

Marvin School Governance Council Meeting Minutes

(January 8, 2019 Marvin Elementary Library)

Council Members:

Present: Darnelly D'Erario, Kari Gutierrez, Mimi Chang, Mark Lilliedahl, Kathrin Hughes, Dana Siano, Sue O'Shea, Nate Sheldon, Tara Palmer, Nancy Lamb, Aly Johnson, Christine Murray, Amanda Seroff and Julia Dufort

Absent: Judith Rivera and Diana Paladino-Christopher

Proceedings:

-Meeting commenced at 6:05 PM

Handouts

-The statistics for Marvin's enrollment by grade level, ethnicity, ELL, Special Ed, and lunch status were handed out to members

PTA Guest Speaker

-The PTA President, Marissa Mangone came to speak about ways the PTA has raised money for Marvin in the past; last year the PTA raised \$50,000 for Marvin

-The PTA is preparing for their second Walk-A-Thon on May 3, 2019, whose raised profits last year went directly to the school to fund water bottle fountains, landscaping, whiteboards, and enrichment assemblies for students (for example, on Friday January 11, Magic with Mazz came to paint a picture for the school)

-Last year the PTA held a kick-off assembly with activities to get the students involved and collaborating

-This year's goal is to raise \$6,000 more than last year's goal of \$12,000 from sponsors

-On February 22, Marvin is collaborating with Naramake to organize a dodgeball tournament between the two schools charge for admission and will charge for admission to raise money

-A possible idea is to hold an event at Stepping Stones around the time of the Climate Survey to encourage families to complete it, and is looking for other events to use as incentives

-The PTA is trying to increase partnership between the elementary schools as a way of bringing bring together the community and raising money for the schools

-More involvement would illustrate to the Board of Education how parents are putting in effort to help out the schools, which is helpful when the budgets for each school are determined

-The PTA has transitioned from a PTO in order to have a system of checks and balances and to receive support from the CT PTA

-There is a possibility of creating an umbrella SGC in the Eastside schools similar to the CT PTA so that the SGC has more of a voice and a larger group; however, there is a challenge in achieving greater involvement

-The PTA is open and appreciative of any feedback from faculty, administration, or parents in order to figure out ways to meet the needs of the Marvin community

Membership

-Amanda Seroff Kari Gutierrez were welcomed to the committee

-The parent members are now fully represented

School Start Time Committee

- If the updated school start time policy was enacted, the elementary schools would all begin at as early as 8:00 and high schools would start around the time that the elementary schools start currently
- Since some elementary schools have not yet added 30 minutes to their day length, the earlier start time would have even more drastic effects on the students and staff
- According to the bus schedules, some elementary students would be standing outside in the dark waiting for the bus before 7AM
- The costs of the policy would total around \$840,000 due to the altering of the bus schedules and routes
- Originally, the changed start times was meant to be implemented during a two-year plan; however, if the Superintendent's proposal is passed before his term ends next year, the change might be enacted next year
- The ratio of members of the School Start Time Committee was skewed, as only one person was representing the elementary schools, while the others were mostly high school parents
- Nate and Mark suggested that a letter could be written to the Board of Ed explaining that the committee would not represent all schools equally unless there was increased elementary school membership
- In order to ensure that the elementary schools' voices are heard on the issue, Principal O'Shea is asking for the names and emails of the other elementary schools' SGC Presidents to get in touch with them

Extended School Hours Grant

- The Extended School Hours Grant was funded again this year; it has been used for the past seven years
- The program offers extra help to students who are invited to attend based on the MOY test scores, which indicates the students whose scores need some improvement
- The program entails after-school hours for students until around 4:15PM, bus routes, and a snack
- The plan is to run the program for grades three to five in math and grades one and two in fluency.
- It was suggested that the school could possibly send out emails or notice blurbs on the improvement in scores that Marvin has seen to spread information out if the school is doing a good job

