

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

Start time: 6:45pm

Location: MJPS Library

In Attendance:

Erika Bryant
Adrienne Brown
Sarah Bester
MJ Davidson
Nada Basir
Amy Neilson

Paul Reinheimer
Dianne Lapierre
Kara Botelho
Samie Hirsch
Brescia Barker
Alanna Hacking

Gillian Delanghe
Nick Stamadianos
Beatrice Peralta
Miriam Benarroch-Altman
Ehsan Parvizi

Principal: Marcus Hoare
Staff representative: Janice Taylor

Welcome

Principal's Welcome and Update

- Role of Council and council norms: Marcus shared a document outlining the framework/anchor of what School Council is and stands for.
- The document was created a couple of years ago - it is not exclusive to MJ; rather, it is supported elsewhere within the board.
- SLIP: School Learning and Improvement Plan - everything in the framework fits within SLIP, with support from board. It's a cyclical plan.
- A month in at MJ, and there have been many moments of involvement and excitement to celebrate.

Council Matters

Finances - Sarah Bester

- Sarah shared the proposed budget for this school year.
- Total projected revenues: \$38,000; total projected expenditures: \$36,625. Net income would be about \$4,000, depending on fundraisers and expenses, with carry-over and excess going to Outdoor Learning and Activities Fund (OLAF).
- Main question out of this update: Is that enough surplus? Do we want to earn more for our outdoor learning account?

- Reminder: OLAF is a fund to support any outdoor spending. IE: the new outdoor learning area out front, but also a new playground in future, painting the tarmac, etc.
- Ideally, we are not carrying over too much. We should be raising/spending in the same year, unless putting money away with a specific plan (hence the creation of OLAF). Larger sums should be earmarked for specific projects.

Fundraising planning

- Pizza: Oct 17 will be the first pizza day. Alanna is looking for Friday volunteers to hand out pizza.
- Erika suggested a new poinsettia fundraiser for late November /early December. Adrienne and Amy will organize.

Motion: Proceed with planning and executing poinsettia fundraiser.

Moved by: Paul

Seconded: Kara

Motion carries.

- New fundraiser idea: Paul suggests a Wonderbly Books fundraiser. He will research and bring details to next meeting.
- New idea from Nick: Beechwood 50/50; there will have to be some serious investigation to see if this is allowed in our board, etc. Nick will also bring his findings to the next meeting.

Event planning

- Move-a-thon - November 2025: Kara proposes a beach party theme for this year. Needs a little more help from parents to get them involved, maybe for games. Is there something we can give to each kid for the dance? Ie: Leis to go with beach theme. Date set for Wednesday, November 26th.
- Line added to budget to allow Kara to spend up to \$500 for move-a-thon supplies.
- Art Night - February 2026; will be a staff-run event.
- Literacy Night and/or STEM fair - we need to choose one theme or another. Will be set for April 2026.

Motion: run a STEM fair this year instead of a Literacy Night.

Moved by Nada

Seconded by Sarah

Motion carries.

- Year-end event and raffle - June 2026. Suggestion to change from a movie to a foam party. Tentative date: June 11th, 2026. To be discussed at next meeting. (Would be a larger expense)

Further discussions - Marcus Hoare

Update on revised school nutrition program

- Lunch bags have been acquired. Discreet styles.
- MJ is now using the Way Forward Program: a smaller version of Nutrition for Learning. Way Forward is free. Marcus puts in an order as needed and food is delivered.
- MJ still has \$850 worth of gift cards to spend on additional food; aiming for shelf stable, nutritional, etc.
- Lunches and snacks/supplements are being distributed successfully already.
- We are exploring the possibility of approaching local businesses for donations, too.

Update on outdoor classroom (OLAF)

- Project is out for tendering - package with all our ideas is out.
- Facilities team has visited the site; next there will be bids submitted for project.
- We will break ground this school year.
- Current proposal includes writing surface, seating, deck, gazebo, stone seating, mulch.
- Space will be big enough to accommodate presentations, music, etc. - performances.

Learning extension classroom bins

- Request for financial support in budget (to be approved at end of meeting).
- Marcus gathered suggestions and ideas for materials: science, math, communication type activities and tools.
- Ask: \$1500 total.

Dr. Allison Yeung Presentation

- Doctor in Waterloo Region. Smart Phone Effect presentations. This would be a presentation for adults.
- Content: general mental health trends among children, research and data between mental health and smartphone use, approach for parents and educators, screen tips, Q&A.
- Cost: \$700 + travel. Asking maximum \$850 for 1-hour presentation. Would be in the gym for caregivers.

Grade 5-6 trip

- Every other year the grades 5 and 6 leave campus for a trip; often overnight.
- Mr. Howard asked for opportunity for more parent and caregiver volunteerism: for organization and also to go on the trip. Reasonings: breakdown this year means it's tough to meet the ratios for teachers in class and on trip at the same time.
- Ask: support and partnership.
- Final decision is up to superintendent. But goal is to seek out an overnight camp like two years ago.

Vote on current budget

Motion: to approve 2025-2026 budget as presented this evening.

Moved by: Kara

Seconded: MJ

Motion carries.

Motion: approve funding for Dr. Allison Yeung presentation.

Moved by: MJ

Seconded: Sarah

Motion carries.

What is on your mind?

- Paul: could we do a parent/teacher night the day after report cards? Marcus: no, I cannot ask staff to be here on a specific night for that. The board is moving away from that. However, parents can reach out to teachers individually with their questions and/or to set up private meetings or calls.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 2025