



Merryhill Midtown- Parent Teacher Student Organization

## **Minutes of the May 6, 2021 MMPTSO General Meeting**

### **I. Welcome- Melissa Chechourka**

The meeting was called to order at 5:01pm. Melissa Chechourka, the Vice President, is running the meeting today as Priya is unavailable due to travel challenges and technological issues.

The meeting will not follow the agenda precisely as some items need to be heard out of order due to time constraints of members.

Present: Priya Chisholm (President- audio only), Melissa Chechourka (Vice President), Stacey Edgar (Treasurer), Jackie Simon (Secretary), and Elaine Wesphal (Head of School). Student Government Representative was: Copeland Williams (Spirit Coordinator). Other attendees listed in alphabetical order: Erika Arthur, Lauren Celello, Nicole Fountain-Long, Nicole Gerdts, Kyle Gradinger, Brittany Hoey, Yoko Mortel, Shellie Nast, Diana Nguyen, Ardeep Nijer, Shephali Patel, Mellonie Richardson, Grace Roodbar, Sarah Rudes, Cathy Senderling-McDonald, Jessica Mills, Sam Smalls, Kim Tanimoto, Stacy Toledo, Josh Vavao, Katie Vavao, Amber Williams, and Dominique Williams.

### **II. Approval of the February Meeting Minutes- Melissa Chechourka**

The minutes from the March 31, 2021 meeting were sent out to the membership in advance via email. The minutes were approved as submitted.

### **III. Treasurer Report- Stacey Edgar**

- A. Review of current finances- Stacey was unable to share copies of the financials on the screen due to technological challenges, however, all financial documents were sent to members in advance of the meeting.
- B. There were several deposits this month totaling \$2,337.50 including: Nugget, Amazon Smile, Benevity (Intel Community Service donation as billable hours), Mountain Mike's Fundraiser, and the 8th grade auction proceeds. The 8th grade Class will have \$2562.00 toward an event.

Expenses for the month included 2nd Trimester Teacher Appreciation and some expenses from TAP week totalling \$541.68. Current balance as of 4/30/21 is \$12,136.24. Additional requests for reimbursements for TAP are forthcoming.

- C. The Treasurer's report included 2 attachments:
  - a. Profit and Loss statement July 1, 2020 to March 29, 2021
  - b. 2020-21 MMPTSO Budget vs. Actual
- D. Apple also offers community service billable hours.

#### **IV. Special Guest- Ms. Grace Roodbar**

- A. She had a powerpoint ready to share, but due to the screen share challenges, she will talk through her presentation.
- B. Prior to Merryhill, she was the Mental Health Specialist at Oakmont High School in Roseville. Previous to Oakmont, she worked in Stockton at the Langston Hughes Academy as a Middle/High School Social Worker providing Tier 1 social emotional learning, 1:1 counseling and group services at both locations.
- C. Her Master's is in Social Work from Western Michigan University and she has a School Social Worker Credential. Upon moving to California, she worked to earn her PPS credential to provide services in the State of California at public schools.
- D. She is currently working on accumulating clinical hours to become a Clinical Social Worker to fulfill licensure requirements. She has 700 more hours to go and has clinical supervision weekly.
- E. She moved to Sacramento from Michigan 3 years ago because her husband is working on his PhD in Geography at UC Davis. She is very happy here.
- F. Her initial goal at Merryhill was to build relationships with staff and students. She has been working on the playground to introduce herself and get to know the kids and have them recognize her. She is also providing some 1:1 sessions and is coordinating a 4th grade girls' group to help support their needs.
- G. Looking ahead to her time at Merryhill, she has begun working on SEL curriculum to implement schoolwide, bringing back FIERCE curriculum, and she always welcomes questions. Personal questions should be directed to her email which she will put in the chat. She is happy to be here and feels that everyone has been quite welcoming.

