

MHS Home & School Association
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021 – 7:00pm Library and Zoom

In Attendance:

Dr. Gravinese	Cindy Hartson	Marie Kramer	Sophia Pham
Mercy Varghese	Diane Coppola	Ramon delaRosa	Mimi Hudachek
Jenna Bender	Deanna Roeger	Sonya Kapour	Susan deMedio
Katie Shireman	Tara Maurer	Sandy Katz	Michelle Greenawalt
Michelle Petko	Lisa Deal	Gabby Winters	Chrissy Kronmiller
Michele Kasper	Semira Perdue		

Welcome – Introductions

MHS Staff Reports

Principal – Dr. Jamie Gravinese reported:

- So much to share. The list we initially put together of events and timelines for the year is subject to change due to many things – availability, covid – the list is not cemented in stone.
- Homecoming, a heads up for where we are - respective classes are making spirit day decisions for the week of Homecoming, 9/20 – 9/24. Spirit Week info will be out next week (9/13 – 9/17). The dance is set for Wednesday night. We realize this is unusual, we wanted it for Saturday but with having to go outside for the venue, our scope was limited. Elmwood Zoo had a wedding on Saturday.
 - Dance details – there will be a dance floor, DJ, carousel, food trucks, and the whose zoo is ours. It will be semi-formal dress but we're asking students to wear sneakers.. There will be something else to do besides dancing. The venue is close by,
 - Dr. Spiewak is shifting around other sporting games so as not to conflict with dance.
 - We will have a Pep Rally on Friday, weather permitting, during 7th period, and the football game Friday night, but we will be celebrating all sports. There will be food trucks available before the game, and game is at 7:00.
 - Lunch – students have lunch now in 3 different spaces: cafeteria, girls' gym and the commons. Last week lunches were by grade. 9/8 was the first day in real lunches with students from all 4 grades there. Students will be picking their tables 9/10. The reason for chosen/assigned tables is to try to register where they are for contact tracing if we have to. Lunch is the only place they're not masked. We try to keep them 6 feet apart.
 - Traffic pattern change for dropping students off/picking them up – it has worked well so far. We now have cars approaching only from Mill Road and not turning left into school off Kriebel Mill at all.
 - There have been some bus changes with roads being closed from the storm. When roads re-open, buses will change again. We will be looking for the most efficient routes.
 - Back to school nights will be 9/14 for 9th and 10th and 9/20 for 11th and 12th. Parents can park where they like. If parents can't make it, teachers are going to post the presentations. It starts at 7:00 and goes until 9:00. There was a sample schedule in the last High School Happenings. Parents will have 9 minutes passing time between the classes. Students have 6 minutes.
 - There is no school next Thursday 9/16.

- The AP exam ordering window opens 9/30. If students plan to take the AP exam that goes with their course(s), they can start ordering on 9/30.
- Benchmark testing will take place 3 times this year. In October, then in winter and spring. Algebra 1, English, environmental science and biology will be tested at different times of the three testing times, and we are waiting to hear about chemistry as well.
- On October 1, students will take a survey in homeroom for Strategic Planning, giving every student a voice in the process.
- Parent question: Are parent volunteers needed? Dr. Gravinese will ask.
- Parent question (Gabby) will there be something for Juniors and Seniors beforehand? Not sure but we are trying to see if they could go early to have some extra time at Elmwood. No final answer yet.
- Parent question/comment (Lisa Deal) – Football parents, organizing food trucks and tailgating. Suggestion is to talk to Paul Spiewak. There will be morning announcements about Friday night.
- Homecoming Court was discussed – two court members from each grade, and will be announced at the game. This is handled by student council.
- Marie discussed Konstella and Warrior News, also invited parents to send H&S announcements. Marie also revises year-at-a-glance pretty regularly on Home & School page of website, as things change.

