

MVMS Parent Council 2021-2022

Meeting 4 Minutes – December 10, 2021

- Principal Toth
- Chair and 8th grade: Kelly Gillard
- 8th grade: Julie Maurer
- 7th grade: Tiffany Jurist Baus
- 7th grade: Tricia Gay
- 6th grade: TBD
- 6th grade: Vidoushi Curtil
- 5th grade: Sarah Quinn Clausen
- Co-chair and 5th grade: Aparna Largman

Discussion Topics:

- I. Parent-teacher conference feedback – 10min not enough, teachers reading on behalf of other teachers, opportunities for a more meaningful exchange and Q&A or else reset parent expectations about the intent of the conference, etc.
- II. Other – Communication with Pomptonian
- III. Other – Consistent entrée portions
- IV. Other – Google Classroom summary's format
- V. Other – Suspend student/teacher accounts for winter break

Welcome–

- Later today in the Weekly Update, Mrs. Toth will include a note about the opportunity to fill the vacant 6th grade PC representative spot. Interested parents can reach out to Kelly and a random selection will occur from that pool. No deadline will be included (for now) and we'll be mindful of the eligibility criteria for service.
 - Cannot have served on PC last year
- Pomptonian will allow students to use their Pay For It accounts as an alternative to cash, if they'd like.
 - For the students eating in the gym (G5/8), names will taken and entered after the end of the lunch period. Again, cash still welcome. The lunch forms have been updated accordingly.
 - Parents will be notified via email near the end of the marking period if balances are over \$10. Carried balances need to be resolved in order to access report cards.
 - NEW: \$25 limit for charges (previously no limit)
 - Mrs. Toth shared concerns raised in the last PC meeting with the Business Administrator. Questions and issues welcome – we'll pass them along!
- Our new Related Arts courses were featured in December's Mendham Neighbors magazine.

- Yesterday, our Music teachers sent out information to Band, Chorus and Orchestra students about the upcoming Winter Concert, scheduled for January 27th. We're delighted to bring this back! As we get closer, we'll distribute more information and post reminders in the Weekly Updates. The format will be "mini-concerts" to offer a staggered approach; parents come in to watch their child and then leave to allow the next group to arrive. This is a dynamic situation due to COVID, so we'll adjust, if needed.
- The Mendham Women's Club has offered the 5th grade spelling bee again. They screened the students and have identified our MVMS representatives and alternates for the next round in January.
- We have some field trips planned and are also bringing back Workshop on the Arts (for selected G7/8 graders only) as offered through New Jersey's Consortium for Gifted and Talented Programming.
 - The Workshop will be held at the Morris Museum in January and spotlights talent in music, performing arts, vocal music, visual arts, etc.
 - Collaboration with students from other districts around northern NJ in a two day workshop which culminates in a performance.
 - Mr. McMurray is planning the district Chorus trip to Central HS for a collaborative event and performance.
- Question from parent – what about the GeoBee?
 - We didn't do it two years ago, and we have since received a notification that it has since been discontinued. We have, however, received information on a different opportunity and Mrs. Toth has passed it along for consideration. She'll let us know if we choose to participate.
- [The 2022-2023 calendar needs an update to correct the entry for NJEA – it is currently shown on the wrong week.](#) Mrs. Juliano has been advised via email.

- I. Parent-teacher conference feedback – 10min not enough, teachers reading on behalf of other teachers, opportunities for a more meaningful exchange and Q&A or else reset parent expectations about the intent of the conference, etc.
 - a. Background: In the past, face-to-face meetings allowed us to ask questions and get some meaningful feedback. This year's virtual format did not allow for that; additionally, it left the impression that some notes were being read – wouldn't an email have had the same effect? Is there any way to create a more meaningful session?
 - b. A few years ago, the PC explored options on the conferences (i.e., should students participate as they do in some other districts?). Some parents felt that emails would work well in cases where no issues were raised, so the option was added to offer email in lieu of a conference; our experience has been positive.
 - c. Our challenge is that expansion of the conference session durations and/or expansion to include all four teachers in the sessions would result in a reduction in the number of sessions available to parents.
 - d. [It may help to raise awareness that the four teachers are available during team planning four days per week \(three days guaranteed\) for parent conferences which require more time.](#)
 - i. Parents are welcome to request a meeting during the school day's team meeting time.
 - ii. If a team has a concern, they proactively move into the team meeting windows to allow for more discussion time while also freeing up one of the more limited parent-teacher conference windows.

- e. Mrs. Toth ran through some scenarios to demonstrate how little room there is for adjustment to the conference durations/attendees relative to the total time available, but again, parents are welcome to continue discussions outside the parent-teacher conference window and within the team planning blocks instead.
 - i. There may come a point when (depending on class size) the number of available parent-teacher conference slots falls short of our needs.
 - f. It may help to manage expectations of the parent-teacher conference ten-minute format. Parents need to know what to expect, and they need to know how to go about accomplishing the level of communication they seek.
 - g. It was interesting to observe how well the virtual conferences remained on schedule vs. the face-to-face conferences.
 - h. If circumstances change, we'll be happy to revisit this setup.
- II. Other
- a. Background: Is Mrs. Toth the lone liaison with Pomptonian?
 - b. Our Business Administrator is the point of contact with Pomptonian, so communication runs from Mrs. Toth through our BA to Pomptonian. Principals are not involved in the day-to-day interactions but attend some meetings, as needed. We have not experienced such issues in the past, but we do have a means of communicating our needs.
 - c. Would parents be eligible to help? Mrs. Toth may check into it and the context in which it may be possible. After the payment issues smooth out, things may hopefully quiet down.
- III. Other:
- a. Background: There is an occasional inconsistency in the quantity of items in an entrée portion in the gym. For example, the marinara sticks varied as three for some students vs four for others. Can we find a way to standardize this?
 - b. Mrs. Toth will pass this along to the BA.
- IV. Other:
- a. Background: The Google Classroom summary looks different from what was used last year. Last year, missing work was easily identifiable; this year's 7th grade view seems more focused on upcoming work and doesn't seem to point out missing work. Did the format change overall, or does the format vary from grade to grade?
 - b. A parent mentioned the missing work appears on her 5th grader's view.
 - c. The Google Classroom Guardian summaries are basically a read-only of what the teacher is inputting. If a teacher is not using Google Classroom for assignments, you won't be able to view them in the summary. Workbook assignments, for example, are not submitted through Classroom and so you won't see them. Hard copy assignments are another example of work products which may not be the best fit for submission (and tracking) through Classroom.
 - d. Assignments and their respective statuses are viewable Genesis
- V. Other:
- a. Background: Last year, we started suspending student accounts over winter break; it is a time to enjoy and relax.
 - b. Mrs. Toth will share this just before winter break and include information on when the accounts will be back up and running. The suspension applies to student accounts only.

Next meeting Friday, January 14, 2022