- a. Question from Mellonie Richardson regarding what the plans are for getting the kids back on campus in the fall including many of the kids who were on online academy this year.
  - i. Ms. Grace replied that integration is not a specific goal at the moment, but an overall goal which helps address those concerns and they will be addressed including: building relationships, conflict management, and perseverance which intersect with a reintegration theme. Dynamics needing support will be addressed as they arise. Peer interventions will be addressed proactively.
  - ii. Ms. Westphal added that Ms. Grace and her met this week and they reviewed all the Merryhill SEL information over the years to make decisions on what worked and was enjoyed, and what was not enjoyed. Furthermore, they are working on student surveys to gather data on SEL, acceptance, inclusivity, diversity, and belonging. This information will also help to develop plans and goals over the summer in preparation for next school year.
  - iii. Timing for her starting this position has worked out well for getting familiar with the school prior to the new school year. Ms. Grace is also doing some professional development around SEL and is preparing for next school year.
    - Comment by Shellie Nast in the chat, “Welcome Miss Grace, glad to have you at merryhill.
    - Comment by Mellonie Richardson, “Yes, welcome!”
    - Comment in the chat by Shephali Patel, “Glad to have you Ms. Grace.”
    - Posted in the chat by Ms. Grace, “My email is [grace.roodbar@merryhillschool.com](mailto:grace.roodbar@merryhillschool.com), Thanks for having me!”
    - Comment in the chat by Yoko Mortel, “Thank you Grace.”

## **V. Action Items-**

### **A. Election for 2021-22 Board Officers- Shellie Nast**

- a. Shellie acknowledged the quorum and thanked the current officers for their service. Some of the current Board members are leaving the school and moving on to other opportunities.

- Comment in the chat by Melissa Chechourka, “i’ll still be on campus - not leaving the school :)”
  - Comment by Mellonie Richardson, “Yes, clear that up. 8-}.”
- b. There are candidates for all positions. She asked the candidates to introduce themselves and share their vision for PTSO.
- Amber Williams is the nominee for President. Amber introduced herself and shared that she has a current 8th grader in Student Council, Copeland, and a 6th grader, Georgiana. The Williams family loves Merryhill. She works in advertising and runs a busy office . She has never been a President of a Board, but running a business on a daily basis makes her vision for Merryhill to streamline procedures, look at the data and do what is working. She hopes to represent the parents, interface more with students to add their value to the organization, and continue to support the teachers and work with staff and administration to run a smooth ship like Ms. Westphal.
  - Josh Vavao is the nominee for Vice President. Josh introduced himself as the parent of Mateo, a Kindergartener in Ms. Britton’s class, and a 3rd grader, Lily, who is in Ms. DeCoursey’s class. His reason for getting involved this year was because he saw the Board do an amazing job of helping represent families through the pandemic and is appreciative of their work, so he wanted to help. Lily was a student at Merryhill during JrK and Kindergarten and the family left for 2 years and came back and enrolled their son as well. They have seen 2 sides of the coin for parent participation. He is currently working at the CA Restaurant Association and prior to that he was working with California Family Fitness. He is excited to be a part of the Board and looking forward to helping to make Merryhill awesome.
    1. Elaine Westphal commented that it is great to have a Dad running for the Board.
    2. Jackie Simon agreed with the comment and also shared that the last time a male board member was nominated was 7 years ago when the PTSO was getting started.

- a. Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, “shout out to some gender equity representation.”
- Stacey Edgar is the nominee for Treasurer continuing into the 2nd year as the current Treasurer. She is one of the founding members and this will be her 4th year serving on the Board. She shared that she has a current 7th grader and a Junior who is an alum. Stacey would like to bring back some of the community events that the school did prior to the pandemic and would like to tackle some of the project items listed in the “restricted budget area” that were previously approved to purchase.
- There are 2 candidates for Secretary: Morgan Lefforge and Veronica Angin.
  1. Morgan Lefforge just had a baby boy last weekend, so she is not on the call. However, she reached out with interest in running for Secretary to support the PTSO continuing.
    - a. Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, “kinda busy, not sleeping.”
  2. Veronica Angin introduced herself. She is a Labor Relations Manager at UPS during the day and comes to the PTSO meetings and has a lot more fun. She has a daughter in 3rd grade who transferred from the Natomas campus (Mill Creek) when that campus closed, she came to this campus in 1st grade. Recently, she has spent a lot of time with Jackie Simon and Sam Smalls working on the Bylaws and SOPs. She invested a lot of time and worked with the committee to create more structure, guidelines, and accountability for the PTSO. She is very proud of the product that the team put forward.
- c. Because 3 positions are running unopposed, the membership can accept them as Board Members: Amber Williams as President, Josh Vavao as Vice President, and Stacey Edgar as Treasurer, unless there is any opposition. Time was given to express concerns or opposition. With none mentioned, the nominees were accepted as the new Board members with congratulations.

- Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, “ Congrats! Thank you all.”
  - d. There are 2 nominees for Secretary: Morgan Lefforge and Veronica Angin. Given the technology issues for polling and voting at the moment, members can text Shellie Nast with their semi-private vote and she will be the only one who knows how members voted. Or, members can place votes in the chat. Melissa and Shellie decided without opposition that texting votes would be best. Jackie Simon verified that all members present may vote. Shellie Nast put her cell phone number into the chat (916-607-0344). The results of the voting will be announced later in the meeting to allow the agenda to move forward.
- B. SOP guidelines- Jackie Simon
- a. The main issue that was addressed at the last meeting was oversight of the Treasurer position. The committee worked on it and a copy of the edited SOPs were emailed to all members prior to this meeting. The members were asked if there were any questions, opposition, or concerns about the updated SOPs. None were mentioned.
    - Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, “No concerns...”
  - b. Sam Smalls and Veronica were asked if there was anything they would like to add to the discussion.
  - c. Sam Smalls mentioned that he reviewed the minutes from the last meeting as there was good discussion around the point of oversight. Using the term, “Financial Review Committee,” is appropriate and supports a process that allows for consistency and best practices of reviewing the work of the Treasurer. Sam Smalls feels good where the document landed and the final SOP product.
  - d. Jackie Simon mentioned that with the technology issues tonight for voting, we can ask if there is any opposition to accepting the SOPs as submitted.
  - e. Melissa Chechourka asked if there was any opposition to the document. Seeing and hearing no opposition, the documents were accepted as submitted. She thanked everyone for their work.
  - f. Jackie Simon thanked Sam Smalls and Veronica Angin for their diligence on weekends to complete this product.
  - g. Veronica thanked Jackie Simon for her leadership and Sam Smalls for working through the details down to the correct verbage.

- Comment in the chat by Stacy Toledo, “ Thank you SOP Committee!!
- Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, “Yes, thank you all.”
- Comment in the chat by Shephali Patel, “Thank you SOP Committee.”
- Comment in the chat by Sam Smalls, “Happy to help Jackie!!! Fun times!”
- Comment in the chat by Jessica Mills, “Great job SOP committee!”
- Comment in the chat by Shellie Nast, “Thank you SOP Committee.”

C. 8th Grade Celebration- Jackie Simon

- a. Priya is on the call, but is still not able to share the host or share screens, so Jackie Simon talked through the budget and other items she wanted to discuss. There are also 8th grade parents on the call who have been working with me on the event.
- b. As many know, the school has not been able to do field trips and so she has been working on how to celebrate 8th graders. She has been working with Ms. Westphal to figure out how to do it. The bottom line is that it can not happen during the school year because we can not risk students gathering and then coming back on campus due to Covid concerns. Therefore, she has found a private facility where an event can be hosted by Jackie Simon after school is out that can hold a pool party outside with a maximum of 50 people (all 37 students will be invited: all OA and in person students) with 2 lifeguards, 2 hours of a DJ, 3 hours of pool time. Event is on June 5th from 1-4pm. Kids can create their own “clean” music list.
- c. The budget is as follows:
  - \$490 Sunshine Swim Center pool reservation
  - \$375 for 2 hours of DJ
  - \$100 decorations (simple w/ a photo backdrop for selfies)
  - \$1110 in \$30 gift cards for all 37 students
  - Lawn signs were considered, but many have already received high school lawn signs.

