

**Menlo-Atherton High School
Shared Decision-Making Site Council**

2/13/25

**Unapproved Minutes
Approved on: 3/13/25**

Members in attendance:

John Giambruno, Pablo Beramendi, Stephen Ready, Elisa Nocedal, Libia Bustamante, Erin Walsh, Celine Sanie (parent), Irene Gil, Michele Breen, Amy McGaraghan (parent), Paige Winikoff (parent), Karl Losekoot, Randy West, Stephanie Cuff-Alvarado, Danette Bathauer, Sapna Bhagwat, Isabel Habibi (student), Parmis Hoghooghi (student), Abigail MacLeod (student), Lucas Selvik (student)

15 total attendees today - 15 voting members.

Opening: The regular meeting of the SDMSC was called to order at 3:33 pm.

Minutes by: Pablo Beramendi

- **Reviewed minutes from previous meeting, 1/16/25**

Motion made by: Randy West

Seconded by: Elisa Nocedal

Approved #: 16

Opposed #: 0

Abstention #: 0

MOTION 3:39 pm

- **Open Forum:**

- 1 minute of silence performed for the passing of Mr. Harris.
- Mr. G recognized the leadership team.
- Elisa thanked Erin and Rachel on the presentation related to cell phone usage. Question on next steps.
 - Elisa mentioned that 8 students are completing a multi-week phone free experiment. Questionnaire following, as well as reaching out to the community to gather more data.
 - Data to be shared with Principal to eventually implement policy.
 - Recognition that walk out went very well. Most peaceful and respectful. Kids were excellent, as recognized by Karl. Real awareness of the impact on the school, respect of choices, and real community while feeling uplifted. Erin also mentioned that several students had an open conversation on how to support.

- **Spring Collaboration Proposals**

- Mr. G mentioned that the Foundation appreciates us looking into this. We usually don't reject any initiatives but there could be follow ups.
- Several pieces of feedback shared by group on a few items. Some edits were made at the meeting, and others will be checked offline with the owner of the activity by Mr. G.
- Motion made by: Erin Walsh
- Seconded by: Randy West
- Approved #: 19
- Opposed #: 0
- Abstention #: 0
- MOTION 3:58 pm

- **Comprehensive School Safety Plan**

- Elaine Rivera-Rios explained:
 - Looking at the contents of the plan, i.e., making sure that whatever needs to be there is there.
 - Some data will be updated for the next school year.
 - Plan highlights generically what is available.
 - Need to check that what we want to see reflected for the 2025-26 school year is there. Anything new will be added to this proposal.
 - Site Council will approve. SDMSC to provide feedback/ comments.
- Feedback on page 10 related to CPR: align it with the new non breath model. Need to get this right, also for overdose situations. Need to have a single POV on this (e.g., compression, breath) so that people know how to react to different situations.
- Erin Walsh brought up that there's no mention to "say something". Elaine will comment so that it gets added.
- Amy McGaraghan asked if there a specific training/ instructions on the disaster procedures for students with special needs? What are the school plans for that? Elaine mentioned that she had students with a few parents about this (e.g., hearing difficulties). But there is no specific policy. Another example could be international students with different sign languages. Need to make sure that we don't miss this population of kids.
- There was a question on whether there has been a fentanyl issue at school. Karl mentioned that there has not been during his time. He mentioned that he usually comments on that, and we need to have a consistent message.

- Mr. G mentioned that we are not commenting, but rather simply providing feedback.
- Sapna Bhagwat: Need to establish a clear protocol for when people are molested/ insulted.
- Motion made by:
- Seconded by:
- Approved #:
- Opposed #:
- Abstention #:
- MOTION X:XX pm

- **Discussion on Challenge Day:**

- Mr G brought up the conversation on when is the best time, is it productive. Spirit is to build the community but not sure if this is being achieved.
- Sapna Bhagwat:
 - Goal is to change the climate/ make it cohesive.
 - However this year we got negative feedback from students, not perceiving that it'd change things going forward.
 - Some students discussed things that did not work for them. Are 9th graders too young for challenge day?
 - It was also difficult to find volunteers. Very resource-intensive event.
- Abbie brought up student experience, even though she did it at Junior (not Freshman) year.
 - She really enjoyed the day, and as a Junior she knew the people and it was less of an “eye opening” exercise. She also heard a lot of positive feedback, but it has gotten a reputation of students not feeling good about it.
 - Is there a way to fix it? There is value in the event.
- Parmis Hoghooghi: Did it during Freshman and felt that it was very impactful, with kids taking it seriously.
 - What was most impactful was when they had a day to share personal stories.
 - Made her realize that many times struggles are not unique to oneself. This could be harder to understand as a Freshman.
 - Challenge Day really opened her eyes even as a Freshman, having those vulnerable moments with your classmates.
- Danette Bathauer:
 - In other districts there are monthly events that encourage students to check in. Not suggesting that we do it here, but have questions

about Challenge Day. Some kids are pretty dramatic and simply intend to make other students cry. Question on how authentic it is.

