

**Marvin School Governance Council Meeting Minutes**  
(March 5, 2019 Marvin Elementary Library)

**Council Members:**

Present: Tara Palmer, Kari Gutierrez, Mark Lilledahl, Dana Siano, Sue O'Shea, Nate Sheldon, Nancy Lamb, Aly Johnson, Amanda Seroff, Christine Murray and Julia Dufort

Absent: Darnelly D'Erario, Kathi Hughes, Mimi Chang, Judith Rivera, and Diana Paladino-Christopher

**Proceedings:**

-Meeting commenced at 6:06 PM

Handouts

- *Principal O'Shea handed out a packet of Marvin students' average RIT scores on the NWEA MAP Assessment and elementary students' composite scores on the mCLASS Dibels in the fall, winter, and spring*

School Start Time Committee

- *The letter that Nate and Mark sent to Dr. Adamowski about increasing elementary school representation in the School Start Time Committee seemed effective.*
- *Dr. Adamowski invited Nate and Mark to join the Committee for the last three meetings on Thursdays at 4PM at City Hall.*
- *It was agreed that the Committee's overall communication to the district was originally poor but was showing improvement.*
- *The Committee has developed three alternatives for adjusting the school start times: One cheap plan, one middle-of-the-road, and one expensive that would cost over \$800,000.*
- *Since the Committee has collected enough data to move forward, during Thursday's meeting there will be a vote on which of the three alternatives members feel is best.*
- *After this week's meeting the other meetings will likely be more open to the public.*
- *The Committee distributed surveys to the public with questions on students' sleep schedules and overall health that was thought to be poorly designed as it did not address the ramifications of changing the school start times.*
- *The survey collected over 1100 responses, the majority of which were elementary school parents.*
- *It was observed that although middle schools didn't show much involvement in the Committee, there should be input and representation from all three school levels.*
- *Both Marvin and Cranbury Elementary had much representation at the Open Forum Meeting*

### School Based Budget

- *This year's school based budget amounts to \$3 million, which allows for \$7,900 per pupil.*
- *Principal O'Shea found in the staff roster the names of people who no longer work at the school, but she will be able to clean up the roster on the 13th at City Hall.*
- *Unlike last year, it was made known that this year, all elementary schools would receive the same amount of money per pupil*
  - *However, magnet schools such as Columbus Magnet, Silvermine Elementary, Tracey Elementary (a magnet schools for some grades), Jefferson Magnet (which is waning out its magnet program) are granted \$100 more per pupil.*
- *Meanwhile, Wolfpit Elementary only has 317 students and requires a stipend to run.*
- *The Board of Education has expressed interest in using its rainy day fund towards the schools.*
- *It was suggested that the rainy day fund would include more than enough to cover the \$2.3 million worth of one-time expenditures in the 2020 budget request.*
- *The district may be looking to merge some of its services in order to increase its savings.*
- *Although the budget may be adjusted, it has already been passed as of now.*
- *At the SGC meeting in April, Principal O'Shea will have more information on the budget, such as a more clear idea of what money is available and if there is money to move around.*
- *Principal O'Shea hopes that there will be enough money to add a fourth 1st grade class.*
- *The SGC is responsible for approving the budget around May.*
- *According to Barbara Meyer-Mitchell, 80% of taxpayers do not have children in the Norwalk school system, which explains why increasing the money supply to schools is difficult*

### Extended School Hours Grant

- *There is a program set to start next week that is designed for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students whose math testing scores fell in a certain band.*
- *This program also includes a 2nd grade class meant to boost students' fluency.*
- *The purpose is to provide students with more practice in areas they struggle with in hopes that they will reach the next level of achievement in either math or fluency.*
- *Students are chosen based on their achievement in each of four subjects in math: Numbers, Measurements and Data, Algebra, and Geometry.*
- *There are currently six teachers helping students in this after school program.*
- *Approximately 72 students are being helped in this program.*

