**MHS Home & School Association**

**Meeting Minutes**

**November 9, 2017**

**In Attendance:**

Meg Cunnane Colleen Kutz Jason Sorgini Mercy Varghese

Christine Capece Cheryl Rothe D’Lynn Pollock Mike Hoy

Bridget McGrath Colleen Rossi Brenda Hackett Sarah Spletzer

Mary Byrnes

1. **Welcome** – Introductions

Introductions were made

1. **MHS Staff Reports**
   1. **Teachers** – Cara Woudenberg

• No teachers report

* 1. **Counseling** – Cindy Hartson (Report was read in by Meg Cunnane)

• Reminder:  on Sunday, November 12 there will be the National College Fair at the Pennsylvania Convention Center from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Hundreds of representatives from colleges, universities, and technical schools will be in attendance.  Students should register in advance at [nacacfairs.org/ncf](http://nacacfairs.org/ncf). They will be creating a barcode that they should bring with them to the event.  College Fair Guides were distributed in sophomore, junior, and senior homerooms on November 1 for anyone who was interested in attending.  We only received about 300 booklets.

• Information for SAT and ACT testing and registration dates can be found on their respective websites. [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org/); [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

• Counselors will be meeting with sophomores to work on the Do What You Are personality inventory in Naviance.  This year we are trying something new.  Rather than have the counselors walk through the full inventory in a class period, we are asking the English teachers to assign the task as a homework assignment and then the counselors will come in and go over the results and discuss resources for the students to follow up on for their interests. We felt that this would be a better use of the counselors time in the classroom, rather than watching the kids complete the inventory and then only have about ten minutes to go over the results.

• PSAT Results Night for Parents – January 17, 2018 7:00 – 9:00 in the auditorium.

• Post-Secondary Planning Night for Underclassman Parents – January 23 7:00-9:00 in the auditorium. Pre-registration is requested to ensure that we have enough materials for those in attendance. Parents can register in advance through the district calendar.

* 1. **Principal** – Jason Sorgini

• This is a busy time, he is continuing to send out bi-weekly, the High School Happenings newsletter.

• The second marking period started today, 11/9. Report cards will be available for review on 11/20 on the PowerSchool Portal.

• The school play, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, started this afternoon and will continue with shows 11/10 and 11/11.

• MHS will soon be participating in an emergency drill this year with Limerick Power Plant. Even though the high school is located outside of the EPZ (emergency planning zone), it is a staging area. Dr. Sorgini will meet with representatives from PEMA and FEMA to walk through various emergency scenarios. Administrators have received advanced training.

• Our 2nd Annual private school orientation is 11/14. Dr. Sorgini, Mr. Smink and Dr. Zerbe will all be speaking and participating.

• We have an assembly coming on 11/17 called Minding Your Mind, focused on mental health. Students will be brought in for the the assembly by grade level.

• Soon it will be December, and we’ll have Keystone testing 12/5 – 12/7 for algebra, literature, then biology.

• At the September H&S meeting we asked Dr. Sorgini about trends at the high school and per the School Resource Officer. Keith Bell is our officer now, 4 days a week and Joe Valdez is our Wednesday officer. Officer Valdez was a Philadelphia officer, also served as a Community Resource Officer and started/ran a basketball recreation league for under privileged girls. Between talking to the officers, looking at discipline issues and talking with Principal Mangano at Arcola, it seems the biggest issue or trend right now is with vaping. Kids at the high school are trying to do it in the bathrooms and on the buses. Vapes range from elaborate, expensive contraptions to little things that look like a pen – something you would never know is a vape. This is a pervasive issue that we are addressing as its happening. If the high school confiscates vaping items, they will let parents know. What is angering people is that the high school will not return the vapes. Christine Capece asked whether there is a legal age for vaping. Dr. Sorgini responded that for nicotine products, it is the same age as for smoking cigarettes. Another big concern we are facing is that people can make their own vape solution and therefore can put anything in it. This is the biggest trend we are seeing and it is fairly pervasive.

