

**McDonogh Parents Association
Upper School Meeting Agenda
February 13th, 2018
8:30 am**

Welcome and Introductions: **Jill Eisner**, Chair
Kristin Henry, Assistant Chair

Upper School Update: **Merritt Livermore**, Head of Upper School

Merritt welcomed everyone and mentioned many exciting upcoming events:

- Valentine's Day with the McDonogh Gentlemen Songsters and Women of Note, sophomores delivering carnations, and casual dress day tomorrow.
- The very busy Robotics build season ends February 20.
- The US Dance concert was great with over 60 dancers including two boys; there was a great student audience turnout and energy for both performances.
- Wrapping up basketball with girls in the semi-finals on Thursday and boys just entering their tournament; squash and girls and boys swimming won championships; wrestling took 2nd at the MIAA championships and is entering States this weekend.
- The Mock Trial tournament round starts Thursday with single elimination.

She explained that course registration for next year is starting:

- The Course Guide is being edited and will be out by the end of next week.
- There will be a student assembly on 2/27 to learn about new courses and programs.
- Forms will be due at the end of March (3/29).
- Interims will be out to parents by March 8 along with conference signups.

She addressed the situation in the dorms and answered parent questions:

- Still in the process of learning, reflecting, and debriefing.
- Supporting those who are involved in the situation; it is important to respect the confidentiality of students and their parents.
- Committed to doing our best to prevent such actions in the future.
- Developing a comprehensive strategic plan moving forward; for example, meeting with someone today to talk about boy culture; Nancy Love is meeting with every male boarder personally to hear what they feel they need in the dorm community; also talking with Mickey Deegan and Matt MacMullan (co-athletic directors) about how to have conversations with teams and team captains.
- Committed to exploring the culture of silence and the bystander effect with students.
- Reinforcing with students that if something doesn't sound safe or if it sounds like something they wouldn't want to be involved in, it is an important next step to let an adult know.
- Of note, no boarders have moved out of the dorms, and new boarders are moving in for the spring term next week.
- This was unique to the boys dorm; not the girls dorm.

- Merritt invited anyone who has questions or wants to talk to reach out to her; she expressed her appreciation for our support, trust, and patience, and emphasized that the safety of students is the absolute most important thing.

Speaker: **Bridget Collins**, Director of Character and Service

Summary:

- Bridget thanked us for having her, and talked about her background at the school as a student, teacher, coach, and one of the original authors of the student driven Honor Code written in 1990.
- Bridget gave a short presentation on the history of character and service at McDonogh.
 - John McDonogh's rules for living - "Study in your course of life to do the greatest possible amount of good" - is the underpinning of McDonogh's focus on character and service.
 - Themes in "The McDonogh Uniform" poem by Eustace Glascock: patience, labor, wisdom, love, honor and truth.
 - Charlie Britton created the Committee on Character led by John Grega in 2005 to determine our core values. The Character Compass came out of this effort, with the four points of honesty, respect, kindness and responsibility, and service at the center.
 - There are many times when students stop to focus on character and service: Founders Day, Memorial Day, assemblies, advisory, etc.
 - This curriculum is more systematic in the Lower School, with monthly themes and a program title of "Learning for Living." We are working to see this through age appropriately in the MS and US. The student created Honor Code is now used in the MS as well as the US.
- The school is working on a strategic plan to take a look at how we synthesize our efforts across all three schools, with more emphasis on the transition from LS to MS and US. This will also include athletic team culture, clubs, student leadership, wellness, so that kids have the moral courage to take a stand.
- The goal is to figure out how to get kids to transfer character education to their everyday life in a world where what they consume teaches the opposite of what we are teaching at home and in school.
- Technology and social media are an important piece of the puzzle. Children have the same challenges that we had, but social media creates a more public pressure. We must integrate an understanding of digital technology into how they show up in the world.
- The service that happens here is truly inspiring, and in the US it is almost all generated by the kids.
- New students to the US learn about Character Education in the following ways: during the summer they meet with the honor council and have a week long orientation; it is also covered in freshman orientation; there is an Honor Convocation run by seniors in the fall; it is part of the wellness curriculum; it happens in Advisory activities for Founder's Day, Memorial Day, specific themed assemblies with follow up activities.
- We will continue the commitment to character we have always had, but in a much deeper and more authentic way that involves more teachers, students, parents.
- Bridget expressed that we can only be successful in helping kids navigate this world if we work together. She encouraged parents to call or email her with ideas.

