

# SFC Council

## *General Meeting Minutes*

6:00 p.m., Tues., 03.05.24

<https://loyola.zoom.us/j/2612000080>

### Greetings & Introductions [5 min.]

1. Essence/Toja: Welcome attendees and provide an introduction of the Agenda
  - a. Attendance taken via:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehDPbOSzVQx1W42d1brOXGS5ojC9h7Wa6e3vb8qLZ1r8gSfQ/viewform>

### Leadership Team and PTO Updates/Announcements [10 min.]

1. Mrs. Brown/Essence:
  - a. [Bright Minds Summer Camp](#) open for registration. Will be posted to Parent Square.
  - b. First round of Kindergarten and PK registration will open April 2 - May 15, 2024; Round 2 will open between June 3 - July 15, 2024.
  - c. PTO/SFCC are currently planning a celebration for the 8th graders, who will be graduating this spring.
    - i. This group wants to do a project - like a mosaic outside of the upper building - since they are the first class to graduate from the new building.
    - ii. Amalie has the contact information for the artist that did the mosaic for the entrance to the former blacktop/now MS building. Can reach out to him to see if he might be interested to help in this effort.
2. PTO Lead(s):
  - a. Raise Craze
    - i. Andrea Williams from PTO
    - ii. Raise Craze will run from March 4th through April 5th
    - iii. Funds raised will be used for field trips and beautification of the

- buildings and grounds
- iv. PTO is planning for several big events throughout the fundraiser to keep the momentum going:
    - 1. Throughout the month: Acts of Kindness events (arts & crafts, notes to teachers, notes to community partners)
    - 2. 3/13: breakfast @ 8am; muffins, bagels, fruit for families before school (in the elementary school gym)
    - 3. 3/14: spirit week - wear fave baseball jersey/hat as official kickoff for spring break
    - 4. 3/21: Consignment Shop - clothing swap
    - 5. Date?: field trip day
    - 6. Spring Fling: April 12 or May 16 (Essence will follow up with Deborah Harberger and Molly Marra to solidify this date)
      - a. [Link to vote on date](#)
  - v. Needs: volunteers for the various events (SFCC will support by mobilizing room parents to recruit volunteers)
  - vi. PTO will provide a detailed list about all the different events happening during Raise Craze, so that SFCC can begin recruiting volunteers to help.

## SFC Council Committee Updates & Announcements [10 min.]

- 1. Facilities Committee:
  - a. Playground Update:
    - i. Tot Lot
      - 1. Funding from district to create a tot lot for MWS
      - 2. The District folks have drawn up three renderings that Mrs. Brown will be asking for community to vote on
      - 3. It will be located behind the PK classes
      - 4. [Poll for Tot Lot](#)
    - ii. Main playground
      - 1. Ground covering will be replaced with rubberized material
      - 2. Major drainage issue still needs to be handled; necessity for a drainage system to remove the water and make the currently flooded space ready for the next phase
        - a. Can Parks & People do this project so that it is both aesthetically pleasing and sustainable? This has not yet been discussed with Bill Levy.

- b. Mr. C shared some suggestions for this project
    - 3. Bill Levy and his team will complete the final repairs and restoration of the existing play structure in the main playground. Renderings will follow shortly.
  - b. Recent meeting with MWIA to coordinate our efforts re: DOT
    - i. Traffic signage is moving slowly; hoping for signs that ask for people to slow down during drop off and pick up hours
    - ii. Hoping to change the signage for the right-turn-only (Lochlea to Kelly) to focus those hours to drop-off and pick-up times. Restore the two-way turn beyond those times for our neighbors to be able to functionally move through their part of the neighborhood.
    - iii. Keeping upper part of Lochlea two-way, but there will need to be a community understanding that it is one-way at drop-off or pick-up
      - 1. Could there be a traffic sign indicating this? **Toja** will ask MWIA if we can do this, or if DOT can do this.
  - c. Tavian Cardwell: Update on our Green School Certification
    - i. Green Committee just submitted their green school certification
    - ii. It will keep MWS certified as a Green School for the next 4 years
    - iii. Cleanups/Spring Cleanings are coming up (March, April, May)
    - iv. Grant of \$1800 for beautification coming in soon
      - 1. Can be used to for beautifying our active green spaces
    - v. 4/19: Earth Day! Mr. C's plan is to get everybody outside!
2. C&A Committee:
  - a. Victoria: Bmore Transform Partnership, supporting Middle School GSA Club
    - i. Next meeting is March 19 from 3:45-4:45
  - b. Enrichment programming and support: next steps/future planning
    - i. Looking into after-school clubs, assemblies, and partnerships (Orchkids and Arts Everyday, for example)
      - 1. Mrs. Brown asked **Susannah** to connect her to Orchkids for the next meeting
    - ii. We will work on setting up a framework and more efficient process for on-boarding school clubs over the summer, as we look ahead for the next school year.
    - iii. Need volunteers who can share info about enrichment orgs or who want to start their own club.
      - 1. **Ned Kane** works at MICA and said that he would be happy to share some potential connections