• Meg Cunnane added that we would like to have a school resource officer come to one our meetings this year.

• Dr. Sorgini mentioned that MHS participates in Safe Schools meetings every other month with local and state level law enforcement personnel from various offices. This provides another resource for knowledge on trends that we need to be aware of.

1. **H&S Reports**
   1. **Secretaries** – Ronda Neider/Sarah Spletzer

• October meeting minutes are posted on website. Meg Cunnane moved to approve the minutes, Mercy Varghese seconded, passed as approved.

• September minutes will be up shortly. Generally we try to get the minutes up within a week, this is something we are working on.

• Late October reminder about signing up for Konstella and morning announcements resulted in 70 more signups for morning announcements. There are currently about 500 parents registered on Konstella, and 400 registered for announcements.

* 1. **Treasurer** – Mercy Varghese

• We received $1,075.00 for no frills last month. We earned $376.00 through Giant, though it pays at the end of the year.

• We are short this year probably about $2,000 short, compared to last year, on our no frills, so we are trying to get the word out about Giant.

• Last month we paid out two mini-grants: Intro to Film and the classroom Chromebook. We also made our payment for Post Prom golf outing and purchased the cookie coupons for Winning Warriors.

* 1. **Vice Presidents** – Marie Kramer/Cheryl Rothe

• Cheryl has nothing to report; Marie did a lot with Souper Luncheon.

• Cheryl will follow up on getting with Dr. Sorgini to invite a School Resources Officer to attend one of our meetings.

• Cheryl will follow up on the possibility of a January breakfast meeting at the Tech School, per below discussion.

* 1. **President** – Meg Cunnane

• Meg thanked everyone who participated in the Souper Luncheon for teachers and staff this week. The teachers loved it and were very appreciative. She was amazed at how many people responded given the short notice.

• Colleen Rossi raised that we talked last year about doing the breakfast at the Tech School before May. Meg discussed that typically in May we end up going to the Tech School for breakfast and a tour, etc., as our May H&S meeting. We need to reach out to the Tech School about possibly coming in January since we don’t have a January H&S meeting. The group discussed that May is too late to do anything regarding signing up to attend the Tech School, and the Tech School closes for the summer. If we go in January, people will know it’s there and go there more often. A January visit may makes sense since 8th graders sign up 1st week in February. We will look into this and get back to the group on it.

1. **District Reports**
   1. **Post Prom** – Maureen Malachowski, Jennifer Mintz, Mike Hoy. Mike Hoy presented:

• They’ve made significant progress, and are now on pace with the last couple years.

• The theme is movies this year and the slogan is “It’s Showtime.”

• They are putting together a flyer to invite seniors and juniors to create a logo. They expect a flood of suggestions and welcome hand-drawn or computer generated art. The final logo will be rolled out in time.

• Post Prom is also In the process of writing for a grant. Dr. Sorgini told them about an ongoing annual grant, max amount is 5k every year, given by Family Services group (local organization), for drug and alcohol educational programs.

• Writing for the grant will focus on the drug and alcohol education aspect of Post Prom (suggestions of what to include from the group: the car display, the Grim Reaper, the pre-prom assembly, etc.), size of the district, level of participation, value of keeping the kids off the roads that night.

• They feel very fortunate to have someone who stepped up for decorating committee, and it is now filled.

• With the movies theme, they’ve chosen to have specific areas of school dedicated to specific genres. Some people are possessive of the areas they’ve decorated for years and may push back regarding the theme or genre of their area. They are hoping everyone will come together to honor the theme and layout.

• Decorating session times will be Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., after the New Year, they will add Saturday sessions.

• Post Prom announcements can be emailed to Dr. Sorgini to get into his High School Happenings newsletter.

• The group discussed that mailing lists may be light and/or may be missing co-chairs, as not everyone is receiving emails regarding meeting dates and times. Post Prom will look at this issue.

* 1. **School Board** – Brenda Hackett

• They are still in negotiations and have a meeting coming up soon with Teamsters, and one in January with MEA regarding non-binding arbitration.

