

J. R. Masterman School Advisory Council - Meeting Minutes

March 17th, 2015, 4:50 - 5:55 PM

Attendees:

Jessica Brown	III.B.1 (Principal)	
Louis Borda	III.B.2 (PFT Building Rep)	
Tara Hayden	III.B.3 (HSA Representative)	
Alex Kwok	III.B.4 (HS SGA President)	
Alfredo Pratico	III.B.4 (MS SGA President)	
Kim Neu	III.B.6 (Department Head)	
Bernadette Kearney	III.B.7 (Teacher)	Not Present
April Claytor	III.C.2 (Teacher)	
Carolyn Gray	III.C.2 (Teacher)	Not Present
Mike Neights	III.C.2 (Teacher)	
Jane Monaghan	III.C.2 (Teacher)	Not Present
Steve Gallagher	III.C.2 (Teacher)	
Joanne Donahue	III.C.2 (Teacher)	
Nicole Geiger	III.C.2 (Teacher)	
Todd O'Neill	III.C.2 (Teacher)	Not Present
Andrea Appel	III.C.1 (Parent)	
Alison McDowell	III.C.1 (Parent)	
Anndee Hochman	III.C.1 (Parent)	Not Present
Mathew Whitehorn	III.C.1 (Parent)	
Meg Wise	III.C.1 (Parent)	
Sam Garst	III.C.1 (Parent)	
Bridget McFadden	III.C.1 (Parent Alternate)	
Yvonne Lee Clayton	III.C.1 (Parent Alternate)	
Ranim Albarkawi	MS SGA Vice President	
Robert Sim	HS SGA Treasurer	Not Present

- 1) Meeting opened at 4:50 PM.
- 2) Minutes of our January 20th meeting minutes was approved (with minor edits) by Ms. McDowell, seconded by Ms. Wise. The February 17th meeting was canceled due to incimate weather.
- 3) Ms. Brown gave a brief principal update
 - a) "Ryan's Story", a presentation on bullying was held for students on March 16th; the presentation was very powerful and engaging. Unfortunately, an evening presentation for parents/caregivers was canceled. It may be rescheduled for a future date, pending the presenters availability.
 - b) Interim grade reports have been sent.
 - c) We are waiting for the delivery of two more sets of laptop computers (chromebooks). The goal is for each department to have a laptop cart, in addition to each lab.
 - d) Two Masterman teachers were nominated for the 2014-15 Lindback Award for Distinguished High School Teachers: Ms. Elizabeth Taylor and Ms. Kim Neu.
 - e) The Masterman Auction fundraiser is this Saturday, March 21st.
 - f) According the the School District, spring break will not be shortened to make up for the school closures. Spring break is April 1st - 3rd.
 - g) Mr. Garst inquired about the middle and high school selection process. Ms. Brown reported that the process seemed to work well, and that all parents were notified online. Ms. Neu expressed concern about the number of Masterman 8th graders who were accepted but choose not to come to Masterman. A discussion ensued about factors that may negatively impact acceptance. Some factors mentioned by parents, teachers and students: Lack of options or additional courses, lack of sports, parents urging their kids to go their alma mater

(legacies to Central, for example), the state of Masterman's physical building, the overall social size of Masterman high school, the ability to "reinvent" yourself by attending a new school, and Masterman high school perceived as more welcoming of females than males. Ms. Brown was not sure that fewer students have accepted compared to previous years, but she will investigate.

- 4) Ms. Brown presented Masterman's budget for the 2015-16 school year
 - a) Ms. Brown just received the budget information yesterday; she must submit her budget back to the school district in about a week.
 - b) The budget allocates an additional teacher to Masterman. Ms. Brown led a discussion about what kind of teacher to hire (which subject matter), focusing on two factors: the overall vision for what kind of school Masterman is, and rostering constraints. She proposed hiring an additional science teacher for 7-8th grade, noting that such a teacher would free up resources for other grades and subject matters. In particular, such a teacher could enable Masterman to offer more optional courses.
 - c) Several parents and students suggesting hiring a new teacher that would enable restoring courses that Masterman used to offer, or would enhance the existing curriculum. For example:
 - i) ABC gifted courses, which would allow middle school students to sign up for a revolving one-term long courses.
 - ii) 7th grade language courses, which allowed 7th grade students to "try" both Spanish and French for half a year, before deciding on a foreign language in 8th grade.
 - iii) Restore some of the elective classes for high school students, as they are now only offered electives in 12th grade.
 - iv) Restore Latin, which was popular and valuable for language acquisition.
 - v) More creative or fun course offerings, similar to ABC courses, that promote well-rounded students.
 - d) In discussing the long term vision for Masterman, Ms. Brown mentioned the need to embrace digital technology, particularly in the arts and story telling. Ms. Hayden suggested a strategic planning exercise to help inform a long term vision. Ms. McDowell observed that Masterman is really two schools- a middle and a high school, which complicates the development of a vision.
 - e) There is a chance that additional money will be allocated during the summer. Ms. Brown will likely move that money to the books and supplies budget.
 - f) Ms. Brown also mentioned that the book and supply budget is much smaller than previous years. This is used, in part, to pay for support personnel and counselors.
- 5) Mr. Kwok provided an update on high school student government:
 - a) Pre-Spirit week is in full swing. Spirit week is next week, with less emphasis on competitions.
 - b) Elections are to be held May 18th-22nd.
 - c) Ms. Taylor arranged for the CFO of the school district to come and present to the high school.
- 6) Mr. Pratico gave a brief update on middle school student government
 - a) Pennies for Leukemia has been successful to date; the goal is to raise \$4K (\$3.5K last year).
 - b) Spirit week is planned for June, to be held on the roof. 5+6 Carnival is being planned now.
 - c) Pretzel sales continue to do well, consistently selling out (175 pretzels/week).
- 7) Ms. Hayden encouraged all parents to attend the Masterman Auction, this weekend.
- 8) Ms. Neu gave an update on Middle State Accreditation
 - a) A Middle States representative agreed to give Masterman some flexibility. Instead of focusing exclusively on grit and resilience, the committee is going to embrace the very successful mentoring and collaborative work between the high school and middle school students.
- 9) Meeting adjourned 5:55 PM.