

# Marathon Middle/High School Advisory Council

## MEETING MINUTES

October 4, 2011

6:00 PM MMHS Media Center

**SAC Members in Attendance:** Principal Hammond Gracy, Assistant Principal Wendy McPherson, Athletic Director Teresa Konrath, Chairperson Luis Gonzalez, Vice Chairperson Karen McKeon, Secretary Anita Nelson, Middle School Liaison Lisa Maeder, Beth Ann Connell, Tracy Hannah and Mike Puto. Also in attendance: School Board Chairman John Dick and Suzanne Ryals, sponsor for the SGA. *Not in attendance (from 2010-11 council):* Assistant Principal Liz Logan, Staff Representative Regina Ryan, Karen Angle, Tammy Bruland, Delvis Del Pozo, Debra Davis and “Spook” Roussin.

**1.,2. Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chairperson, Luis Gonzalez. The pledge of allegiance followed.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

Mike Puto made a motion to approve the minutes to the September 13, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Diane Culver and unanimously approved.

**4. Dolphins of Distinction:**

Dolphins of Distinction awards/gift bags were presented as follows:

- a. The support personnel recipient for the month of October is Arnoldo Mercado, who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in keeping the school grounds, particularly the football field, in excellent shape.
- b. Certificated staff member recipient is Richard Mangel, who took on an extra class period, helps out with the Century 21 program, and always lends an additional hand when needed.

**5. Guest Presentation:**

Centennial Bank AVP and Business Development Officer Melissa Grady gave hand-outs and outlined features of their new Centennial/Sallie Mae student (college) loan partnership. Main points mentioned were:

- a. Loans are offered to both incoming college freshmen and to students already enrolled.
- b. A co-signer for the student is usually required, but if 12 on-time payments are made, the co-signer can be deleted, helping the student establish credit.
- c. There are a number of options in loan terms, including but not limited to starting payments six months after school starts; interest-only payments while in school and six months afterward; or delaying payments until out of school.
- d. Applicants can quickly apply online by going to [www.salliemae.com/smartoption/my100bank](http://www.salliemae.com/smartoption/my100bank) or go to [www.my100bank.com](http://www.my100bank.com) for more information.

**6. SGA President's Report:**

In SGA President Alexander Morato's absence, sponsor Suzanne Ryals summarized Homecoming Week and various class activities as follows:

- a. All senior high classes are working on Homecoming floats. The parade will start at 2 p.m. on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>; participants are asked to not throw

- candy or other hard projectiles this year, as it has been a safety issue in years past. The Homecoming football game against Chaminade will be at 7:30 p.m. on the 14<sup>th</sup>; and the dance, with the theme “Alice in Wonderland,” at the airport, 8-12 p.m. Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>. Helpers are requested for float-building.
- b. Seniors have received their class T-shirts; all other classes’ shirts are on order.
  - c. A junior class pie sale will take place Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, and other class fundraisers are in the works.
  - d. Mr. and Ms. 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be elected this week.
- 7. *Mentoring/Academic Help:***  
Mr. Gracy and Ms. Ryals presented some information about mentoring and other assistance being given to students:
- a. Core teachers are working with students who need help with curriculum, academic or testing issues, including, e.g., AP enrollment and what classes to take. Ms. Logan, Mr. Lettau and Mr. Murphy are working with sophomores; Ms. Konrath and Ms. Ryals are working with juniors, with one major emphasis being community service hours; and Ms. Buhyoff is working with seniors on scholarships, FAFSA, and school visits.
  - b. The administration is looking for someone to take on the responsibility of planning prom each year.
  - c. Ms. Ryals noted that Leadership students are now meeting at 7 a.m. each morning, that community service hours are available, and that participation is now open to any high school student.
- 8. *School Improvement Plan:***  
It was noted that the School Improvement Plan (SIP), finalized by Ms. Logan and including some input from SAC regarding parent involvement, was in compliance and submitted to the state Department of Education. After approval, it will be posted to the school’s Web site. In addition:
- a. The ethnic/demographic make-up of MMHS as of October 4<sup>th</sup> was: 49% white; 40% Hispanic; 9% Black; and 1% each Asian and Multicultural.
  - b. There will be an October 18<sup>th</sup> District SIP visit with “report out” at 2:45 p.m. in the Media Center. SAC members/parents are encouraged to attend.
- 9. *Principal’s Report:***  
Mr. Gracy updated attendees on class sizes and other matters:
- a. To meet class size requirements and to have enough teachers, six 6<sup>th</sup>-period teacher pay supplements have been approved by the district. An influx of students into sixth grade (primarily from Big Pine) has caused the restructuring of some classes. It is hoped that next year’s classes will be “looser,” with five instead of four core teachers. There is a 22-student limit in Middle School core classes.
  - b. Smaller class sizes to continue class offerings are necessary in some cases due to our student make-up and the small size of the school.
  - c. Mr. Doll is teaching a sixth-grade Science class. Critical Thinking classes have been rolled into sixth grade Science.
- 10. *Assistant Principal Report:***  
High school AP Ms. McPherson reported on upcoming high school events and matters of interest:

