



Board Briefs, November 16, 2023

The MRH Board of Education selected a new Director to fill the unexpired term of Brandi Herndon-Miller, who resigned from the Board last month. Julie Francois will serve until the April 2024 election. She was one of three individuals who applied for the Director position. Francois is Global Regulatory Manager with Bayer CropScience. She has served in varying capacities with Good Shepherd School for Children, Maplewood Parks and Recreation Commission, Girls on the Run, Scouts and Mosaic Services. She was MRH School District Citizen of the Year for 2021-2022. Long active in the MRH PTO, Francois has two children attending MRH and has lived in Maplewood since 2009.

The Board also voted to name current Board Treasurer Rachel Goltzman as the new Board Vice President, the title previously held by Herndon-Miller. Goltzman will hold dual titles until a reorganization meeting in April.

CFO Chris Hoelzer and Operations Director Dr. Michael Dittrich reported that the bidding deadline for the new Central Office renovation closed on Thursday, November 16, with three companies offering bids. The administrative team will evaluate and score the proposals and will make a recommendation for approval at the December 7 Board work session. MRH purchased the property at 2531 S. Big Bend with the aim of returning spaces back to students by providing a public meeting space for Board of Education meetings, professional development, and office space for staff and leadership. The project timeline calls for construction activity to begin before the end of the calendar year, with spaces ready for the start of the 2024-25 school year.

Three MRH teachers presented proposals for new courses.

- Seed to Table instructor Melissa Breed-Parks laid out plans for a course which would introduce students to food and agriculture career paths. Breed-Parks said the creation of this course would also fulfill some of the students' interest in starting a Family and Consumer Science experience in the new Teen Kitchen space.
- On behalf of teachers Christine Demijan and Lisa Weaver, Asst. Supt. Dr. Chris McGee presented a dual course plan (Math 6/7 and Math 7/8) designed to give students and families greater flexibility to access advanced math content during the transition from Elementary to Middle School.

The president of the [Principal's Advisory Leadership \(PAL\) Board](#), senior Abraham Blue, reported that PAL made a presentation to the High School student body at a recent town hall. PAL members also took a hardhat tour of the construction site at Building "A," the future site of additional classrooms, offices and a gymnasium serving the High and Middle Schools.

Board President Amber Withycombe offered a reminder that candidates interested in running for three open Director positions in the April 2024 election may begin filing candidacy paperwork on December 5. [Filing details can be found on the MRH website.](#)