District Breakfast Program

- The District Breakfast Program is designed to have students pick up breakfast in the main hallway, bring the food back to the class and eat in the classrooms. This is creating difficulties for the faculty, including ants coming back to the classrooms
- Although the program was meant to allot community time for the students, students often have to complete their morning work and students cannot work, socialize, and eat simultaneously
- As faculty is in support of moving breakfast back to the cafeteria, Marvin has to decide whether to voice their concerns as a school or as a SGC to the Board of Education
- It was proposed that maybe Marvin could make necessary changes to the program as a school

Lunch Fees

- Principal O'Shea has budgeted \$1,000 for unpaid breakfast/lunch fees and currently these unpaid fees have totaled to \$775
- The school typically sends notices home to parents when they owe around \$12-\$20, including applications for free and reduced lunch so that parents can reduce these debts in the future
- Some families can owe a considerable amount of money, especially if their children eat breakfast/lunch offered at the cafeteria without their parents knowing

Marvin Comparative Diversity

- The statistics for Marvin's enrollment by grade level, ethnicity, ELL, Special Ed, and lunch status are sent out on a monthly basis
- It was observed that 19% of Marvin students are classified as ELL, meaning that English is these students' second language and these students are eligible for ELL learning services
- The majority of enrolled Marvin students (63%) receive free/reduced lunch
- This year, it was noted that kindergarten has received an increased number of Special Ed students and 12% of Marvin students are identified as requiring Special Ed
- It was observed that there was a greater number of male Special Ed students than female
- It was suggested that girls are not always identified as Special Ed until later in their school careers as they are not as likely as boys to show indicating signs and are typically quieter and well behaved despite possible learning problems; furthermore, boys tend to act out more
- Kathi shared her experience with aiding and sometimes translating for kids who are not fluent in English
- It was observed that the ELL students who are already struggling with their native language are much more likely to struggle with learning and understanding English
- Some students and teachers use Google Translate as a means of communicating
- There is a substantial difference between the amount of students coming from Spanish-speaking households and those enrolled in ELL, which arises concerns about possible gaps in scores between those who come from Spanish-speaking versus English-speaking households
- For the past seven years, an after-school program has offered English lessons to Spanish-speaking parents; about 10 parents, who are mostly female, attend consistently

Summer School Program

- Beginning this year, Title 1 schools (including Marvin) will use Springboard curriculum and system for their Summer School programs
- Tracey Elementary students will now be housed at Marvin for Summer School, which means that 180 Tracey students, Play-and-Learn middle/elementary school students, and Marvin Summer School students will all be using the cafeteria, classrooms, and gym while the school is being cleaned
- An issue arises in the increased amounts of students who now need to be fed, including an optional breakfast and a lunch for everyone
- In past years, Summer School has been four days a week with Friday off, the program totaling 24 days
- This year, the program will be five days a week and a total of 25 days (beginning July 8 and concluding August 9), without any pre-work

- Teachers and students will both receive extra break time to transition between the school year and the Summer School program, unlike last year, where teachers began Summer School training the day following the last day of the regular school year*
- The Summer School program requires teachers to visit the homes of Summer School students in order to build a connection with the parents*
- Enrollment in Summer School and weekly visits to the school are mandatory for parents whose kids do not achieve a certain Dibble score or score above the 25th percentile on the MOY (Middle-of-Year) Reading test of the NWEA*
- Parents of such students receive letters warning that their child may have to attend Summer School in February*
- However, MOY scores are notorious for being lower than both the Beginning-of-Year and End-of-Year scores, which leads to an increase in the number of students eligible for Summer School*
- There is a great chance for improvement in the students' score between the MOY and EOY, and if Summer School eligibility were based on the higher EOY scores, less students would be in the consideration for Summer School*
- Currently, around 90 students' scores indicate a need for Summer School*
- This large Summer School enrollment would lead to increased staffing, thousands of dollars in cost, and concerns of parents/faculty about identifying students in February who should attend Summer School in July*
- There is a possibility that the Achievement Officer will see the large number of students whose MOY scores indicate Summer School enrollment and will wait until the EOY scores are released before determining which students are required to attend Summer School*

Miscellaneous Items

- There is still one vacancy for community members on the SGC, so current members are searching for community members in the area that could make a positive addition to the council*
- Meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM*
- Meeting minutes submitted by Julia Dufort*