- \$200 food/beverages- simple snacks because a meal is not needed.
- \$155 goodie bags (beach ball, rubber duckies, candy, etc.)
- \$30 for 6 \$5 raffle prizes for games

Total= \$2460.00

Total amount available for 8th grade event is \$1956 from auction and \$606 from See's candy = \$2562

- d. Goodie bags and \$30 Amazon gift cards will go to all students regardless of whether they can attend the event. Those who can not attend the event will receive the gifts at graduation.
- e. Jackie Simon made a motion to have \$2562 allocated for the 8th grade event. The PTSO fiscal year ends on June 30, 2021, so the money needs to be voted on and spent prior to that date.
- f. Chaperones will be limited by the number of RSVPs to stay within the maximum capacity guidelines.
- g. Kim Tanimoto asked Elaine Westphal how this works with the school and PTSO. She is surprised about this announcement. Elaine Westphal explained that the school is not involved. It is not a school event. The school did not plan it and is operating outside of this event.
  - Question in the chat from Elaine, "Kim - did I answer your question?"
  - Answer in the chat from Kim, "Yes thank you Elaine. I just want to make sure that the school is not liable."
- h. Mellonie Richardson asked if Jackie had surveyed the parents to see if they are comfortable with the event. Jackie explained that she emailed the parents prior to this evening to explain the plan and share the information and thus far, no parents have expressed concern for the event. Positive responses have been received from approximately half of the class. There is one OA family that has not been contacted by Jackie and that is because it's a new student and the school can not share the contact information. Jackie Simon went through the last several years of emails and class lists from her PTSO participation to gather contacts since the school can not share parent information. She has also shared messages through her son to families where emails have been rejected. The school



has not participated in getting contact information for students to Jackie Simon.

- i. The money being used is specifically for 8th graders and is not general fund money or membership money. When this money was raised people were clear on where the money would be going.
- j. Nicole Fountain Long shared that her daughter, Claire, an 8th grader, is very happy about the event and would like to second the motion.
- k. Question in the chat from Melissa Chechourka, “ is there any PTSO liability to holding a public event like this? Jackie Simon replied on the call that PTSO’s name is not on any documentation which was done to protect the PTSO and the school. Jackie’s name is on everything and she is the one putting up the money and requesting reimbursement.
- l. Furthermore, the Sunshine Swim Center requires that all parents sign a waiver of liability in compliance with their policies and current health guidelines.
- m. Stacey Edgar reminded the group that the event is after school is out and none of the attendees will be returning to campus this school year.
- n. Melissa Chechourka clarified the motion would be to reimburse Jackie Simon for appropriate expenses incurred for the 8th grade event.
- o. Mellonie Richardson said that she has concerns that it’s a private party. It could be a private party where parents cover the expenses and the money for PTSO could go for 8th grade student gifts and gift cards. If it’s a private party and the school has nothing to do with it. The money only exists because of PTSO and the school.
- p. Elaine Westphal offered to share what the school will be doing for 8th grade students. She explained that she has been working with Jackie Simon on this project for a long time. There are constant changes with guidelines regarding Covid. There are so many guidelines and restrictions regarding how to do an off campus graduation including: capacity restrictions, vaccine verifications, proof of negative Covid tests which also requires special health confidentiality security and more. Therefore, the school has decided to host a BBQ on campus on Thursday and the kids can sign yearbooks, do some other activities, and complete graduation practice on campus. On Friday, there will be a stage area set up for

a live student graduation which will be live streamed for families. There will be a reception for the kids after the ceremony. Then, families who have signed up can take pictures in 10 minute increments for graduation photos on the stage or in front of the backdrop that Ms. Lopez is creating. There is also a video being played for the kids of memories.

- q. Nicole Fountain Long commented that the money was raised for an 8th grade event and questioned if Disneyland was a school event. Stacey Edgar and Elaine Westphal confirmed that the school does coordinate the Disneyland trip.
- r. Melissa Chechourka clarified that the discussion occurring is not to diminish that something should be done for the 8th graders. The concern is whether or not the school or PTSO should be involved and could be held liable if anything should happen. We are living through a pandemic which is uncharted territory. We need to be respectful of the Board, the school and county guidelines. What should we do appropriately without getting ourselves into “legal hot water.”
  - Comment in the chat from Jessica Mills, “The California Department of Public Health Department has approved private outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people.”
- s. Jessica Mills responded that we are operating within the CDPH guidelines for a private event for 50 outside for an outdoor event in Tier 1 and we are almost in Tier 2.
- t. Priya asked if the pool was outside or inside. Jackie Simon replied that the pool is located outside not inside a building.
- u. Melissa Chechourka asked if Jackie could repeat the motion. Jackie Simon stated that she would like to make a motion for the reimbursement for an 8th grade event in the amount of \$2625.00. Nicole Fountain Long seconded the motion.
- v. Shellie Nast asserted that this vote in the chat is appropriate: There were 15 yes, 1 abstained, 0 no. Melissa stated that there were no objections and the motion passed.