- a. FCAT retakes will occur the week of October 17-21. These will be done online and are for incoming senior students or those who previously didn't pass.
- b. The PSAT will be administered to 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> graders on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. Practice books are being distributed this week. Several types of scholarships are awarded to finalists, so this is an important test.
- c. Kudos to Duncan McCarthy and Marina Kay Wiatt, who were National Merit Scholarship qualifiers, and to Marina Kay, who is a finalist.
- d. Class picture retakes by HJMiami are scheduled for October 24<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity for seniors who didn't previously get pictures.
- e. Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> is an 11:40 a.m. early release day due to the Homecoming parade. Volunteers are needed to help monitor the younger kids during the parade.
- f. The high school Homecoming Court will go to Switlik School on October 22<sup>nd</sup> to introduce themselves.
- g. Student volunteers are needed for the Switlik School Halloween Carnival, from 9 a.m.-noon, also on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was noted that Bright Futures volunteer hours requirements have been upped from 75 hours to 100 hours, so this is a good opportunity to score some volunteer hours.

**11. Athletic Report:**

Ms. Konrath reported on the following:

- a. Most fall sports (volleyball, cross country, football, and swimming) are about halfway through their seasons. In volleyball, Rita has been assisting the squad. After-school study hall for athletes has helped them maintain grades.
- b. Golfers have won some games lately, have finished their regular season and will be heading to Miami for Districts on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Four swim team girls are off to Orlando for state qualifying this weekend. The cheer squad has worked hard this season as well.
- c. Football has an away game this Friday and will play the Homecoming game against Chaminade on Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30.
- d. There was some discussion about overlapping of seasons: Some coaches and parents are OK with athletes overlapping sports practices and some are not. Athletes need to check with individual coaches.
- e. MMHS will continue to offer Varsity, JV and Middle School sports programs. JV coaches are responsible for Middle School teams.
- f. Transportation was an issue recently when a one-time problem occurred and teams had to rely on the boosters club for travel; this is not expected to recur.

**12. Guest Speaker: Half-Mil Referendum:**

School Board Chairman John Dick gave some background information about the upcoming referendum:

- a. Authority for the District to transfer a half-mil of school taxes from the capital account to the operations account will be on the ballot for the Republican primary in January. This election was chosen so as to save the District the cost of a special election. Two mils were approved eight years ago by voters for capital improvements, and authority to transfer the half-mil to operations expires on June 30<sup>th</sup> unless re-approved. A "yes" vote would *continue* the authority to transfer funds, and would *not* mean an increase in taxes. Failure to

authorize the transfer could result in extreme budget-cutting measures next year, up to and including the closing of schools. An estimated \$9 million is needed for operations, due to anticipated cuts from the state.

*Some additional background:*

- b. While increasing teachers' salaries to the highest in the state, the District has also cut its budget 18% in recent years. Administrative expenses have been cut 29% in two years, support staff by almost 20% and instructional staff by 11%, while maintaining quality programs.
- c. In answer to a question as to why Coral Shores High School has seven class periods and MMHS six, it was noted that Coral Shores received authority to pay supplements in order to retain the seven periods.
- d. It was noted that the District budget currently maintains a 4% fund balance, which is the lowest it wishes to go in order to cover any contingencies. The discretionary millage is at its maximum.
- e. Some discussion occurred as to whether quality has been maintained with the outsourcing of janitors.

**13. *Announcements:***

- a. Nominees for this year's MMHS SAC council – to mirror the make-up of the community – were suggested, to include: Luis Gonzalez (Chairperson), Karen McKeon (Vice Chairperson), Anita Nelson (Secretary), Lisa Maeder (Middle School Liaison), Suzanne Ryals, Teresa Konrath, Diane Culver, Mike Puto, Gerard "Spook" Roussin, Karen Angle, Beth Ann Connell, Delvis DelPozo, Katherine Mayan, and Madeline O'Farrill. These potential members will be contacted and an electronic vote carried out to finalize membership, to be submitted to the District by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Note that officers of the council were chosen at the May, 2011 meeting.
- b. It was noted that the SAC by-laws are in need of revision; Ms. Nelson was asked to revise them and present them for any further revision and approval at a future meeting.
- c. Culinary classes will offer a "Brazilian dinner" this Friday from 4:30-7 p.m. in the Dolphin Bistro. Reservations are necessary.

**14. *Adjournment:***

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2011, by  
Anita J. Nelson, Secretary

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