



**MSC SLT Minutes  
March 4, 2015**

**Attendees:**

Claire Lowenstein	Principal
Wendy Smith	Teacher
Danielle Monaghan	Paraprofessional
Erin Moughon-Smith	Teacher
Amy Watkins Barnard	Teacher,
Stephanie Douglas	Teacher
Alison Holden	Parent/Co--PA President
Alyssa Cheng	Parent Representative (K--3)
Brigit Beyea	Parent Rep(all grades)
Manuela Zamora	Parent Rep (4-6)
Maxine Witherspoon	Parent Coordinator

March Meeting began at 3:15pm in Science Room.

- I. **Principal's Report.** No changes on the budget at this point in year. Next year's budget will arrive from DOE in June/July.
  
- II. **Parents' Report.** Celebrate MSC is March 28<sup>th</sup>. Parents Association (PA) and SLT elections are planned for May 2015 PA meeting. .

**Inclusiveness & Diversity Committee (IDC)** recently met with Maxine to plan out additional outreach events and help promote "chain of command" communication. This will help parents understand what to do when they have an issue.

There was discussion around the selection of the school play, "Legally Blonde." Some parents were concerned about the gender/racial perceptions of the selection. The show was chosen because there are many strong female roles and the themes of empowerment, independence and breaking stereotypes. Erin welcomed the help of the IDC and others in marketing the play to ensure the community is aware of the positive messages. In the future, parents can be included in the review of play options.

**III. Old Business Updates**

- a. **Cellular Phone & Technology Policy.** The team reviewed the feedback shared by parents on MSC's current cell phone policy (see attached). **Claire recommended and the SLT strongly agreed that MSC keep its**

**current policy** unchanged through the end of this school year, and consider revising it for the upcoming year. The team agreed to use the rest of this year to get valuable feedback from parents, teachers and students. Specifically, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are debating the pros and cons of allowing technology in school. Stephanie said that the students would like to present their final recommendations to the SLT at the May meeting. The PA May meeting can also solicit more feedback from parents, as not everyone was aware that it was being done via the Blast. Claire will communicate that for the rest of the school year, the current policy is unchanged via the Blast and teachers will review with their students.

- b. **Quality Review 2015:** The upcoming DOE Quality Review, a one-day visit by the DOE, to assess MSC on multiple dimensions of quality is scheduled for March 31, 2015. Alison is collecting names for the 10 parents to meet with the observer. Brigit will reach out to the IDC and pass names to Alison.
- c. **Review of SLT Bylaws and Processes:** Based on the February discussion, Brigit, Alison and Alyssa reviewed changes that will be needed to by-laws. Several of the by-laws are outdated or need to be updated. Alyssa requested set time aside for a vote during the April meeting.

#### IV. New Business

- a. **State Assessment Testing.** Darlene presented on the schedule for state testing for 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Dates are April 14-16 for ELA and April 22-24 for math. Makeup days are the days immediately following test days. 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders also have Science tests. (Tests are taken on these dates by all three schools in the building). To limit disruptions to all test takers, MSC students will stay in their classrooms for the tests, K-2 will be encouraged to take field trips and there will be no recess.

Parents wishing to refuse the test for their child can ask Darlene for a sample "Refusal letter" that they can submit. Refusals are for all tests, not just some. If more than 10% of students refuse the state tests, the Chancellor can mark the schools as "underperforming." Claire stated that each family should do what is best for them. Students that submit the refusal letter will be given a place in the building to read during the tests.

Parents wishing to educate themselves about the tests can visit <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/eigen.html>. Other websites by groups that are opposed include <http://www.nysape.org/refusing-the-test-resources.html>.

- b. **State Proposal on teacher evaluations** etc. A Committee has been formed at MSC to increase awareness about the pending state changes in teacher evaluations, funding etc. Claire included this in her Blast letter, which teachers appreciated as it demonstrated her support of teachers.

There will be a circle to “Protect our Schools” on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:45am outside MSC. The Committee (including Alison Roque, Sharlene Spire, Andre and Claire) has invited elected officials, media etc. Many other schools are organizing as well to reinforce the message.