- a. Current [MICA project](#)
  - iv. SFCC will soon launch a grant-writing committee and needs people with expertise who can help us raise money for enrichment opportunities
    - 1. Kim Campbell offered to volunteer; she has experience
  - v. Some after-school opportunities have recently been advertised that are fee-for-service
    - 1. **Action item:** in order to ensure equity and inclusion we want to start a scholarship fund with the PTO so that all students can have access to these programs.
- 3. FCE Committee:
  - a. Organizing for April middle school dance (Spring Fling)
    - i. Lots of interest from students
    - ii. Still working out the theme
    - iii. PTO said they could allocate \$1,000-\$1,500 plus decorations for the event
      - 1. Parents have offered to decorate or provide decorations
      - 2. One parent is a DJ and Ms. Essence is currently waiting to hear back from him
  - b. Amplifying PTO fundraising effort through room parents
  - c. Room parents: challenges?

## Community Forum [45 min.]

- 1. Needs Assessment
  - a. Ms. Essence's goal is to put together focus groups to discuss school needs as part of the polling process. More to come in the coming weeks.
- 2. School Climate: current challenges and steps being taken to address them
  - a. Restorative Practices with Akoben
- 3. Questions and Discussion
  - a. Toja:
    - i. Goal to try harder between now through the summer to be more proactive around climate issues and to bring in strong SEL programs
    - ii. Current issues at the school around anti-black racism, charges of antisemitism, strong feelings around the humanitarian conflict in Gaza
  - b. Susannah called for more programmatic partnerships with orgs like Bmore Transform to work with the district to truly address the needs of the

community; signaling that we are a place of safety and inclusion

- c. Zafar
  - i. Needs to be a structure for inclusion/equity
  - ii. The Kindness Program from last week did not meet the needs of the students
  - iii. 7th and 8th grade classrooms were given no context, no outreach to parents about this very controversial topic being presented in class; clear bias from the presenters with a specific vantage point
    - 1. Danger in this kind of talk (“ Hamas are born to hate Jews”) despite the fact that there has been a stark power dynamic in the region between Israel and Palestine for decades
    - 2. This program that was meant to teach about hate speech actually perpetuated hate speech
    - 3. It was not led by experts
    - 4. The speaker told kids that they might be antisemitic without even knowing it; Zafar read that as a way to teach kids not to critique
    - 5. Also, it was meant to address anti-Black racism and the use of the N-word but that was never addressed
    - 6. Now, Zafar has asked Mrs. Brown to bring in a counterpoint to even this out now
  - iv. Asked if the event last week was approved by the district
- d. Toja asked if we could go to the district or look for a group that can talk with 4th-8th graders about this issue
  - i. Are there plans for that?
  - ii. If not, can we find experts who can address this in a more meaningful way?
  - iii. JHU or Loyola faculty might be able to develop a workshop on this, and maybe we need a social worker in the room to help mediate feelings
  - iv. Also need particular programming around anti-Black racism
  - v. And LGBTQ+ programming that is conducted in an age-appropriate way to talk about gender identity and sexuality
  - vi. Asked once more about a counterbalance for the talk on what is happening in Gaza
- e. Mrs. Brown
  - i. How do we establish systems on approaching speakers?
  - ii. Another parent wanted Mrs. Brown to talk about bullying and

reinforcing healthy relationships; how can the admin work to help kids work through big feelings?