Parent Relations:

Ann Fleming, Director of Advancement Services and Parent Relations
Jen Little, Incoming Director of McDonogh Connect, Director of Parent Relations, Co-Director of the R-L Leaders Program

Ann introduced Jen Little as the new parent liaison for the MPA. Ann reminded people that if they need tables, chairs, room reservations etc. let her know. There is a new reservation system and she has to order at least 3 days in advance. A week of advance notice would be ideal to make sure we have what you need for your event.

Jen Little shared that this is her 13th year at McD, and she is currently still in the position of Director of Alumni Relations until that is filled. She is excited about transitioning into her new role and to work on the upcoming parent event March 24th.

MPA Updates:

Randi Hyatt, MPA Chair
Erika Davies, MPA Assistant Chair

No updates

All School Committees:**After Prom:**

Debbie Thacker, Chair

Had a second meeting 2/1 with 20 plus attendees and some who couldn't come. Working on the prize committee. Going to Dave and Busters today to make sure it is large enough and it works. Searching for a new Treasurer to shadow this year and take over next year. If you are interested in donating or being involved please reach out to Debbie.

MPA Parent Ambassador:

Maureen Roden, Upper School Chair

No updates

Parenting Education:

Judy Yu, Chair

Judy was not present, but Ann Fleming stated that there is a March 5 Parenting education program with Dr. Dan Ellerman on Diversity and Inclusion. This is open to the community at large, not just McDonogh parents.

Upper School Committees:**Used Uniform:**

Pam Foresman, Chair

Pam will be scheduling uniform sale times on the following dates:

Teacher Coffee Bar: **Jill Bloom**, Chair

This event has been moved to Feb 14th from 7 - 9 a.m. due to snow. Please contact Jill Bloom if you can help as she may need a few more volunteers.

Student Treat (Snowballs): **Jill Bloom**, Chair (May 3), need 1-2 volunteers

No updates

Teacher Appreciation Luncheon (Spring): **Kristin Henry**, Chair

Kristin was not present, but Jill Eisner spoke on her behalf. There are still a couple spots to be filled (case of soda, flowers, blankets - see the google doc). The event is on Thursday 4/19. The Koopers food truck is confirmed serving the teachers outside. Please leave food and drinks that morning or night prior under-cover on the St. John's porch by the green, or on the counter in the board room kitchen in the St. John's Center.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fLbRV_bEJ3ofFm6h4ntI90Npu5AnQOS_wFDVGjfgI58/edit

Thanks to Kirsten Lockyer, Charlene Simonds and Murph Beattie for today's refreshments.

If anyone can bring coffee to the next meeting please contact Kristin Henry

Jill Eisner thanked everyone and encouraged them to be in touch with Merritt Livermore or Charlie Britton if they have anything to discuss.

Upcoming dates:

March 2nd Multicultural night at 6pm in Paterakis Hall- free, bring/drop off a favorite family dish to share if you would like.

March 22 US Parent-Teacher Conferences (late afternoon & early evening)

March 24 All school Parents only "Mix and Mingle McDonogh" 7:30-10:30 Paterakis Hall in Edward St. John Center (magician, farewell to Mr. Britton, jazz band, and Copper Kitchen Catering)

April 5 MS Parent-Teacher Conferences

April 5 Sophomore Stay Safe Night

April 6 MS Parent-Teacher Conferences

April 18 US info night for Grade 8

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 20th at 8:30am at Mullan Board Room**

** (Please note, March 20th is the THIRD Tuesday of March and the FIRST day back to school after Spring Break.)