• Reorganization will begin in early December.

• The Board has a Work session on 11/21, and a Board Meeting on 11/28.

• They have been dealing with transportation issues all fall. The high school has not had too many problems compared to the elementary schools. Many of the problems stemmed from 11 drivers leaving right before the start of school, giving little or no notice. The Board is looking for a Transportation Manager. They are in an active search and a process for interviews will be coming up soon.

• There will likely be an assignment for a new H&S liaison coming up soon. Meg thanked Ms. Hackett for her dedication and time as liaison between the Board and H&S.

• Christine Capece raised concerns about high school students getting off the bus other than at their own stops. She has observed this and is concerned in areas where there are no sidewalks or shoulders on the road. She expressed an additional safety concern about who is on the bus should anything happen to the bus.

* 1. **MCC** – Marie Kramer (Report read in by Meg Cunnane)

• The first Methacton Coordinating Council meeting was held Oct. 16 – they are the body that oversees all of the schools’ Home & School Associations.

• Last year, each school H&S Assoc. sent a representative to talk to the School Board about what they do.  This year, the MCC is looking for other ideas.  For the January School Board Meeting, a representative of SEA (Special Education Alliance) will speak.

• All of the schools are now using Konstella, most of the issues are getting addressed pretty quickly.  The goal is to get more parents registered.

• Konstella members have the opportunity to register for the Amazon Smiles program.  Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.  If parents register through Konstella and select the MCC as their charitable donation, Amazon will give an extra 1%in donations.

• The By-laws for the MCC are under review this year.  Any comments or suggested changes will be discussed at the Nov. 13 meeting and final approval voted on at the December meeting.  Here is a link to the By-laws:  <https://www.methacton.org/Page/16036>

• The treasurer reported that they have received confirmation of status as a 501(c)(3) entity, so donations to H&S are tax deductible.

• There will again be Laser Light Shows at the Arcola planetarium – Dec. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 10th.  This year, each school’s Home & School can agree to take 2 shifts of selling refreshments at the show, and earn ½ of that shift’s proceeds to the light show (no one has to identify what school they’re from for that school to earn money, like they did last year).  Methacton High School Home & School is scheduled for December 9 – “Laser Zeppelin” at 6:30 and “Dark Side of the Moon” at 8:00pm.

* 1. **SEA** – Colleen Kutz, Colleen shared the following talking points from the Special Education Alliance (SEA)

• Our October meeting featured an introduction of Dr. Jamie Gravinese, supervisor of special education at Methacton High School by Dr. Susan Angstadt, director of Pupil Services. Followed by an intense workshop, presented by Kris Koberlein from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) on Transtion Planning at age 14.

• We had 26 attendees representing Methacton and other neighboring school districts.

• Our upcoming November meeting will be held Monday, November 27 from 7-9 in the library at MHS. This month’s meeting topic is an “Ask the Advocates” session featuring: Melissa Bilash, Bonita J. McCabe, Maureen Stankiewicz.

• On December 18, we will feature an “Ask the Attorney” session, featuring Michael Connelly, Esq. from McAndrews Law Offices, P.C. (a flyer will follow after the November meeting with more details about Connelly’s topic.

• Methacton parents can find information about SEA through Konstella (ask to join the SEA Committee) and through the Methacton SEA Facebook page. We appreciate the monthly reminders and support by the H&S boards.

• More to details to follow on our Chick Fil-A spirit week fundraiser in December. Proceeds go to support our SEA scholarships for students with special needs graduating this year. Last year, we kicked off our SEA scholarship program awarding 7 fifty dollar gift certificates.

1. **Questions & Answers**

Colleen Rossi commented that they had a great turnout for Simons Fund, over 200 kids, and they squeezed in the waiting list. Volunteerism was great and appreciated. Those running Simons Fund estimate that about 10% of students checked at such an event will be recommended for further evaluation and a smaller percentage of those will be recommended for further follow up.

1. **Adjournment**

The next Home & School meeting will be held on 12/14/17 at 9:15 a.m. in the High School Library.