

Mary Johnston Public School - School Council - Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Start time: 6:30pm

Location: MJPS Library

In Attendance:

Andrea Labyt

Kara Botelho

Sameera Banduk

Maria Kuznetsova

Mark Hacking

Dianne Lapierre

Samin Shokri

Nadia Deonarine

Sarah Bester

Reza Ramezan (Acting Chairperson)

Korhan Aydin

Melanie Columbus

Adrienne Brown

Principal's Welcome - Marcus Hoare

A successful first week back after winter break; report cards being written now; they will be coming home February 10th. These will be evaluation report cards (as opposed to progress reports). They show where students are in their learning at at this point in the year.

Duffel bag theatre production

Mme. Daley organized this visit and got a Learning Enrichment Opportunity Grant (\$500) - so \$500 will go back into school council account, as it's no longer needed.

Academics support resources

This year, the MJ team has teachers taking on leadership roles for different subjects (ie: math lead teacher, literacy lead, PE lead, etc.). This is back after a few years. It allows for more PD for these leads, they bring their learning back to the whole team to share. New this year is a DECE lead.

Council Matters

Finances - Sarah Bester

- Estimate council will end the year with about \$51,000.
- We are operating on a pretty lean basis right now, pretty similar to last year.
- If we want to start investing in a significant, long-term project, now is the time to plan for that and set money aside.

Discussion regarding funding recommendations and long-term projects:

- Sarah recommends an operating reserve for emergencies - suggests \$15,000.
- That would leave us with about \$36,000
- Consider that chunk of money as a starting amount for large, future projects. Outdoor space and playground were discussed in previous meetings.
- We should vote on a sum of money - open the account with a lump sum. Maybe \$10,000 for outdoor classroom and \$20,000 for playground?
- That would leave surplus of \$6,000
- How much would we want to put into these capital projects every year? How much is reasonable?
- And then, where would that money come from for subsequent years? We don't raise that much each year so there would need to be fundraisers for these projects specifically.
- Is there a minimum amount we should have in our accounts? According to the board, carry-over should be as minimal as possible.

Ballpark costs:

Replacement junior playground - \$80,000-120,000

(usually fundraise with help from community partners, donations, etc. as well - the entire cost would not be covered by council exclusively)

Outdoor space

Min ~\$25,000, Max ~\$75,000-80,000

There is a wide range here and cost would depend on what we want to install. Can be flexible.

Continued discussion on capital projects:

- Marcus suggests choosing one project, not having both on the go at once.
- Note: the junior playground has an expiry of about 2028-2032 (There is a shared cost of teardown during that window)
- Outdoor learning area could be done in a shorter timeframe.
- Projects over \$5,000 need to be tendered, bid on, etc.... Long process. Work with facilities.
- Can we include the school community and ask for student input? Make it a fun MJ project. Ask kids, teachers, etc. what they see for an outdoor space - get them excited.
- We could look at templates, other schools, what they have done, etc. Facilities will know more.
- Marcus suggests building a subcommittee to handle the project. Then also have regular meetings, check ins.
- Ideal to have a budget range. Then ask what we can get for that.
- Once it's done, the board "owns" it. Maintenance, facilities.

- Look up TD outdoor classroom for more ideas/inspiration/cost breakdowns.
- We will choose a name for our fundraising carefully so it can apply to both our big goals: an outdoor learning space and a new playground. Example: Outdoor Education Improvement Fund.
- Goal: focus on one project and get it done as soon as we can, then focus on the next one immediately following.
- Laurelwood and Clair Hills have good spaces, as examples.

Motion: Allocate an operating reserve of \$2500

Moved by: Sarah

Seconded: Reza

Motion carries

- Once we allocate the funds for a big project, the rest is controlled by the board.
- We will make an umbrella term for the account so we can spread it between the two projects. The scope will be wide: make the outdoor space better on school grounds.

Motion: The money we have available for capital projects (~\$35,000-40,000) will be earmarked and saved for an outdoor education improvement fund.

Moved by: Sarah

Seconded: Kara

Motion carries

Sarah and Kara will create the necessary committee for the outdoor improvement projects.

Fundraising Initiative Updates

Pizza

- Collection of funds was different this time around
- Previously, there were hiccups with School Day which led to missed orders
- This round, kids had a hand in submitting orders
- More people ordered pizza this way
- Easier to be inclusive with this payment method

Move-a-thon

- No updates

Literacy Night

- PRO grant - Reza will apply

End of Year

- Booking food trucks
- Creating committees and will seek volunteers

Notable dates

Kindergarten night for incoming kindergarteners will be May 28th.

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 12th.