- Amy McGaraghan: Link Crew brought up.
- Lucas Selvik:
 - Not really an eye opening experience with small group. Part of that is that coming in you don't know what Challenge Day is.
 - Has not interacted with anyone in his group to understand if it worked.
 - But see value in the larger group.
- Erin Walsh: feedback from other teachers, mostly 9th graders in the English Departments.
 - Having it early in the semester was challenging. Normally at the beginning of the semester new concepts are introduced, and having a day with no interactions made it challenging. Later in the unit there could be more independence.
 - As a school we need to do more to follow up on Challenge Day, as a continuous thing.
 - Unclear on how valuable Challenge Day is to students and teachers. May need to make it more clear. This has not been explicitly communicated.
 - Feedback from 9th graders: boring, others have been able to learn from others, some students felt forced to share personal experiences with a group of people who they don't know.
- Has done Challenge Day for 7 times. Variable experience.
 - Important to think about the goals, and it should not be to leave with best friends. It should be about knowing that we are all going through stuff, but this is not something that 9th graders could articulate.
 - Some schools do it proactively, others reactively. As a teacher, she'd rather do it in a proactive manner.
 - Wonder what facilitators think about Challenge Day. It has not changed a lot, so wonder how things like Social Media could change it. It'd be interested to understand their opinion.
- Acknowledge that at the very beginning of MA there's pros and cons of that day, including struggles with kids that many times our staff needs to work in putting together.
- Stopped doing it after the first time, as he did not want to open his personal things. It's also exhausting to go through this the whole day. Kids might feel the same way too, and it could be another obligation when they are busy with homework and other things.

- Consistency is everything. This needs to be something that carries on, and there's no follow up to Challenge Day.
 - Is it better to do it during Junior year? Can we do it by English class and split people for stronger connections?
- Celine Sanie: Done it once, in 2014. At the onset of social media. It should be different these days as information/gossip can easily spread. Families should be able to opt out.
 - There's also a maturity issue, particularly for Freshman.
 - Possibility for program to set goals.
- Amy McGaraghan: questioned what are the goals of Challenge Day.
 - Sapna Bhagwat: one day cannot change the culture, even though that seems to be the goal of the day.
 - Change culture in terms of less bullying, feeling of belonging.
 - Mission was read out loud. Seems to be a lot for a day.
- Karl:
 - It's about growing a sense of empathy for each other. And does that allow for self awareness as well as awareness of others.
 - Expecting more than that may not be reasonable.
 - Goal is important, but Challenge Day may not be doing the job.
- Mr. G asks how we should measure that goal.
- Amy McGaraghan:
 - When we were talking about the safety plan, she was going to ask if we had looked at our hazing rules. Other schools have had problems.
 - This is the kind of things that, if we are trying to be inclusive, there are a lot of things that we can do to meet those goals.
 - This could have more impact on her kids than a Challenge Day (i.e., how norms are set up for sports).
- Part of challenge day has benefits. Challenge Day plants some seeds, but things will not change from one day to the next. We won't see results that way.
 - It may be a mistake to only pay attention to the kids that say that they don't engage or did not like it, as they may still realize value from the activities.
 - Things learned at Challenge Day as a teacher have been valuable. But effects come long term.
- Abbie:
 - Different effect on different people depending on their experiences.
 - She does not remember the details of the experience.

- Ideally these would be conversations that could come naturally, i.e., people who want to share, share.
 - Impossible to stage those conversations, but more impactful for students who have had those conversations before.
- Elisa Nokedal asked who'll make the decision at the end.
 - Did it twice in the past, and had some very good and very bad experiences.
 - Not great to expose people who's had significant trauma.
 - Need to understand who we are serving.
- Parmis Hoghooghi: It'd be great to be able to hear feedback from students. Need to hear their voices.
- Mr G questioned what next steps should be:
 - Important conversation.
 - Not expecting closure on this today.
- Sapna Bhagwat: would like to poll the Freshman class. But also understand if the majority of students see value from it.
- Amy: make sure that we also include Senior, Junior and not only Freshman.

Adjourning meeting at 5:01 pm:

Motion made by: Elisa Nokedal

Seconded by: Erin Walsh

Approved #:

Opposed #: 18

Abstention #: 0

MOTION PASSES: 5:01 pm