Teachers – Cara Woudenberg provided the following report:

- **From the Yearbook Staff:** Yearbook “Baby Ads” Class of 2022: This message is for all parents and guardians of members of the Class of 2022: Continuing a 31 year tradition, the staff of the Methacton High School Yearbook (The Methactonian), is offering parents of graduating Seniors the opportunity to purchase a “baby ad” for publication in this year’s book. Space is provided for a baby photo and a personal message of well wishes and congratulatory statements of 50 words or less. Baby ads are only offered online. This classic section is a favorite for all. Please contact Caitlin Ferenchak (cferenchak@methacton.org) or Chris Lloyd (clloyd@methacton.org) if you have any questions.
- **From the English Department:** There is a recorded audio version (done by teacher, Jodie Pitt) of the summer reading book *Just Mercy*, with Chapter 1 available at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtY82TrWaTQ>
- **From the Business Curriculum Department:** A new course “Incubator.edu Entrepreneurship” needs volunteers to help the students start a business. There are two different volunteers needed, coaches and mentors, see description below. If you or someone you know would like to help, please reach out to Melissa Gorla or Mike Urbassik at mgorla@methacton.org or murbassik@methacton.org.
VOLUNTEER ROLES: COACH (teach 1 lesson or more a year); 16 coaches • 8 coached lessons per semester. As a Coach, your role is to work with students in their class to help them learn the material you present through lectures and activities. You will choose the lesson that aligns with your area of business expertise, e.g., marketing, finance, sales. INCubatoredu provides complete lessons with presentations, student activities, and curated resources to you. If you wish, you may replace the professional examples used in the lesson with your experiences. However, we ask you to use the lesson’s content. The student teams need to work disciplined, starting with finding a problem to solve at the beginning of the academic year to investor pitch at the end of the year. Work closely with your teacher to ensure you have access to the materials needed for the days you are in class. MENTOR (1 time a month); Sept-May (max would be 10). One mentor per team • approx. five teams per section (2 classes). As a mentor, your role is to facilitate learning, which is different from directly teaching. Students will look to you for answers, but they need help finding the solutions themselves. In general, mentors will meet with their student teams once a month for at least an hour. The energy and effort will increase before key milestones such as the

Minimum Viable Product Pitch near the academic year's mid-point and at the year's end for Investor Pitch.

Counseling – Cindy Hartson reported:

- **2021-2022 MHS Counseling Programs for Parents:** Advanced Registration for these events are through the high school online calendar.
- **Senior Parent Night for Post-Secondary Planning:** Monday, September 13, 2021, MHS Auditorium, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Senior parents are invited to learn about the post-secondary planning process, whether your child is planning to enter the military, the world of work, taking a gap year, attending a technical career school, or college. Information about each of these areas will be covered with the majority of the time being spent on the college application process, the student side of Naviance, letters of recommendation, campus visits, the Common Application and searching for scholarships.
- **Financial Aid Night:** Date TBA, MHS Auditorium, 7:00 -9:00 p.m. This annual event will cover information regarding the Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA) and the CSS profile. Topics will include how to set up your student and parent accounts, an overview of various financial aid scenarios using sample schools, discussion about the awards letter and more. A representative from a local college/university will be our presenter.
- **FAFSA Completion Night:** Wednesday, October 27, 2021, MHS Library, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Cindy Whitley from the Financial Aid office at MCCC will be available to assist you in getting started with the financial aid process, or help finishing up. Later this summer, we will have a link on the calendar to sign up for the event. We will limit the program to the first twenty-five people who sign up. This will be an “in-person” event as we had done two years ago.
- **PSAT Results and Post-Secondary Planning for Parents of Underclassmen:** Thursday, February 10, 2022, MHS Auditorium, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. This program will assist parents with an understanding of their child's PSAT results, free resources for test preparation, the college and scholarship search process, and more! It is recommended that parents view their child's PSAT scores through their child's College Board account prior to this event. Snow date for this event will be Tuesday, February 15, 2022.
- **College Representative Visits:** Ongoing at MHS. Students can converse with college representatives. These used to be in person, representatives would speak and then hold a Q and A session. These visits are virtual this year. Seniors will be educated on this proves next week and will have forms to fill out. We usually have about 70-80 colleges visit per year, and we want to keep that going this year. These visits are a good opportunity for students. On thing we learned from last year that we will share out with students this year, is to have cameras on during the meeting out of respect for the presenter. These meetings are for students only and not parents. **Gabby asked the following question** – Regarding the virtual college visits, was it Methacton's idea to keep them virtual this year? Cindy confirmed yes, they are trying to limit outsiders in the school building.
- **PSAT day 10/13:** Sophomores and Juniors will be taking the PSAT on 10/13 at MHS. Practice books will be distributed next week in Social Studies classes. There is a full-length test right in the middle of the practice book. Guidance asks that students please use the prep materials. During the PSAT, Seniors will be participating in some programs regarding transitioning after high school and mental health. There is an SAT coming up 10/2, please register by 9/21. There are also SATs coming up in November and December. There are ACT tests coming up in November and December.

