

# Nicolet Multi-Ethnic Parent Association (MEPA)

February 24, 2016 Meeting Minutes

## MEPA Mission:

MEPA Exists to

1. Promote academic success for all students.
2. Advocate for equal access to a college ready curriculum for all students
3. Increase parental engagement, involvement, and awareness of the Nicolet System to ensure success of the diverse student population.
4. Award and honor seniors from the diverse population with scholarships

## Agenda Topics

- 1) Administration Update -Dr. Kobylski
- 2) Committee Updates
  - a. Scholarship
  - b. Parental Engagement
- 3) College Readiness - Special Guest-Andre Douglas
- 4) What's your Passion?

## Topic recap

- 1) **Administration Update – Dr. Kobylski**  
**Board Adopted District Goals**

Dr. Kobylski discussed the district goals. He said Nicolet is proud of the goals. They are smart, data oriented, they understand the challenges Nicolet faces. He said they incorporate wellness, communication, and partnership with families and students. They include high expectations and equity in education. **The district goals can be found at the link:**

[http://www.nicolet.us/district/district\\_goals.pdf](http://www.nicolet.us/district/district_goals.pdf)

## Referendum

Dr. Kobylski discussed the upcoming Referendum. In 2010, the Nicolet community voted to support a referendum to spend beyond the revenue limit. That referendum is coming due in June 2016. There will be fact sheets, FAQ, and other information on the Nicolet website. Without the referendum, Nicolet would see a 15% reduction in services. This would translate to 12 less teachers, one less custodian, one less administrator, etc. Currently, Nicolet is able to hold class sizes to about 21 students per class. Class size is a key determinant of an effective school. The financial cost to the community is \$7 per \$100,000 home value (e.g. a home valued at \$400,000 would see a \$28 increase in taxes due to the referendum).

## **MEPA Response to Administration update**

MEPA members expressed interest in campaigning to other residents to vote YES to the referendum. There will be yards signs, door to door contact and other community meetings to get residents involved in the hope the Referendum passes

## **2) Committee Updates**

### **Scholarship:**

The scholarship committee will be leading grass roots efforts to raise additional funds for the scholarship fund. MEPA members are encouraged to contact local businesses to contribute the scholarship fund. A standard form letter has been developed to send.

Current Seniors will soon be able to apply for a MEPA scholarship. More information to come.

**Scholarship Celebration** -Please save the date: Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm in the library to celebrate the seniors awarded MEPA scholarships.

### **Parental Engagement:**

Tim, Yolanda, Jenna and other parents attended some basketball games to hand out information about MEPA. One attendee at the meeting tonight was made aware of MEPA because of this engagement. MEPA is requesting members to attend a basketball game at Nicolet on March 1<sup>st</sup> and a track meet on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Parental engagement is the key for student success and achievement. Parental engagement is the foundation and strength of MEPA. There is strength in numbers as together we partner with the school, administration and community to ensure our students' success.

## **3) College Readiness Special Guest Speaker: Andre Douglas, Project Manager, Graduation Plus-Boys and Girls Club**

Andre Douglas has worked at the Boys and Girls Club of Milwaukee in the College Access and Success Program for 8 years. He explained that sometimes, even in great high schools, classroom instruction is not enough. This program facilitates college access and success.

The goals of the program are to have all students go to college, with as much scholarship money as possible, and to be prepared to be a successful college student.

Mr. Douglas previewed, year by year, how their program guides their students through this process:

### **Freshman Year**

- The student needs:
  - An academic plan
  - A college plan that guides them through all four years,
  - And a life plan.

- These plans are different, and the distinction is important. The academic plan includes classes needed to graduate. The College Plan and the life plan includes thinking about what interests them, their passions, and a successful way to achieve them.

Advice to Parents: Be involved in your children's school. Go to conferences. Ask questions. Help your children shadow careers. Investigate pre-college programs. Be mindful of your foundational GPA.

### **Sophomore Year**

- Begin college visits. Visit college classrooms and lectures, attend campus orientations, and investigate college culture etc.
- Revisit grades, is the trend positive?
- Begin asking your child what they may want to do?

Advice to Parents: Continue to be supportive, involved, and an advocate for your child.

### **Junior Year**

- Begin the college entrance essays. Edit them to perfection. Children will need instruction on how to write this essay. It is different than a research paper or classroom paper.
- Begin thinking seriously about Career and Major options. Explore Careers and Majors.
- Begin understanding the Financial Aid component of college.
- Begin a list of colleges your child wants to apply to.
- Create a list of scholarship options. Constantly research scholarship ideas: Parent in a labor union? Religious/cultural scholarships? School/ university specific opportunities? There are a many scholarships available
- Create a financial statement checklist. Create a cost worksheet for every college your child is applying to.
- Solidify recommendation letters. Request one community member letter and one letter from a teacher. Request the teacher's letter at the end of Junior Year so the teacher can work on it over the summer.

Advice to Parents: Junior year is the year of Building a Culture of College.

### **Senior Year**

- Submit your college applications by October 1st.
- Send Thank you cards to the colleges child applied for admission, visited &/or applied for scholarship (the student is to send the cards).
  - Get and stay on their radar. Send follow up emails. Build connections.
- Finalize financial planning. Create a college financial worksheet, every student for every college.

### **Boys and Girls Club Programs**

BMO Scholars: College Access and Success. Gives tools, ACT prep, budget management help, personal soft skills. Currently accepting applications from sophomores and juniors. This program has a strong partnership with Marquette University.

College Corner (located at all Legacy Sites): attend two programs a month. Tools to engage, prepare, and apply to college.

Dr. Kobylski thanked Andre and responded that Nicolet is interested in partnering with B&G Club in some way. Nicolet's Guidance Department is in the middle of a change in their operating system. Nicolet would welcome another resource, especially for the soft skills the B&G Club emphasizes. He feels like this could complement what Nicolet offers.

Note the list below contains brief **status updates** of action items discussed at previous meetings and **New Action items** identified at meeting.

Action	Owner	Due date
<b>Status Updates:</b> March 1 <sup>st</sup> Basketball game. Hand out MEPA flyers.	All	March 1st
<b>Status Updates:</b> MEPA is encouraging ALL families to proactively set up appointments with your guidance counselor to make sure your child is on track to graduate.	All	Ongoing
<b>New Action Items:</b> March 10 <sup>th</sup> Parent/Student/Teacher Nicolet Conferences. Please attend and volunteer to staff a table to hand out MEPA information.	All	March 10 <sup>th</sup> 3:30-7:30
<b>New Action Item:</b> Communicate information from Referendum Parent meeting and share with/ engage additional Nicolet parents	D Carter	March 10th
<b>New Action Item</b> Mr. Klingman and Ms. Robertson are going to distribute graduation and college planning information at Sporting Events	All	May 17 <sup>th</sup> Track meet
<b>New Action Item:</b> Parent Engagement. Continue the strong conversation regarding our responsibility as a community. We have to be vested, have the knowledge and experience to guide our students to success.	All	Ongoing
<b>New Action Item:</b> Redefine Parent, Student, and Counselor roles. MEPA and Nicolet will hear outlines of successful college plans from Partner schools. We will access the ideal plan vs. the current Nicolet Plan. Where are the Gaps? We will work to have defined Parent Roles, defined Counselor Roles and defined Student Roles.	Kabara & Kobylski	TBD

<b>New Action Item:</b> What's Your Passion? Please let us know what you are passionate about (advocacy, outreach, and fundraising) and commit to helping MEPA reach every Nicolet family to maximize their student's potential for success.	All	Ongoing
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