

Mary Johnston Public School - School Council - Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Start time: 6:30 pm

Location: MJPS Sensory Room

Erika Bryant
Adrienne Brown
Sarah Bester
Sameera Banduk
Nada Basir
Yasmin Shamji

Paul Reinheimer
Dianne Lapierre
Kara Botelho
Miriam Benarroch-Altman
Leah Thomas
Masha Kuznetsova

Gillian Delanghe
Alanna Hacking
Beatrice Peralta
Kevin Labyt
Samantha Hirsch

Principal: Marcus Hoare (virtual)
Staff representative: Janice Taylor

Welcome

Highlights since returning from winter break:

- Mr H has met with someone from a micro forest company; we have the opportunity to have a micro forest - 500m sq flat space that's a no-mow zone, densely packed forest, variety of trees. No cost or work for MJ. We would need a team for maintaining the trees for about a year. Shouldn't be an issue. Perhaps this could be blended in with our outdoor learning space. Could also do 250m sq out front, 250 out back, as an option. Planting time possible for October.
- Mme McManus is running the annual Family Day Food Drive from Monday Feb 9th - Fri Feb 13th. Her class will take it on. Communication to whole school coming.
- February 4th is Winter Walk Day. We need to register MJ and then we get entered to win a prize for participating; students can also register and participate for prizes. Marcus could use a volunteer to help with that.
- Term 1 report cards are in the works. Will be sent home mid February.

Council Matters

Pizza update - Alanna

- Everything going smoothly; just two volunteer spots to fill between now and March Break.

Spirit Wear - Leah

- Easy to set up; using the same company as before.
- Janice: Perhaps we can tie it in to the art night so we can have samples available for people to see sizes, etc. – maybe even order on site.
- What about a used pass-it-on MJ Spirit Wear as well; run it at the same time, sharing things that are too small. OR consider doing that at the end of the school year at the end of year event.
- For new items next school year, we will plan to set orders up in September so people have Spirit Wear for the whole school year. Possibly add to May agenda.

Helping other families

- Sameera: What about a toy drive? Think in terms of coat drive - maybe have donations, people can pick toys, swap items, share unused toys and pass them on.

Art Night

- Thursday, March 5th
- There is a staff committee collecting data from all classes.
- Goal: every class will contribute an art piece, a performance, some type of art component as a class (or classes combined) and have those items put on display and there is an opportunity for a raffle to occur, for art pieces to be raffled off.
- Money collected will be used to help students in need at MJ; maybe to help offset costs for field trips, provide needed items, etc.
- The staff wondered if there were community members who could contribute. Maybe local musicians?
- Mme Daley is taking on the choir. It will perform on the art night.
- Makerspace for families to create something night-of.
- From council, they're asking - 1: some funds for paint, canvas, art supplies for classes; 2: volunteers to run rooms/stations or to perform.

PRO Grant - Sameera

- Approved for \$500 to put towards STEM fair

STEM Fair - Nada

- Need to create a committee, about 3 people to help with planning.
- Date finalized for Wed April 15th.
- We can send out a call for volunteers on School Day and/or in Sameera's new update newsletter.
- Students can pick any science project/subject they want to investigate. They will be provided a board to help present their research, etc. – this is to be completed at home.
- Dianne: is this something that could be prepared so kids can present during the school day as well? So classes can circulate and kids can see all the projects.
- Janice: maybe the family night to present is before; following day is presented during school hours.

- Plan: set up on 15th, then doors open to show community, then leave set up for other students for next day. Tear down at end of day on the 16th.
- Open to all grades.
- Maybe some committee members could volunteer some lunchtimes to help kids who may not have the opportunity to work on projects at home. Facilitate a safe space to work on their projects at MJ and provide some materials.
- There will be an information assembly at school to inform students what it's all about.
- Projects would also be good tasks for in class when students are finished with their work. (Instead of "free time").
- No additional funds needed.

Grade 5-6 year-end trip

- Location selected: Hidden Acres
- Now we need approval from the Superintendent before going forward.

Year-End Event

- What does the event look like this year?
- A foam party would cost \$1130 if we wanted to go ahead with it. So the question is prioritizing fundraising vs foam party.
- Opportunity for bonus fundraising: raise X number of dollars, Mr. H. goes into the foam party, etc. Add a donation box for extra money.
- Pie in the face - pay to pie.
- Once we decide on budget, Adrienne and Erika will book food trucks, activities, etc.
- Raffle baskets: Kara, Sarah and Alanna will spearhead the raffle baskets this year.

Finances - Sarah Bester

- Move-a-thon - last year we raised about \$2000, this year only about \$600.
- Poinsettias raised about \$800.
- Overall: we make about \$6000 revenue at the end of the year.
- Keep in mind how much we're making, how much surplus we have at end of the year (less this year so far than projected).

OLAF

- Do we have an amount we'd like to add each year? What's our goal?
- So far there is a budget submitted to facilities for the project.
- The Superintendent visited on Monday.
- Now we are waiting for contractors to come back with plans.
- Facilities will also have some funds to contribute for construction, safety measures, etc. (from government grants)

Motion: Approve \$1500 for the budget for the 2026 year end event (to cover foam party and other expenses)

Moved by: Paul

Seconded by: Sameera
Motion passed.

Grade 6 graduation - Dianne

- School-sanctioned festivities. Will confirm some ideas by next meeting.
- \$600 budget allocated

Further Discussions

Active Transportation Committee - Paul

- Paul has formed an Active Transportation committee. He's looking for more volunteers.
- Paul emailed the City Councillor about a new path so kids don't have to cross through parking lot. Waiting for a response.
- Other ideas, such as covered bike racks, to be discussed at future meeting.

Art Committee - Paul

- Still exploring bringing an artist in to paint interactive art around the school. Paul will be visiting another school with lots of art to get a feel for what they have done.

New Student info group - Paul

- Still looking for feedback on his email from December
- Goal: intro email for new families / students
- Maybe make a video of what a day at school in kindergarten looks like, starring Mr. H. as the kindergartner.

Kindergarten Info Night

- Will become kindie day this year. Opening kindie wing/classrooms during the day for people to visit. Biggest benefit: the optics of what it actually looks like during the day. Date TBD, end of May.

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 11, 2026