

**Menlo School Parents Association**  
**Joint Meeting**  
**Martin Hall**  
**March 13, 2019**

**Welcome: Jenn Miller, MSPA Co-President**

Introduced the Menlo School Girls Basketball State Champions

**Steve Minning, Director of Creative Arts, US Drama**

Cast of Bye Bye Birdie performed a piece from the musical.

**Updates:**

**Than Healy, Head of School**

- Reflections on the college admissions scandal
  - Than wants to reinforce that Menlo has an incredible college counseling team
  - Core issue facing today's high school student is that we as a society are fixated in an unhealthy fashion on a select 10-20 schools. This puts too much pressure on our students. We as an adult community need to send messages to our children that there are hundreds of acceptable colleges for them.
- Update on Performing Arts Center construction: demolition of the current structures will occur over spring break. There will be more information provided at State of the School. Estimated completion of project--August 2020.

**LaVina Lowery, MS Director**

- MS students shared their "Odes to a Friend"
- Several MS students participated in the hackathon
- ERB testing will begin in MS the week of March 18 Testing is only in the morning; light homework may be assigned but no tests and quizzes.
- 4th quarter rotation starts.
- MS Service week is coming up; please reach out to the coordinators as they may need additional volunteers.
- Random Acts of Fun with 8th grade is coming up in the next week.

**John Schafer, US Director**

- Girls State Champs: our athletes represented Menlo well
- Writers Week went well: on the last day, dozens of kids came to present and also support their classmates.
- Report cards come out next week.
- Hiring in US: seven new teachers
- Signing up for classes
- Admissions process: very difficult process with many great applicants

## **US and MS Teacher/Staff Panel: Moderated by Bridget Longis**

Leo Kitajima

Ricky Lambert

Becki Phillips

Carmen Borbon

Jake Fauver

The panel commented on a variety of topics including:

### Reflections on first coming to Menlo

Beautiful campus

Tremendous amount of freedom and support from students and faculty community (very powerful and inspiring)

Team model of people working together and creating a student life team; the cohesiveness and holistic approach was refreshing

### What stands out to you coming to Menlo

Small class sizes and being able to provide more attention and build relationships with students.

At Menlo it truly feels like its a place where a teacher can try new things and experiment with the curriculum and see what works in individual cases. Being able to change things to meet the needs of the current students.

Being able to be flexible and setting up learning experiences for current students

Spirit at menlo stands out; students out on the quad

### What are some challenges of working here

Housing, cost of living, not sustainable long term;

When students are surrounded by others who are so motivated and high achieving, it's easier for kids to use those kids as the benchmarker and then perceive themselves in a diminished way

We need to be able to celebrate and nurture other ways that makes kids absolutely amazing

With a school of this age and so many traditions, coming in and starting to change a program or bring in something new can be challenging

### What are you proud of that you are involved in at Menlo

New Performing arts center being built: expands what is possible with performing arts and innovated programming that can merge different disciplines together

Seeing how Sophomores have progressed in their writing/research papers from Freshman year

Incredible to see the number of staff who are actually excited to be here

Also, this is a rare school where the school builds in time for faculty to meet together and discuss students as a team.

Wellness conversations by class

The work that the MS is doing with SBL allowing school to have authentic assessments of students

## **Keith Wheeler, Chief of Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

WASC : although we are on the right path, there is still work to do

The Journey of Menlo from an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion perspective:

Phase 1: EIDC (committee of diverse group of faculty and parents; will add students)

Was responsible for creating Menlo's first five year plan for Equity Inclusion and Diversity

Observe student and parent affinity groups

Assess AIM results (from 2014-15; standardized report)

Foundational for centennial scholars program

Phase 2: Looking at the scope of best practices

Centennial Scholars group solidified

Scope defined for CS workgroup

Draft 1 of Strategic plan will be prepared.

Executive Summary will be prepared. Also, a professional videographer will put together a film of our progress over the last five years.

Narrative on where we are going in the future will be included.

Phase 3: Action

New strategic plan will be presented

There will be EDI items added to the professional development calendar for faculty as well as parent ed in a variety of areas and talks

Protocols for affinity groups will be developed for consistency across the entire campus (MS and US)

Science EDI retreat (exploring data with science teachers in US re: student matriculation)

Revising the mission and vision of the EIDC

HR recruitment plan

Faculty of color affinity group (will be led by Keith)

EDI faculty book will be recommended

Website: relevant info re EDI will be added throughout the year

Centennial Scholars Program: Keith will become involved with this program

An endowment from donors wanting to create programs on campus to serve specific populations to build community and investment that once they graduate, would encourage them to come back and share their talents with the menlo community.

Looking to create a systems of interventions to support our students throughout their time at Menlo

Keith will also be expanding the Kickstart program (for a specific set of students) to happen all throughout the academic year. Parents will be assigned a mentor; students will be assigned a mentor.

Moving from transactional to transformational from an EDI standpoint: college undergrad tuition remission for those students involved in Centennial Scholars program

For more information about the Centennial Scholars program, please contact Keith Wheeler

**MSPA Council Slate for 2019-2020: Mary Pinkus and Alli Deeter, Nominating Chairs**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the MSPA Council slate for 2019-20 was unanimously approved by the MSPA parents present.

VP MS co-president elect still to be added.

Auction committee: Reminder to buy tickets.

**Announcements**

Auction - Saturday, March 23

MS Service Week - March 25-29

Special Olympics - Saturday, April 13

Last US MSPA Meeting - Wednesday, May 1

Last MS MSPA Meeting - Wednesday, May 8

US Musical - May 3-5 and May 10-11