- c. Erin alerted the team that District 3 is holding an Arts Showcase on May 14-15<sup>th</sup> at PS163. One group may have a live performance from each school; applications due March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**V. SLT Events**

- a. Responsive Classroom followup event: Manuela has arranged for Shelly MacDonald to host two workshops on “**How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk.**” The parent workshop will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:45am in Room 619. The Teacher Professional Development workshop will be held on 4/21 at 3:30. Wendy will coordinate with Shelly in advance to help her understand what currently exists as part of the MSC Responsive Classroom model.
- b. **Navigating Social Media** workshop will be moved to May 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:45am (half-day) so that 6-8<sup>th</sup> grades can participate. Alyssa is seeking panelists/experts to join students to speak on their experience. Erin shared the recent NYT article on the impacts of social media. [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/magazine/how-one-stupid-tweet-ruined-justine-saccos-life.html?emc=eta1&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/magazine/how-one-stupid-tweet-ruined-justine-saccos-life.html?emc=eta1&_r=1)
- c. **Arts Showcase** (June 16-18<sup>th</sup>) will be held on 4-5<sup>th</sup> floors, B17 and Auditorium. Will be potluck and structured like middle school tours. MSC Specials teachers from Art and Dance and all art-based external partners (such as Lincoln Center and NYC Ballet) will participate.
- d. Other possible topics: **Cultural Competency for Teachers** (as discussed by IDC, and in webinar hosted by EdWeek at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/webinars/webinars.html#archived>)

**VI. April Agenda Topics**

The team agreed on April’s New Business agenda:

- Vote to change by-laws (Alyssa and Brigit)
- Parent Education on MSC Inclusion Model (with Kim Madden)
- Quality Review Debrief (Claire)
- SLT Events

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
<b>Future Meeting topics</b>		
Eighth grade Presentation on Cell Phone/Technology	May meeting	Stephanie/Claire
How to encourage more “events” like Nancy’s Math	TBD	

Workshop		
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Future SLT Meeting dates: First Wednesday of every month at 3:15pm (except May\*) in room 519:

- April 1
- May 20
- June 3

**Please see below for the responses from Parents who shared input on the Cell Phone policy to the SLT. 5 responses total. 4 supported keeping policy as is; 1 recommended students could keep phones with them but turned off in class. Also, EdWeek had an article about how other schools are looking at the policy:**<http://www.edweek.org/dd/articles/2013/02/06/02byod.h06.html?override=web>

#### **MSC Parent Input – submitted to SLT February 2015**

Thank you for asking for parental input on the cell phone policy. Here's mine: I agree with the idea that cell phones and other electronics should be turned off while kids are in class (with the exception of Kindles being used for ELA work).

However, I would like our policy to permit kids to have cell phones (assuming the phones are turned off) in their pockets in class rather than stowed in their lockers. After Newtown and 9/11, I feel much more comfortable knowing that my daughter has a way to contact me quickly and at all times in an emergency. Also, we have already had two incidents where her lock has been broken off her locker this year, which leads me to suspect that electronics aren't very safe in lockers at MSC.

I think that if kids violate the rule about not using phones in class, they should get a warning for a first offense and then whatever disciplinary action the school decides to codify (taking the phone for the day, losing lunches out for a few days, etc.).

7th grade mom

I am writing to give an opinion of the cell phone policy. I think that the policy of putting away cell phones before entering school and keeping it off during school until the end of the day works well for us.

It is easy to enforce and will prevent valuable teaching time wasted on wondering if a student is using their phone for "learning" or fun. We can also avoid any issues for those who has a phone (especially a smart phone) and those who do not have one.

P.S. I have seen student selfies taken in our school bathroom (posted on social media) when phones were technically not allowed in school.

Not sure what the new DOE policy is but I would prefer to keep the current policy as is. I agree with the current MSC cellphone policy. Cellphone usage by children in school needs to be discouraged. They have too many electronics and gadgets and they do not need this during school time.

Keep it as is. No roll for cell phones in the class.

Dear Claire, Our family is extremely opposed to any visible existence of cell phones anywhere in the school, on school grounds or even within sight of school. We think the current written policy is valid now and after the new DOE rule goes into effect. The thought of children at school gathered around an electronic device for personal use is distressing to the max. Let's please continue to have a space that is dedicated to focusing on each other, person to person, our studies and our imaginations.

- Parents of 4th graders