## Excellence in Education

- *Every year schools nominate teachers or paraprofessionals for an Excellence in Education award.*
- *Marvin staff has agreed not to send any nominations; competition for a nomination has pitted teachers against one another in the past and all teachers are doing their jobs sufficiently.*
- *The teachers are in agreement that they do not need or particularly want recognition that they feel is unnecessary.*
- *The SGC is to approve Marvin's decision to withhold nominees for this award.*
- *However, the district does want to nominate two outstanding paraprofessionals from Marvin: Deb Benn and Rebecca Sweeney.*
  - *These two dedicated women go above and beyond to improve students' lives as well as the community. They additionally run an annual program during the holidays to provide students in need with gifts that they want and need*
- *Marvin would like to put the \$500 Excellence in Education reward towards a yearly scholarship for a Norwalk High senior going into education or studying education in college.*
- *This scholarship would honor late Marvin teacher Kara Kowlakas.*

## Climate Survey

- *Staff members are still looking for ways to increase parent completion of the Climate Survey*
- *O'Shea awarded certificates to students whose parents sent out their names to be put in the raffle and claimed to complete the survey*
- *31 parents sent out their names, some through a screenshot of the screen indicating that the survey was completed*
- *There were 49 parents who had completed the survey, which totals to 13% completion thus far, and the entire staff and students still have to take the survey*
- *Teachers were asked to inform parents after their conference that there will be computers and Chromebooks available outside the classrooms with directions to complete the survey*
- *The goal is to achieve a completion rate of 32%*
- *It was suggested that parents who take the survey on conference night could receive a coupon for the Book Fair*
- *Principal O'Shea sends notices home to families about the Climate Survey and includes the names of the past raffle winners to get the students excited about their parents completing it*

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

- *Teachers agreed that having two half days allotted for parent-teacher conferences was helpful and less chaotic*
- *It was suggested that teachers could ask parents to fill out the Climate Survey at the end of the conference*
- *Principal O'Shea offered to give a list of parents who claimed to fill out the survey already to the teachers*
- *Teachers would be able to address any attendance or tardiness problems during the conference as well*

## Miscellaneous Items

### Testing Scores

- *Third grade Marvin students have seen a 6-point improvement in their ELA RIT scores from fall to winter and a 9-point improvement in their math RIT scores*
- *Fourth graders improved their RIT scores by 6 points in ELA and 8 points in math*
- *Fifth graders' scores increased 3 RIT points in ELA and almost 4 in math*
- *EOY testing for the NWEA MAP Assessment begins on March 26, although MOY testing was just completed in the end of January*
  - *Teachers agreed that the students' EOY scores would not truly show their progress since their curriculum lasts until June and will therefore not be finished by EOY MAP testing*
- *Third, fourth, and fifth grade students' growth on the NWEA Assessment reflects their teachers' performance in the form of SLO's.*
- *Students will be taking the SBAC Assessment in May; their scores on this reflect Marvin's performance overall*
- *Fourth and fifth grade students' scores on the EOY NWEA Assessment determine which students will go to summer school this year*
- *Although Marvin students' composite Dibels score for the mCLASS increased from 57% to 67%, their scores were still below those of the overall district*
- *Teachers have noticed that although there are Chromebooks in the classrooms, students may need more practice with using them so they feel comfortable while they are testing*
- *It was suggested that starting a typing class after library specials might be beneficial*
- *Parents found that the after-school enrichment programs for \$60 were very useful, especially in teaching children how to type*
- *Kindergarten and first graders show huge growth in their scores since they are learning letters and sounds, but there is typically not as much improvement in second and third graders' scores since they are tested on more difficult subjects like fluency and accuracy*

### Attendance

- *Attendance this year has been so poor that Principal O'Shea sent out 77 letters to parents whose students had excessive absences and tardies*
- *23 families had enough attendance issues that they were asked to contact the social worker*
- *Other schools who started 30 minutes earlier this year found that they also had increased attendance conflicts*
- *Although a certain amount of absences requires that a student be held back, there is no real consequence for excessive tardies*
- *There will be another notice going home to families with excessive attendance problems via mail, which will be followed by possible house calls*
- *There are also some parents who constantly take their children out of school early, which is now being monitored as well*
- *It was suggested that calculating the amount of hours that students were missing of class could motivate parents to get their children to school on time*
- *Certain students miss the same subject consistently if they are excessively late, which explains some lower test scores*

- *It was suggested that teachers could ask parents to have their child take the bus so they can be on time more often*

### **Dodgeball Event**

- *The dodgeball tournament was considered a success and a great community event*
- *Marvin is looking to organize other events to bring the schools together, such as a volleyball tournament or kickball match*

-Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

-Meeting minutes submitted by Julia Dufort