

## **Minutes of Middlesex Parents Association Meeting November 12, 2011**

### **Summary:**

Betsy updated us on the upcoming events: the Sports tea today at the St George's game, the faculty and staff appreciation brunches on December 10 and 12 and decorating for the Holiday Concert on Nov 30 and set up for the tea that follows the Concert on Dec 4.

Kathy Giles, having just flown in from Asia, spoke about changes over the summer to the school including the departure of Jim Zimmerman and the more recent appointment of Dan Scheibe as the Head of Lawrence Academy effective next July. Kathy also spoke about the seniors and Trustee work including a new strategic plan, among other things.

Meg McLaughlin spoke about concussions and the new Mass law as well as Middlesex's practices.

Carmen Beaton spoke about the Community Life Program including the new student program entitled "Choices" and the Senior leadership program.

Dan Scheibe ended the meeting with a quick tutorial about My Backpack, the parent online portion of the MX website, which now has billing and the student's interim grades on it.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20.

### **Details**

Betsy announced that 131 Zebra scarves were sold on parent's weekend and only 19 were left. These sales raise money for the PA to cover speakers and other events. The Sports Tea is today and goodies were to be brought to the tent by 1pm. Deb Zaffiro organized the event; thanks to her! Robin Shapiro is organizing the Faculty and Staff appreciation brunch/snack on Sat Dec 10 and Monday Dec 12. Please bring in food by 8:30 am to the Barron Room on 12/10 and to the Terry Room on 12/12, or send cash (instructions and sign-up available online as well). All kinds of foods are welcome; sign up on the virtual clipboard in the parents section of the MX website. Finally, for the Holiday concert Christiane Masiello needs help in decorating the Chapel on Wednesday November 30; in addition, others can help by setting up for the tea following the concert on December 4. No baking is involved.

Betsy spoke about recruiting volunteers for this year and next. Particular positions that need filling are the host and hospitality group, class reps, opening day and others. Please email Betsy if you are interested.

## **Kathy Giles, Head of School**

Kathy had just returned from a trip in Asia where she visited Korea, China and Hong Kong. The part of the trip to Bangkok was cancelled due to the flooding there. She was accompanied by Erica Prahll and George Noble. They interviewed prospective students and visited families of current students and young alums. It was an exhaustive but worthwhile trip.

Kathy spoke about the changes to staff over the summer and into the fall. Jim Zimmerman, the Director of Development, has left and has been replaced by two internal candidates, George Noble and Heather Parker. Meggie Patterson closed out the Annual fund over \$3.0 million for the year and Mollie Mattuchio did not leave and helped with the annual fund. One more person is likely to be added to that area over the year. Kathy also announced that Dan Scheibe will be leaving at the end of the school year to be the next Head at Lawrence Academy. He will be sorely missed but we wish him well.

Summer travel trips for students have been streamlined. All trips must be organized and submitted to the school by Nov. 1 so that scholarships and schedules could be properly arranged. In January, all trips for 2012 will be on the calendar.

Several teachers had professional development projects funded by the Warburg family including trips and studies to Oxford, Hawaii and the Western National Parks. Mr Pillai finished his Masters degree.

Nine babies have or are about to be born on the campus! Everyone is happy but tired!

Enrollment statistics are quite strong. The school is at 379; the ideal is 370-375. The seniors are at 104 but they are more balanced in ages. Among other positions, seniors are part of the Peer Tutoring program organized by Chris Coffin and they are available from 6:30-7:30 on a variety of subjects. They wear brightly colored t shirts and are hard to miss. The senior class median of SATs is 690, 690, and 690 or roughly 90-94% percentile, which is pretty high especially compared to the SSAT data of 83-85% on average. In the area of APs, students took 528 AP tests and 70% of those were 4s and 5s and 98% were over 3s. Almost all of these seniors applied for either early decision or early action on Nov. 1 and will be hearing from these colleges initially by mid December.

Several projects the staff are working on include a sustainability study on using #6 fuel oil and finding a way to reduce the campus's use of that. Also The Mary May foundation has offered \$0.5 million to help finance the building of faculty housing for 5 residences. These will be built across the street from the entrance to campus and be done by 2014. Dorm renovations will be taking place probably in the summer of 2013 and the arts center renovation is in the planning stages.

The Board is working on a new strategic plan for the school. The former goals included becoming a premier small national boarding school, and now they are looking at how to best fit international study and international students into the mix at Middlesex. MX

fares well internationally because the data is fairly transparent and easily accessible, which makes it easier for families from abroad to find. They interviewed almost 100 prospective students while they were in Asia. Other topics on the Board's long-term agenda include online learning, creating a math/STEM curriculum for students that is similar to the writing workshop done in the sophomore year, and finally financially retaining the same strong, if not stronger endowment. The current level is \$92 million.

The next few weeks finish the fall sports tournaments, prep for prep visitors, Thanksgiving and final exams.

### **Meg McLaughlin, Director of the Cruz Health Center**

Meg spoke about concussions. There is a new law in Massachusetts that requires schools to take the injuries a lot more seriously, something that MX has already done. What is a concussion: a blow to the head that leads to an alteration of mental status. The alteration in mental status could mean a headache or something more obvious such as blacking out. The alteration may not appear right away and could mean feeling foggy or forgetting things. If the concussion takes place during athletic competition, there is a sideline assessment and at the very least, the athlete is not allowed to continue playing. Afterward the Health Center will follow by checking regularly; if there is any question an impact test will be administered. When students enter MX they are given a baseline impact test and their results will be tested against those. State law requires reporting now so we can compare with other schools and the public system.

MX has approximately 50 concussions a year and there is no one sport or activity that dominates.

### **Carmen Beaton, Dean of Students**

Carmen spoke about the Community Life Program. For the Freshman and new sophomores, there is the Choices program that runs from 7-8:30 on Tuesday nights for 7 weeks in the fall. There are groups with 2 volunteer faculty or staff members, a peer supporter and 8 students. It is a chance to talk about tough issues and most students really enjoy it.

There are 6 planned community life meetings during the year and these are typically done by dorm or house. Recently there was a meeting focused on kindness. There is a club called the Random Acts of Kindness club that inspired this topic. There was a discussion regarding whether actions are either kind or just civil and what that means. Although it might have appeared hokey at the time there has been positive feedback.

There is also the senior leadership program where each junior is interviewed by a faculty member they may not know so well and the students are asked to think about where they like to contribute and then they are asked to apply for a leadership position in order of preference. Then at the beginning of school the Seniors return to school early to get some

formal training in leadership and have some fun together. The program really works well and students can have a variety of experiences.

**Dan Scheibe, Assistant Head of School**

Dan spoke very briefly about the new website in particular about the “My Backpack” section that is specifically for parents. Now billing and grades are available on the website. It is easy to navigate and everything is available on the site. Café prepay will be implemented and available shortly. There should be an update on business office functionality at the January MPA meeting.

The next meeting is January 21 at 9 am.