

**Monroe Parent Organization
October 6, 2009 Meeting Minutes**



1. Introduction by Principal Tromba

Principal Tromba discussed how Monroe Parent Organization meetings will be conducted and an overview of the agenda for this meeting. Principal Tromba recommended that parents look at the new school website. Michelle Williams in the front office is dedicated to keeping the website up-to-date and informative.

2. Speaker

The speaker was Shirley Madathil, a long time teacher at Monroe who recently became the school counselor after going through a two year internship at Monroe. Ms. Madathil discussed communicating with children at the middle school age level. She shared her experiences with children and what she sees the adults around campus doing to communicate with the students - communicating in a positive way that supports the students keeping in mind that sometimes the communication is needed to correct the students. She also discussed the importance of networking and communication among parents. Ideas were explored about future topics or ideas to facilitate networking of parents. Questions were sought from parents and a discussion was held about students exploring the use of inappropriate language.

3. Principal's Report

Principal Tromba provided a tour of the computer lab and discussed the future plans for the lab. The lab supports 35 students providing individual computer stations and work space, as well as different stations to accommodate project base learning. He discussed the importance of technology support for the students and explained how students are given objectives that have to be met by the production of some type of project, resulting in a higher form of learning than writing out an objective and handing it in.

While phases of the lab are in place, modeled after what other schools are doing, more funding is needed. Funding will be used toward equipment for individual learning bays for the students to create podcasts, produce films, compose music, and more. It is estimated that in addition to funds the school will provide, we will need to raise around \$20,000. Principal Tromba will be preparing a fund raising letter signed by the principal and MPO board members setting forth the final details toward related fund raising. A discussion was held about acknowledging donors, perhaps by placing their names along the walls in the computer lab. Further discussion was held about the possibility of acquiring grants and the extensive survey conducted last year by the Site Council - most of the larger money grants go to schools that are considered to be within a higher poverty area. Principal Tromba also talked about donations of actual equipment which must be compliant with security mandates set forth by the District.

4. Staff Representative Report

Principal Tromba spoke with department leaders who indicated they would appreciate the opportunity to come to future MPO meetings and present information. Some future subjects may include math and science and the MPO is encouraged to request specific topics they may want addressed by a staff representative.

5. Site Council Report

Site Council meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month from 3:30 - 5:00. Staff and parents meet to discuss school improvement, goals of the schools and the value of those goals such as staff development and related funding and how the school plans to progress in terms of educational programs. Historically there has not been a tight relationship between the MPO and Site Council, but the new MPO Bylaws call for some specific overlap between the two organizations. While up to eight parents can be on Site Council, ideally at least two parents would in both groups

6. New business / Review and approval of the bylaws

Principal Tromba introduced Ron Ewert who discussed the new Bylaws being presented. The Bylaws represent an effort to bring more structure to the MPO allowing the MPO to carry forward year after year, clarification as to how to operate, having both elected and volunteer positions, and goal setting. The new Bylaws were unanimously approved and were adopted accordingly.

Fund raising is not the ultimate goal of the MPO. The purpose of this group is to inform, network and to share ideas which are evident in the goals expressed in the Bylaws. The MPO Board will be able to make a lot of decisions through email, and those decisions can be briefly discussed at the MPO monthly meetings.

Elective positions were narrowed down to: Facilitator (the person who will typically run MPO meetings and oversee what the MPO is doing); Facilitator Elect (ideally a two year position before becoming the Facilitator the following year); Secretary (keeps minutes for MPO meetings, ideally posted on the school website); Treasurer (this position will be appointed by the Principal since it involves the handling of money); Site Council Representatives (attend Site Council meetings and then share that information with the MPO). Ideally elections will typically happen in May of each year appointing Board members for the following year.

The MPO Board positions for the 2009-2010 school year were appointed as follows:

Facilitator	:	Anne DeZarn
Facilitator Elect	:	Ron Ewert
Secretary	:	Candyce Steward
Treasurer	:	Brenda Large
Site Council	:	

Facilitator Anne DeZarn discussed how volunteering on committees presents a fun opportunity for parents to be involved without the pressure of fund raising. Events typically take 2-3 days of effort. If interested, parents should send (or respond to) an email expressing their interest in helping on a particular project.

The MPO is seeking volunteers for the following activities:

Student Directory - The school cannot produce a directory, but the MPO could put something together in an effort to encourage networking and communication.

Monroe Gear - Brenda Large is currently coordinating this activity but is open to having an additional volunteer help her or to take over the project. The parent volunteer gets to pick when and how to promote the gear. Kids love to wear the gear making this a fun and positive area to help.

Bingo Night - A winter event currently handled by parent Shanna Rothleham, but an additional volunteer is needed. This event occurs once or twice and involves getting the word out about the event, bringing in some pizza and pulling together a few prizes.

Art & Music in the Courtyard - This event typically occurs in the spring with students' art displayed in the courtyard along with a band, cake and lemonade. Shelly Silver will need at least one other person to help her put this event together.

eScrip - Suzanne Planck has volunteered to handle eScrip and advised the group that you can go to www.escrip.com and search by school name. You can easily update any cards you already have or register new cards. You can also do online purchases from which a percentage of the purchase will go toward the school. The MPO currently gets about \$200 per month from the e-scrip program.

Book Fair - Jennifer Ewert and Melissa Miller have volunteered to handle this year's Book Fair. The Book Fair will be held November 2nd through 5th. Additional volunteers are need to cover shifts.

Monroe Night Out - Volunteer(s) will coordinate with local businesses such as Papa's Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery, etc. to secure a date with the businesses where a portion of their proceeds go directly to our school. The volunteer(s) will make arrangements to advertise the upcoming event through the school website, distribution of flyers, etc. Ideally one event per quarter will be scheduled.

Meeting Concluded at 8:40 p.m.