

# Marathon Middle/High School Advisory Council

## MEETING MINUTES

September 13, 2011

6:00 PM MMHS Media Center

(Draft minutes pending approval at the 10/4/11 meeting)

**SAC Council Members in Attendance:** Principal Hammond Gracy, Assistant Principals Wendy McPherson and Liz Logan, Athletic Director Teresa Konrath, Chairman Luis Gonzalez, Vice Chairman Karen McKeon, Secretary Anita Nelson, Middle School Liaison Lisa Maeder, Staff Representative Regina Ryan, Karen Angle, Diane Culver, Gerard “Spook” Roussin and SGA President, Alexander Morato. *Not in attendance (from 2010-11 council):* Tammy Bruland, Delvis DelPozo, Beth Ann Connell, Debra Davis, Tracy Hannah and Mike Puto.

**1.,2. Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chairman, Luis Gonzalez. The pledge of allegiance, lead by SGA President Alexander Morato, followed.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

Karen McKeon made a motion to approve the minutes to the May 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup> (continuation), 2011 meetings. The motion was seconded by Teresa Konrath and unanimously approved.

**a. Meeting Dates:**

A motion was made by Karen Angle, seconded by Anita Nelson and unanimously approved to set SAC meeting dates for the 2011-12 school year as follows: September 13<sup>th</sup>, October 4<sup>th</sup>, November 8<sup>th</sup>, December 6<sup>th</sup>, January 10<sup>th</sup>, February 7<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup>, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**b. Request for SAC Dollars:**

A request by Ms. Costello-Lettau and the High School English Department to use SAC dollars to purchase a continuing subscription to the “Turnitin” anti-plagiarism program for grades 10-12 at an approximate cost of \$800-\$900 was discussed. This program has been used in previous years and is a requirement of the IB program. The request was tabled due to a lack of available SAC funds. It was noted that the current subscription runs through November and that other sources of funding would be explored and an attempt made to negotiate the price with the company.

**4. Dolphins of Distinction Recognition Program:**

Dolphins of Distinction awards/gift baskets will be awarded to one support staff person and to one teacher each month starting in October.

**5. SGA Update:** SGA President Alexander Morato gave an update on Student Government Association (SGA) activities as follows:

- a. Classes except for seniors are in the process of obtaining their class T-shirts. The seniors had theirs at the beginning of the year.
- b. Seniors had a great entrance at the last pep rally and won the spirit stick. All classes showed a lot of spirit. Another pep rally is scheduled for this Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>.
- c. SGA is organizing fundraisers for Homecoming. This year’s theme is “Alice in Wonderland.”