H&S Reports:

Secretary – Sarah Spletzer/Jessica Fox. Sarah reported:

- Konstella and Warrior News numbers are higher than last year, an expected increase given freshman parents coming in who are accustomed to using Konstella at this point.

Treasurer – Sophia Pham reported:

- She only picked up this role in July. In August we received No Frills Fundraiser contributions in the amount of \$3337.00, bringing the checking account balance to \$5095.00, with one outstanding H&S award (check not cashed by student).
- Marie has a copy of the budget that was approved at the end of June. H&S budgeted hoping for \$8k total. This would cover seniors yearbook pens, post prom, each of student classes for activities, transportation breakfast, staff appreciation, mini-grants for teachers. We will see how No Frills goes this year. We're a little behind with no cushion from prior years.

Vice President – Katie Shireman/Susan DeMedio – nothing to report

Presidents – Mercy Varghese/Marie Kramer Marie reported:

- We've given out awards, 8 awards (x\$100) to seniors who were most improved over their years at MHS. Last year we also gave out new scholarship awards, 8x\$1000, and received several handwritten thank you notes.

Report by Gabby Winters

History on Student Loan Program/now Scholarship Fund. Back in the 1960s a group of parents started a loan fund for MHS grads, up to \$1000/year all 4 years in college with no interest. In recent years the District decided we should not have a loan program.

A couple of years ago, we met with the person who was running it. MCC discussed it and decided to give the high school the ability to run it as a scholarship program. As we get more \$\$ in from collecting on the outstanding loans from when it was a loan program, we'll see where we are. Last year we gave out 8x\$1000 awards. Students have to apply, and are chosen for the award based on leadership and involvement in MHS and the community. All of the other Home & Schools have representatives who evaluated applications – no high school parents were involved in the decision.

Gabby took over as the person who will help to continue collecting repayment of loans. In July we received \$1100 in repayments and in August we received \$4735. She has sent out quarterly letters. At some point we have to figure out that we're done with sending the letters. Someone in August who had not made any payments paid off the full amount.

The Scholarship Fund awards were/will be awarded at the May awards ceremony for seniors. At this point we predict having enough to go about 8 years. This year we received 13 applications. Historically each H&S at each school would donate \$500/year to this program. Those donations have stopped. **Parent question** - Would criteria change in the future – artistic talent, business acumen, etc.? Answer: last year H&S specifically set this up for community contributions and leadership. Future H&Ss may handle this differently.

District Reports:

SEA – Colleen Kutz, Sandy Katz – Sandy reported:

- She is co-chair with Peg Herbison.
- Last year under grant of \$1800, SEA hosted a speaker on Executive Function.
- Their first agenda item for this year is to increase their planning committee membership. A huge contingency of the SEA planning committee has moved up to HS. They are looking for elementary school, Skyview, and Arcola parents.
- They don't necessarily need representatives from the high school but welcome anyone who is interested in working on the Planning Committee.

- The Planning Committee plans topics for the year, some are targeted for special needs but some are for any parents.
- They are trying this year to bring in internal speakers for October and November. They are shooting for 10/20, and asking Dr. Angstadt to bring in her team.
- SEA can always be reached on Facebook. Dr. Gravinese asked if students could volunteer if interested. Sandy responded that they are looking for volunteers interested in being part of the planning meeting starting on 10/21.

