

# Bloomington Montessori School Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2020, 6:00 pm, BMS Commons

## Board Members Present

- Leslie Thomas
- Amanda Cook
- Janelle Terkhorn
- Scott Pitkin
- Jennifer Diaz
- Noriko Hara
- Stacie Farmer
- Allison O'Boyle
- Susan Yeley
- Phuong Thang

## Staff Members Present

- Quinn McAvoy
- Jess Davis
- Teresa Mandell
- Karen Keagle
- April Waxler
- Anna Wegerson
- Eve Cusack
- Matt Metzler
- Nick Beatty

## Community Members Present

- Ashley Pirani
- Stephanie Li
- Bridget Stomberg
- James Clawson

## Preliminaries

Leslie Thomas – President – Time: 6:00 pm

- Introductions and Welcome
  - Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made all around.
- Statement of Ground Rules
  - The ground rules were passed around and read aloud.
- Approval of Minutes from January Board Meeting
  - **Janelle Terkhorn, Policies Director, moved to approve the minutes from the January Board Meeting. Allison O'Boyle, Fundraising Director, seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with no objections or abstentions.**
- Call for Issues Not on the Agenda

- Several parents of students in the Magnolia classroom were present to raise some concerns they had about the classroom. Their discussion was added as the last agenda item for the meeting.
- The point was made for the benefit of those present that during a board meeting, administrative staff and lead teachers do not vote.

### President's Report

Leslie Thomas – President – Time: 6:04 pm

- Leslie deferred for time.

### Operation's Report

Quinn McAvoy, Jess Davis, Teresa Mandell, Karen Keagle – Time: 6:04 pm

- Secretary's note: many of the following items were briefly highlighted by the relevant staff members due to time constraints. The full operation's report was provided by the Head of School prior to the meeting and has been copied here.

### Enrollment Update

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

#### Table of Enrollment Numbers

<b>Group</b>	<b>February 2020</b>	<b>2019-2020 Budget</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Half Day</b>	40	40	0
<b>Full Day</b>	7	7	0
<b>All Day</b>	58	58	0
<b>Lower EL</b>	64	65	-1
<b>Upper EL</b>	35	35	0

- Currently, we have one opening in AM Half Day Early Childhood, two openings in All Day Early Childhood, two openings in Lower Elementary and one opening in Upper Elementary.

### Staffing

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- The hiring committee finished the interviewing process for the new Lead Teacher for the 9-12 classroom.
- Maddy McCallister has joined our After-Care Team.
- Mid-year Goal Check-in/Peer Feedback meetings were held the week of February 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- High staff absences this month due to sickness.
- Alice Pennell is out on maternity leave.

### Student Services

Jess Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Continued work with Lead Teachers and MCCSC on individual accommodations and ISPs, including team meetings with parents and Accommodation Plan meetings
- Arranged service providers (one staff member and the original MCCSC teacher will be covering. Still working on MCCSC payment of our staff member)
- Graduating sixth grade students' transitions to middle school: ALPS timeline to parents, set up visits from local middle school principals, passed out class selection forms
- Did a series of student services observations on students in 3 classrooms.

- Provided literacy assessment and support for a few kindergartners once per week.

#### AMS

Jess Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Waiting to hear back with final accreditation determination
  - The accreditation committee meets in January and takes up to two months to discuss and make their final decision. Jess stated there has been some turnover in the administration, which could be a cause for delays.
- IU Teacher Education Program Partnership: Jess followed up again. She received a positive response again. She is still waiting to hear back on next steps.

#### Curriculum

Jess Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- The Parent Forum for February will be on Sexuality Education.
- She has been arranging CTBS (standardized testing) make-up tests for absences and will send tests out for scoring.
- She met with a representative from the IU School of Urban and Alternative Agriculture regarding a partnership project for the 9-12 class.
- She facilitated a service partnership between Sycamore classroom and Community Orchard, which included pruning, a site check, etc.
- Teaching drawing classes in Sycamore classroom
- Providing additional support in Magnolia classroom

#### Advocacy

Jess Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Spoke to a group of FSSA and IN-DOE representatives last Friday at the state house regarding Montessori education and compatible legislation
  - They talked about the pros and cons of 3<sup>rd</sup> party accreditation
  - They also discussed the benefits of accreditation through AMS
  - This is new territory for the state legislature. They have procedures/practices in place for accrediting parochial schools, but not for Montessori schools.

