

Mary Johnston Public School - School Council - Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Start time: 6:45pm

Location: MJPS Library

In Attendance:

Melanie Columbus
Kevin Labyt
Erika Bryant
Jasmine Moffett
Paul Reinheimer
Gillian Delanghe
Jenn Huff
Nick Stamadianos
Sarah Lim
Sameera Banduk
Bill Halford
Sarah Bester

Amy Yardley
Dianne Lapierre
Amy Neilson
Samin Shokri
Ehsan Parvizi
Maria Kuznetsova
Chantel Markle-Perricone
Beatrice Peralta
Vivian Mirani
Brescia Barker
Antonio Ostapova
Roxana Ichim

Salma Rahimi
Samantha Hirsch
MJ Davidson
Nada Basir
Kristen House
Jintana (Lek)
Miriam Altman
Yasmin Shamji
Kara Botelho
Adrienne Brown

Principal: Marcus Hoare

Staff representative: Janice Taylor

Welcome

Bill introduced MJ Council and welcomed everyone. At this meeting, the primary order of business is to elect a new executive team and identify 9-15 voting members for the year ahead.

Council Matters

Elections

Marcus outlined the Council positions for nomination, including their responsibilities.

Candidates for co-chair/chair:

Amy Yardley
Bill Halford
Erika Bryant
Sameera Banduk

Running for treasurer:
Sarah Bester

Running for secretary:
Adrienne Brown

All in attendance voted on chair/co-chair positions by secret ballot.

Sameera Banduk and Erika Bryant elected co-chairs for 2025-2026.
Sarah Bester will serve as treasurer and Adrienne Brown as secretary.

Due to overwhelming interest, a balance of 11 more voting members were selected by random draw from all who were interested. Confirmed voting members for 2025-2026:

1. Paul Reinheimer
2. Dianne Lapierre
3. Nick Stamadianos
4. Gill Delanghe
5. MJ Davidson
6. Beatrice Peralta
7. Melanie Columbus
8. Nada Basir
9. Sammie Hirsch
10. Amy Neilson
11. Kara Botelho

What's on your mind? Open discussion

- Dianne - asking about a running club or coordinating a race for kids (cross-country). Could be a group/club, or just a single run, or could coordinate with another Centennial feeder school to get kids together for a run. Marcus will connect her with a teacher who can be her contact to coordinate that.
- Sameera: Can we do class photos this year? Yes. They will be composites. (Picture Day is October 15 this year)
- Sarah: Grade 6 grad. Maybe at the beginning of the year, we should solidify a grade 6 grad rep who can plan in advance. We have \$600 allocated in the budget for grade 6 grad. Dianne volunteered and had others offer to help, too.
- Nick asked about using a program called School Cash Online. Is it a possibility? Can we share QR codes for donations? Sarah will look into it.
- Will there be a camping trip this year? Marcus: Yes, an overnight trip for grades 5 and 6 is expected.
- No plans to run a kindergarten concert.

Finances - Sarah Bester

- Sarah reported \$39,900 revenue. Total fundraising expenses about \$18,000. We put money towards things like covering buses (\$200 per class), Nutrition for Learning, chicks in the classroom, Worm Wrangler, new gym mats, theatre productions, etc.
- Expenditures of \$29,000 so \$10,000 in positive.
- We have a large sum earmarked (\$45,000) for Outdoor Learning and Activities Fund (OLAF) for our new outdoor learning centre out front of MJ.

Timely fundraiser pitch: Herrle's vegetable box

- Melanie suggested a fundraiser with Herrles, something she has experience with from a previous school. Concept: an early October produce box distributed just before Thanksgiving (including potatoes, apples, squash, onions, garlic, etc.). In her experience, orders were collected through School Day, then on the day of distribution, parent volunteers met at Herrles, brought boxes to school and distributed on site.
- Melanie is happy to take on a coordinating role with Herrles, etc. should we wish to bring this fundraiser to MJ. She estimated the school collects about \$6 per box sold.
- However: Marcus explained the impacts of a possible reorganization year; there may be challenges getting a fundraiser up and running that fast on School Day. Pizza Day fundraising is also on hold for the same reason. (Note: parent representative for pizza volunteers this year is Alanna Hacking. Fees will be collected in cash again.)
- It's hard to make decisions to go forward with fundraisers, etc. before we know if classes will change.

Motion: If reasonable and feasible, we move to go ahead with Herrle's fundraiser. Marcus will confirm either way.

Moved by: Sameera

Seconded: Adrienne

Motion carries

Council agrees if we don't go ahead for 2025, we should consider revisiting in June for 2026.

Parent-run clubs

- MJ Davidson would like to start a group called It's Cool to be Kind for girls JK to grade 3. MJ to email Marcus to discuss.
- Note that parents CAN start clubs and groups, although there are many requirements that need to be met.
- Nada: some parents interested in starting a science club at MJ. She would be interested in getting involved or leading this if possible.

Principal's Welcome - Marcus Hoare

The first week of school has been pretty typical in that it was both smooth and rough.

As per an informal meeting last June, Marcus presented carry-over requests for funding, as follows:

- Lacrosse - no longer happening in fall; will revisit in spring
- Classroom experiences / field trips. In the past, council has covered \$200 per class. Today, we have 15 classes in the school. Request to continue this coverage, but increasing to \$250 per class, with possibility we will increase number of classes in possible reorganization.

Nada noted skewed perception of equity (people thought some inequity in this, ie: some classes do more trips than others, however some teachers chose to bring experiences in). Maybe communicate this out. Experiences and use of funds are up to each individual educator.

Motion: Approve \$250 per classroom for experiences.

Moved by: Sameera

Seconded: MJ

Motion carries

- Worm wrangler for library by Mrs. Shaver. Option 1 at \$423.75 would support Kindergarten up to the 3-4 splits. Option 2 for grades 1 and 3 only: \$254.25.

Motion: Approve \$423.75 for Worm Wrangler Option 1.

Moved by: Paul

Seconded: Melanie

Motion carries

Introduction for future request

- Marcus: everyone please recognize and understand that some things need to shift and change. The next request addresses helping/mitigating/dampening/minimizing off-task behaviours. Kids are savvy. Sometimes they're in situations where learning is not optimized. "Free time" for example, can be tricky, transitions off Chromebooks especially. These transitions cause disruptions to whole learning. Now we will be calling it "Extension Learning", not "free time."
- Maybe Council can help support offering kids other opportunities for their Extension Learning – offline activities that enhance literacy, teach skills, communication, etc.
- Marcus and Janice will bring more details forward at the October meeting. First they will talk to students.
- Expect to vote on a request for funding in October.
- Sarah: can people donate materials? Marcus will provide more information in October.
- Kristen: How much free time has there been? What does that look like? Short answer: too much; unproductive to learning.
- We need to be meeting curriculum markers.

- Samie: How much variety? Marcus: The idea is to offer many options for different interests.

Nutrition Program

- In the past, we have used Nutrition for Learning. We have not re-signed a contract with them.
- We have \$850 in gift cards that have been donated to us in the past.
- We will operate our own nutrition program this year.
- Michelle and Marcus will purchase some lunch bags and use the funds to purchase snacks until about January. They will build lunches.
- What they need: at least one parent from the community to help build lunches for an hour, about once a week.
- Amy Yardley will help package the lunches.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 8, 2025