



**MYSTIC VALLEY REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL
PTO GENERAL BODY MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING NOTES
September 30, 2019**

PTO Leadership Team Members

IN ATTENDANCE:

President: Heidi Barraza
Vice President: Julia Pilleri
Treasurer: Julia Pilleri
Secretary/Clerk: Andrea Antonucci
Marketing & Communication: Suanna Crowley
Student Activities Representatives: Leslie Winslow-Keats and Pamela Manrique
Teacher Representatives: Peggy Kerans and Estella Bu

MEETING LOCATION: 729 Salem Street, Malden – Basement PTO Room

OPENING: 7:00 p.m. Number of attendees: Members of the Leadership Team with a quorum present.

Ms. Barraza introduced the meeting and members of the PTO. She described the mission, purpose and structure of the PTO meetings. Ms. Barraza noted the intended structure of the meeting to focus on the Mystic Valley community's stakeholders including silos to address parents, teachers, fundraising and students. The PTO meetings, which are held monthly, serve as working sessions to advance the work of each silo with the goal to maximize community involvement. Mr. Dan spoke and introduced an org chart that specifies to whom any concerns with the school, both academic and administrative, should be addressed.

Treasurer's Report and Financial Matters

Ms. Pilleri reviewed the Treasurer's role and the PTO's current financial standing. She discussed the success of the back to school carnival. Last year we had our biggest response yet to the Annual Appeal. We hope to have similar results to last year. We are rolling out different enrichment programs. We have preliminary budget and a plan. Ms. Pilleri also emphasized that our books are open, and anyone can ask questions. Every invoice and bank statement is available. Two people on the board must sign every check. The budget documents are available electronically for anyone who wishes to examine them.

Marketing and Communications Report

Ms. Crowley reported on the monthly newsletter and Facebook posts, noting about 500 followers. She also noted that we are a few weeks away from debuting our new website which will function as our new communication portal rather than relying on Facebook posts and newsletters. We will now be able to communicate continuously as well as update our communications as needed, when needed. This will improve access to information about events as well as ticket purchases for those events; it will add coherence to our PTO community.

Ms. Crowley will announce volunteer opportunities throughout the year as they arise; these can be structured to make use of whatever time a volunteer can give. All efforts are greatly appreciated and will be well utilized. The plan is to give two weeks of notice, although it may be less depending on circumstances.

Reporting of the Silos

Teacher

Ms. Kerans and Ms. Bu discussed the many staff appreciation projects that are executed throughout the year, including creating welcome baskets for not only the teachers new to the school but for all returning teachers, for the first time. Other projects throughout the academic year will include themed gifts, for example, Valentine's Day; birthdays, births, and the like. Ms. Kerans explained that the biggest project of the year is the staff appreciation luncheon held in June. Many volunteers will be needed at that time for numerous tasks. She also mentioned that Ms. Vaudo, MVRCS teacher, has great ideas that she has been executing on her own. These include things that help the students feel prepared for MCAS testing, like lucky pennies, crowns, and water bottles. She does all this at home with her children as helpers. The PTO hopes to work with her to continue and expand upon these. In order to keep up with all the different projects, the budget for this silo has been increased from \$5000.00 annually to \$6500.00.

Parent

The PTO is currently seeking a parent representative for the Leadership Team. The Parent Representative helps to support MVRCS parents and build community. That person is not responsible for doing everything but will help find and coordinate other parents who can donate some of their time. As often mentioned, anything people can offer is greatly appreciated and can be utilized. (How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!) One responsibility is to take the lead on planning parent socials at an establishment in one of the communities we serve. (For example, last year, three of these were held. One was at John Brewer's Tavern; one was at Down the Road Brewery. The Parent Rep reserved tables and Ms. Crowley set up tickets through Eventbrite.) It is an effective way for our MV parents to get to know each other.

After many years of trying, we are launching a Parent Speaker Series. We will have three speakers this academic year, drawn from the senior teaching staff. The first is scheduled for November and is an evening with Jonathan Keating, who will discuss Mystic Valley's International Baccalaureate Program. Excellent suggestions were made about how to provide access to these to parents unable to attend; these will be further explored prior to the event(s). The subsequent events will be in winter and in spring.

What used to be the Halloween pasta dinner has evolved into the Fall Festival. Students in K-6 can wear costumes, there will be fun activities, like bobbing for apples, donut on a string, mummy wrap, freeze dance, bake sale, and a book swap. Volunteer-wise this is structured similarly to the Carnival. It is an excellent volunteer opportunity for students in 7th through 12th grades. Student volunteers are coordinated through Mrs. Stone. For perspective, note that the Carnival had 65 volunteers, 35 of whom were students, with 170 hours put in just for that day. We seek a parent volunteer to oversee this. We will provide a framework and all the resources. It is a great way to connect with the administration, faculty, and facilities personnel.

Our Back-to-School Carnival was a great success, especially as it was a pilot program. We have gathered a lot of feedback from parents and administration, through discussion and a survey that Ms. Crowley sent out to attendees. We are excited to put this to use for next year's Carnival.

Our next parent event will straddle both the Parent and Fundraising Silos. The idea: a Parent's Prom. Once again there were excellent suggestions from the attendees regarding what we might include, how to market the event and make it truly inclusive for the entire MVRCS community.

Student

Ms. Keats and Ms. Manrique discussed their ideas for this silo. This year is the first we have been able to provide student enrichment programs both after school (like the chess program that just launched). We will also continue with offerings for programs on the monthly half days. While we do have a lineup in place for this academic year, we can always use more support not only during the year but also for the programs to be included in our proposal for next year. This would include brainstorming and researching programs. If a particular topic speaks to you, or you are involved in a certain field that you are excited to share with students, this is a great way to get involved. This is a very important part of what we do, and indeed is what we promised to do with the money from the Around the World program. Feedback from attendees included suggestions about how to make registration for the programs more available for parents who cannot access email and Internet at will during the workday. Having the website up and running will make notice much more available, including making the schedule for the entire academic year accessible. That way parents can plan in advance for the half days including childcare; in addition this portal will centralize ticket sales and information/updates.

Fundraising

The Fly Like an Eagle 5k is scheduled for Sunday, October 6. All the proceeds from this go to subsidize the 8th grader trip to Washington DC. The PTO is building a MVRCS family-owned business sponsorship program. This would help provide funds for the student trip as well as exposure for our local, family-owned businesses.

Box Tops for Education has changed to a digital program. This will make it a great deal easier to participate and we hope to leverage it to its greatest extent.

The Annual Appeal will begin soon and run through November. It solicits direct contributions for general fundraising, which includes operating funds, events, and scholarships. Ms. Crowley does this all (utilizing her daughter and friends, now in 9th grade, to lick and staple), including creating the tax letter that she sends out which also explaining our 501(c)(3) status. She hopes to have a general forum on our website as well.

Open Forum

Because all discussion took place as each subject was introduced there was nothing further.

Our next meeting will be on October 28, 2019. We will be hosting a textbook swap prior to the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Note: These notes are considered the (un)official “Minutes of Meeting Notes” for the Mystic Valley Regional Charter School PTO and not those of the PTO Secretary’s personal notes.