

## April 1 2021 Parent Connections Meeting

Margarita Castanon (Vice Chair), Rebekah Martin (Treasurer), Kate Suchomel (Chair), Claire Tralle (parent), Nina (5th grade math), Sidney Orchard (Parent Liaison), Val (5th grade Language Arts), Mike Hogan (parent), Donna Andrews (Principal), Alix Herzing (parent), Marvin (5th grade Science), Jacqueline Dekker Travis (parent alumni)

**Donna Principal's Report:** School is going well. In-person students are happy in their classrooms. Changes keep coming down from the Governor, which makes it difficult to stay on top of. While some of the classrooms are starting to feel full, they aren't at the point yet of creating waiting lists for in-person learning. Because some teachers came back in person and some are staying distant, each of the grades is doing things a little differently. Some Marcy teachers are teaching subjects they don't usually teach- everyone is being flexible!

The District is moving ahead with MCA testing. Many families/parents are opting their students out of the testing. ELL language students had to do the Access Test (Reading, Writing and Speaking), was challenging to coordinate, but the staff made it work!

Moving forward looking at next year's plans- including hiring someone to coordinate TOSA anti-bias training will be integrated into school next year. Overall, there are lots of emotions around all of the changes next year.

Jacqueline asks if there is going to be any sort of event or recognition to honor the history of Marcy being an Open School and the transition to a new focus. Donna replied that some of the students are working on a project, and that something will be coordinated to recognize the history of the school. Donna invites any ideas for an event or recognition, noting that its difficult this year with COVID.

Holly Siasoco has brought up a concern that she wanted to have presented at Family Connections- Donna is presenting on her behalf- expressing that she would like to see any excess MAP related funding to be spent on arts related programming. She hopes that Parent Council continues to support teachers with teacher funds each year for needs in their classroom. She expressed her support for the idea of setting aside funds for Wolf Ridge each year. She suggested the following areas for funding in the future: recess needs, etc.

Claire talked about the impact of funding the Orton-Gillingham training and how it is an investment in Marcy's future, and will impact a large group of students.

Nina, Val and Marvin presented their request to fund Wolf Ridge trips in May 2022 and each year going forward. They are asking the Parent Council to cover the costs of busing, chaperones and snacks, a request of about \$13,000. They are hoping that the Parent Council could help to support this program long term so that years of students can participate. (see attachment for request)

It was suggested that Wolf Ridge be a standing budget item in the Parent Council budget each year (as well as other Marcy initiatives such as the Labyrinth).

Rebekah brought up the strong bond that is created by parents when they are able to fundraise together for the Wolf Ridge trip (suggested a combo of both student fundraising AND a Parent Council budget line). Rebekah brought up the concern that while Parent Council might be able to support this budget line for the next few years, it is not a sustainable way to support Wolf Ridge. For planning purposes, maybe we need to establish a system where the funds raised from the past year are those that are used the next year.

Phyllis manages the Wolf Ridge account - it is not a Parent Council run fund.

Donna noted the importance of naming those experiences central to Marcy that Parent Council would like to continue and support. (Perhaps a survey of families next year)

Claire asked for clarification about when the funds would be used- this is a request for 2020, so the funds would be part of the 2021/2022 budget.

Jacqueline gave a Labyrinth update: They spend the summer installing after construction forced the labyrinth to be temporarily removed. They are working on getting the historical information about the project back on the website, as it was deleted when the new school website went up. The labyrinth is a Peace Project, with ongoing fundraising, the next project is an arts project.

Sidney noted that in the past, bricks were purchased for retiring teachers- with the transition to the K-5 school how can we honor them? Maybe a brick honoring all of the teachers that are leaving? Rebekah asked that someone submit a special request for this to Parent Council for the May meeting.

The Wolf Ridge request cannot be voted on by this year's Parent Council, as it is a request for next year's budget. It was recommended that next year's budget include a line item to support Wolf Ridge (and consider adding other line items such as labyrinth, creating a fund to support training of Orton Gillingham in other schools, etc).

May's meeting will be the election of officer positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary)- we will advertise this hope for a large showing!

NEed to look at bylaws about when officer are elected, what funds can be used for, etc.

Bylaws: "Officers of the Board shall be determined by a majority vote of those members present at the annual meeting in May. Elected Board members term will then begin the following fall and last the length of the school year. The months of June, July and August will serve as the transition period. If any seats are vacant at the beginning of the school year those board members will be determined at the earliest regular meeting of the council but not later than the

October of that year. If any seats remain vacant after October they shall remain vacant until the next annual meeting elections or until an candidate steps forward and is elected.”

“Fund Raising - To plan and implement activities for the primary purpose of collecting moneys for room funds, special projects, and the other needs of the students, community and Marcy Open School.”

Parent Note from Abby:

Dear Sydney and Donna,

I hope you are both hanging in there. Given the many changes at Marcy in the coming months, I wanted to share some thoughts I had regarding the generous funds still in the Marcy Parent Council and MAP bank accounts.

I of course come at this from a parent's perspective and one that served on the parent council, but I also come at this from a fundraising perspective as well (given my job).

The funds raised by Parent Council over the years have for many years surpassed the needs of the school and my understanding is there is a significant surplus available in the savings account at this time. These funds were certainly raised with the intent that they should benefit all Marcy students. An idea that I had and shared with some other parents would be to use the remaining funds to support something like Wolf Ridge for 5th graders each year. This is an experience that all students can benefit from, it is uniquely Minnesota focused and is something that is quite costly.

As far as the MAP funds are concerned, given that these funds were raised with the intent to be spent on arts experiences at Marcy, it would follow that they should be maintained for art related experiences going forward. While I understand that the school will change to an arts magnet, I am sure there will always be a chance to enhance the arts curriculum with additional arts funding.

I understand that because Sascha is a 5th grader this year, he will not have the chance to benefit from these funds going forward, but I will always have a special place in my heart for Marcy and hope that the spirit of the school in some ways is maintained.

Thank you for listening,

Abby