Post Prom – Gabby Winters/ Lisa Coupe – Gabby reported:

- Meeting location change. They will now meet in the LGI on 10/12 at 7:00.
- Meetings are always the second Tuesday of the month.
- They will focus on a lot of recruiting. A lot of chairs no longer have students in the schools.
- By January they should have a good idea what Post Prom will look like this year.
- 4/22 is the date for prom/Post Prom 2022.
- Post Prom does not meet in December.

School Board – Liz Drummond provided the following report:

- **Welcome Back:** We are so excited to welcome all students and staff back to school for in-person instruction. We are all hoping we see few interruptions to learning and that everyone has a great school year!
- **Personnel Update:** A new Principal, Michael Bourdreau, was approved at Arcola, with Dr. Amy Mangano beginning a new position as a Supervisor of Special Education. Dr. Mangano will continue to be acting Principal at Arcola until Mr. Bourdreau is able to transition to Methacton, which could take up to 60 days. Joyce Amici was approved as interim Principal of Worcester Elementary, effective August 1, 2021.
- **Audubon Update:** The board heard a presentation from Lower Providence Township with ideas for the currently unused Audubon Elementary School. This was a preliminary proposal and was just a very broad overview a potential community center at that location. You can see the presentation here: [Audubon Elementary Community Center Presentation](#).
- **Back to School Nights:** Arcola has already held its Back-to-School Night but there are more to enjoy. See the calendar below for dates and times for your school:

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2021-22

Methacton SCHOOL DISTRICT

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>
August 25	Arcola
September 8	Skyview (Grade 5)
September 13	Worcester
September 14	MHS (Grades 9 & 10)
September 20	MHS (Grades 11 & 12)
September 21	Woodland
September 22	Eagleville
September 23	Arrowhead
September 29	Skyview (Grade 6)

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- **Full Day Kindergarten:** It is finally here! The board voted in July to approve full-day Kindergarten, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. There is work to be done to make sure

that we have balanced enrollment in each elementary school (it will help that the new Arrowhead school will be open at that time, as well). Along with academics, there will be a focus on social and emotional learning, play, and many other areas of growth to ensure that our youngest Methacton students are ready to be life-long learners.

- **Strategic Plan:** Dr. Zerbe provided an update for the Strategic Planning Committee that encourages even more community engagement. A summary of the plan can be found here: [Strategic Plan Update](#) and some important dates to know are:

- September 9, 2021: Participation process signup
- October 21, 2021: Kick Off Event - Full Group
- October 22-Nov 24, 2021: Sub Committee Work
- January 10, 2022: Virtual Full Group Meeting
- February 22, 2022: Board Presentation – Strategic Plan

More Strategic Plan information is on the website: <https://www.methacton.org/Page/109>.

- **Upcoming meetings:**

Board meetings are now being held in-person at the Arcola Auditorium:

- Work Session: Tuesday, September 21, 7:00 PM
- Regular Meeting: Tuesday, September 28, 7:00 PM

Questions & Answers – as time allows – Q – meetings times? Marie answered, we are alternating between mornings and nights, mornings we'll do conference room in the library. We will continue to try doing it both ways.

Adjournment

Dates to Remember:

September

- 10 – Welcome Back Staff Dessert Buffet
- 13 – Senior Parent Post-Secondary Planning 7:00pm
- 14 – 9th & 10th Grades Back to School Night 7:00pm
- 16 – No School (Holiday)
- 20– 11th & 12th Grades Back to School Night 7:00pm
- TBD – Financial Aid Night 7:00pm
- 21,22,23 – Class of 2022 Senior Portraits
- 24 – Homecoming Tailgate and Game
- 25 – Homecoming Dance

October

- 2 - SAT
- 7 – H&S Meeting –9:15am

**Next meeting 10/7/21 9:15 am
In Conference Room C149 and Via Zoom**

(Look for Konstella announcement or our webpage for Zoom registration link)