Results from Item V. A. Election of the Board Secretary will be Veronica Angin who received the majority of 19 votes submitted.

## **VI. Items for Discussion-**

- A. Teacher Appreciation Week- Shellie Nast

Thank you to everyone who worked on the committee to share creative and inventive ideas, plans, and implement the plan. The plan showed how much we care and appreciate our staff and teachers.

1. We did have too many great ideas and did not want to make any cuts. Shellie Nast is making a motion on behalf of Priya Chisholm who is experiencing technology connection issues. Priya Chisholm has asked to increase the TAP budget by \$750 to cover the over spending. The rationale is that we did not have a Field Day this year, so there is money in the budget to cover the expenses. She recognized the money has already been spent, so the request is after the fact. If the budget is not increased, there are a handful of parents who have agreed to cover the expenses. There will not be any one person affected. Shellie Nast made a motion on behalf of Priya Chisholm to increase the TAP budget by \$1000. Kim Tanimoto seconded the motion. Voting was completed in the chat. 16 yes, 0 abstained, 0 no.
  - Comment in the chat by Stacy Toiledo, "Thank you TAP Committee and Shellie the leader!"
  - Comment in the chat by Kim Tanimoto, "Great job on Teacher Appreciation Week!"
  - Comment in the chat by Mellonie Richardson, "Yes, thank you all."
  - Comment in the chat, "Great teacher appreciation week! Nice work everyone :)."
  - Comment in the chat by Shephali Patel, "Well done to the Committee! 1 of the events would have been amazing but so many things done! Nice to know so many care enough to be willing to pay it themselves."
  - Comment in the chat by Veronica Angin, "not being able to be "on campus" forced our creativity and planning! haha."
2. Shellie Nast mentioned that there are some things that we should continue doing regardless of Covid restrictions.
3. Elaine Westphal said that she has gotten so much great feedback from the teachers. All families have stepped up in addition to the PTSO, the increased budget, and the active committee. Teachers said they felt that this was the best TAP week ever! It was so thoughtful and planned out and purposeful. Elaine thanked everyone.
4. Jessica Mills asked about giving credit to some of the vendors who gave us lower prices for the publicity in our newsletter. Melissa Chechourka answered that Priya Chisholm usually does it and sends it to Elaine Westphal.

5. Elaine Westphal offered to put names of vendors in next week's newsletter to thank them since this week's is already completed. Jessica Mills and Jackie Simon agreed to get the information to her.
6. Melissa Chechourka asked that photos should be posted on our MH Facebook page.
7. Elaine Westphal asked to have Jessica thank Olivia Chandra for her charcuterie bowls. The staff loved them. Olivia is a high school student who did them at a reduced cost as a favor. Stacey Edgar added that she has used her business in the past.
8. Jackie Simon shared that doing the vases outside and handing the kids a flower to take to their teachers was really special because she misses interacting with the kids. Seeing their smiling faces made her smile.
9. Stacey Edgar added thanks to Elaine for allowing her and Jackie Simon to be on campus to hand out the flowers. It was so nice to see kids and teachers that we have not seen in so long.

**VII. New Business- Stacy Toledo**

- A. PTSO would like to recognize Jackie Simon for her work on the PTSO. She was recognized with a gift from the PTSO by her family. There were many sentiments shared with Jackie Simon. Jackie Simon attempted to share how grateful she is for Merryhill and she is hopeful for the future Board. She was very teary.
- B. Melissa Chechourka thanked Priya Chisholm for her serving on the Board during this difficult year. She is organized, detail oriented, and wants to get things done right.

Next meeting will likely be in September of 2021.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:07pm.

Submitted by Jackie Simon, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_