6. **Guest Speaker:** The Custodial Services Supervisor scheduled to speak was unable to attend and will be rescheduled for the October meeting..
7. **School Improvement Plan (SIP):** Ms. Logan highlighted some changes and areas to be emphasized in this year's School Improvement Plan, and asked that attendees, prior to leaving the meeting, jot down ideas for encouraging more parent involvement. Of particular note:
  - a. Efforts must continue to reduce language barriers which discourage Hispanic parents from becoming involved in the school. Hispanic students now comprise almost 50% of our student population. The adult ed/*Los Padres* meetings organized last year were a good start, but better attendance needs to be encouraged.
  - b. One difference in this year's SIP is that goals will be included relating to Algebra, Geometry and Biology End-of-Course (EOC) exams.
  - c. In answer to a parent question it was noted that *volunteers/tutors are welcome* in general and are needed specifically to assist with the AVID program for several class periods on Tuesdays and Thursdays (6<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade). There is a training program for tutors, and those interested should contact Jamie Buhyoff or Heather Doney. Tutors don't necessarily need to know all subject matter, but would be assisting students in the learning process.
8. **Open House:** Ms. McPherson gave information regarding Open House, which will take place Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6-7:30 p.m. A letter with students' class schedules will go out this Friday (16<sup>th</sup>). Open House will begin with a short DTV introduction from Principal Gracy, followed by a bell schedule, with 10 minute classroom visits and 5 minutes between "classes." A take-out pork dinner (5-7 p.m.) will be available from the Bistro, with proceeds benefiting the athletic program. SGA members and Cheer Squad ambassadors will assist parents in locating classrooms. It is emphasized that Open House is for introductions only, not for "parent-teacher conferences."
9. **Principal's Report:** Principal Gracy summarized encouraging trends and some challenges this year:
  - a. The number of disciplinary incidents has decreased about 31% in the last year (from about 1200 to 800 incidents).
  - b. The Middle School student uniforms are working, and this year's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class is a great group.
  - c. Although high school (overall) grades will not be received until about November 1<sup>st</sup>, MMHS has a good chance for an "A" this year: It is expected that the score will improve by about 120 points. FCAT scores improved by 39 points, AP participation increased 25%, and at-risk students improved by 67%. 40% of last year's graduates finished with at least one AP credit. One area for improvement is our graduation rate.
  - d. Some changes are occurring starting in the Middle School the week of September 26<sup>th</sup> due to class sizes (High School classes are capped @ 25 students, Middle School @ 22). Ms. Dalrymple will be teaching social studies exclusively, and a ½ teacher will be assigned science classes. Co-teaching will be employed. Increased class sizes are primarily due to Big Pine students being bused to MMHS. It was noted that the State of Florida funding formula (local

effort is now up to about 60% of funding), combined with decreasing property values, has been detrimental.

- e. Some cost-cutting measures that have been implemented include closing the first floor of the 2000 building and re-assigning assistant principals to some classroom duties plus ½-time principal duties.
- f. It is cautioned that next school year may be even more financially challenging than this year. It is hoped that a return to 7-period days will be possible. AP, Springboard and AVID programs will continue to be emphasized.
- g. Efforts will be made to institute an Academic Booster's Club, and Adopt-a-Classroom may also provide some resources.

**10.a. Assistant Principal's Report:** Ms. McPherson gave an update on High School activities:

- i. Ms. Lynne is now teaching Adult Ed., but has been collaborating with Dr. Sympson in assisting students with SAT and ACT test registrations and college entrance matters.
- ii. The first early release day will be tomorrow, September 14<sup>th</sup>, at 11:40 a.m.

**10.b. Assistant Principal's Report:** Ms. Logan gave an update on Middle School matters:

- i. Due to the limit of 22 students for each core area class, some Middle School students will experience schedule changes to comply with that limit. Co-teaching will also be employed.
- ii. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class was very creative at the last pep rally and won the spirit stick. This Friday will be "spirit day" for both the Middle and High School, and the most spirited student and teacher will be recognized.

**11. Athletic Update:** Ms. Konrath updated attendees on school sports activities:

- a. The football, cross country, swimming, volleyball and golf seasons are well underway. The golf team won their match today, and the football team defeated Miami Country Day last week, 30-13.
- b. A major push this year is to improve school spirit; posters made for games and matches, pep rallies and the like should help to spread the spirit.
- c. Transportation costs are achievable this year, but will probably be more of an issue next year, since transporting players by school bus to Miami costs \$500 per bus.
- d. Some incentives, fundraising efforts and "spirit" initiatives include a \$ discount for T-shirts for juniors and seniors; selling the pork dinners at Open House; getting advertising signs for the fence; and in general, giving donors a *product* for their donations.
- e. The issue of students being in inappropriate areas of the school and exhibiting inappropriate behavior during games and matches was discussed, and this will be addressed. It was noted that coaches donate their time to provide additional security.

**12. SAC Council Members Election:** Election of additional SAC members was tabled until the October meeting, to allow a determination as to the demographics of the school.

**13. Adjournment:** There being no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2011, by  
Anita J. Nelson, Secretary

(Note: Sports schedules and the school calendar are posted on the Web site.)