- iii. Mrs. Brown responded to Toja's questions and said it will be brought to her district supervisors
- f. Susannah
  - i. Suggested cultural competency should be a hallmark of IB
- g. Molly
  - i. Consistent bullying happens during transitions that happen outside of the classroom
  - ii. SEL needed for the perpetrators
- h. Mrs. Brown
  - i. MWS has hired more helpers at lunch/recess to keep watch
  - ii. Lunch Bunch for small groups
  - iii. Lunch Detention for repeat perpetrators
  - iv. Second Step SEL program - Brown is looking into amping this up in classrooms
  - v. For next school year they will add on an additional AP for more coverage in both locations
  - vi. District offered de-escalation training to two faculty and the rest of the admin team will go for training this summer
  - vii. Looking to increase Sheppard Pratt partnership
- i. Mr. C.
  - i. As an IB school, international issues are very important
  - ii. The topic of Israel and Palestine and book bans came up in Debate Club
    - 1. This is an example of focus that MWS provide safe spaces for people to think critically about things
    - 2. Important to hold space for these kinds of critical conversations so that kids can learn the joy of learning through critical thinking
  - iii.
- j. Lindsay
  - i. Has the district provided any guidance around how to talk about this conflict?
    - 1. Mrs. Brown responded that the district has given all social studies teachers materials
- k. Carrie
  - i. Noted that it will be important for any sensitive topics that will be

presented to kids that a letter or announcement be sent home - either in folders, email or parent square, or even phone calls

- l. Lindsay
  - i. Asked if there could be standards expected of teachers in terms of using parent square so there can be more consistency
  - ii. Mrs. Brown said they can work to try and norm teachers' use of parent square for next year
  - iii. Toja suggested teachers who struggle to use parent square rely on their room parents to get messages out to the class families
  - iv.
- m. Amalie
  - i. Suggested that if the Israel-Palestine conflict is going to be discussed that the school send home what they plan to share with students so that they will be
- n. Ms. Tillman-Cromartie
  - i. From district
  - ii. Shared that she agrees with what was said about SEL and agrees that proactivity is important
  - iii. She said that Mrs. Brown will have support in terms of responding better to this event and the fallout
  - iv. Someone is scheduled to visit with Mrs. Brown to help her develop a better response
  - v. Noted that the district did share information with social studies teachers but the teachers were not required to address the conflict
  - vi. Ms. Cromartie-Tillman will make sure that Mrs. Brown shares upcoming information with SFCC and the broader family community
- o. Mrs. Brown
  - i. Will be in touch with updates
  - ii. Appreciates the transparency tonight
- p. Toja (post-meeting ideas):
  - i. Can we use the SFCC space to streamline the process of bringing in experts and speakers who might also come in to speak with our students...using SFCC as a clearing space for these experts and programming while giving parents and families an opportunity to preview, reflect, and have conversations at home prior to the programming starting in the classrooms. (Of course, these experts/programs would go through the District's official vetting

process). This could provide us with a more nimble way to approach much-needed conversations around equity and inclusion outside of school time, and really do the work that our community is committed to. We can routinize this for the coming year, if this is an option that our District leads approve of.

- ii. With regard to the recent challenge addressing the conflict in the Middle East, Toja has suggested seeking an expert at one of our local universities to prepare a simple, age-appropriate, evidence based presentation for a mediated discussion among our 4th through 8th grade scholars. In addition to bringing this expert in, it would be good to have a District representative from the Equity and Inclusion team attend this session, along with a skilled mediator (i.e., a neutral counselor or expert mediator [Toja has 2+ decades of experience moderating difficult conversations as part of her university work]) to help manage any big feelings that may come up in the conversation. If this goes well, this could be a model we can adopt going forward. We could, of course vet it through SFCC, providing plenty of lead time for conducting the presentation/discussion during the school day. That way, families can determine whether they want their scholars to opt out of these conversations.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS? [20 min.]**

1. Community Budget Meeting (3/13 @ 6 pm)
2. Upcoming schoolwide polls