#### Administration

Jess Davis, Director of Montessori Programs/Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Support consultant/Head of School work on bylaw and policy edits
- Enrollment offers out to families of 3-year-olds and admission visits in progress
- Completed peer evaluations on all teaching staff. Jess is assisting Quinn with building evaluations and surveys.
- Applied for two small grants: a nonfiction library grant and a Monroe County Master Gardener grant for a Sycamore classroom project.

#### Facilities

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- MAINTENANCE PENDING:
  - Installation of the bike rack – Racks to be donated by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission; still waiting to hear from the commission about the racks
  - Remodel Sycamore

- Install STOP sign at the end of our driveway. Quinn is working out the logistics for exiting the school parking lot now that Short Street has been extended.
- Relocate DO NOT ENTER sign since it's at the entrance to Short Street and no longer relevant to just our parking lot.
- Research remote entry system for the interior doors – main campus
  - Quinn is looking into a system for school safety to keep children from escaping but also to have a way to buzz people into the building.
- COMPLETED:
  - Replaced damaged blinds in Magnolia
  - Toilet fixed in one of the Commons restrooms

## Technology

Teresa Mandell, IT Manager

- Updated Windows 10 and drivers for all the Sycamore laptops, Office desktop, IT desktop, extra laptop, and IT print server
- Updated listservs for families/children who have left the school
- Discovered version update issues with Dreamhost.
  - Reached out to Adam Hinz for guidance and help.
  - Worked with Dreamhost to get the PHP version of our Parent Portal updated. This upgrade is necessary for security reasons. We will be keeping the Parent Portal (programmed 10 years ago by parent volunteers) going until FACTS and our new SIS systems are in place to run our lunch-selection options for community members.
  - Currently, we are testing the new coding from Dreamhost.
  - Leslie asked if there might be issues with the lunch selection process during the transition. Teresa said we might have to go to doing lunch selections on paper, but there are only a couple of months left in the school year that need lunch selections.
  - Teresa and Quinn will meet on how the lunch selection process will need to be modified until its ready to cross over to FACTS.
- Started pricing replacements for one of our Epson projectors which is having issues with connectivity. Pricing looks like \$500 (high estimate) for an Epson X29 with current format. We have had 11+ uses with these projectors in the last month.
- Pricing new Chromebooks and laptops. (Will investigate responses to new HP Chromebooks and the possibility of moving from laptops to Chromebooks.)
- Updated our .ORG site for changes reflecting new school processes and procedures as well as removal of content to complement our new FACTS system. Our .ORG site will be redesigned by GoMontessori next year.
- Covered front office as needs arose (meetings and illness)
- Making modifications to the .ORG site until it's ready for the GoMontessori transition

## Development

Karen Keagle, Director of Development and PR

- Spring Parent Social: Help Willow Grow
  - Continued planning activities and meetings

- Met with events coordinator at Southern Stone (formerly Sweet Grass Restaurant)
    - Continued plans for fundraising goals and activities
  - Event set for Friday, April 3, 6:30 – 9:30 pm at Southern Stone
    - Heavy hors d'oeuvres
    - Wine, beer, array of non-alcoholic beverages
    - Live music, easy free parking, including parking at the dermatology center across the street
    - Three fun fundraising activities along with a specific ask for Willow needs
    - Tickets \$40; staff tickets available at cost
    - Mark your calendars! Bring your friends! Bring your checkbook!
    - Book that sitter!
- Spring Fling Fundraiser
  - Continued planning activities and meetings
    - Met with Allison, Ashley, Quinn and Lacey to continue planning for Spring Fling
  - New Date for Spring Fling: Saturday, May 16, 4 to 7 pm at Karst Farm Park
- Annual Appeal
  - 100% Board Participation, just over \$3,000 in donations
  - Donations net: \$9,668.34 to date
  - Last year net: \$9,108.04 to date
  - Annual appeal thank you letters generated
- Annual Fund
  - Net to date: \$13,564
  - Last year net to date: \$11,779.24
- FACTS Giving
  - Met again (via phone) with representative from FACTS Giving
  - Provided information and cost estimates to Head of School
- Panera Dine Out
  - Set for February 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 – 8:00 pm, 2748 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - Mark your calendars! Bring your friends! Bring your flyers!

#### PR and Communications

Karen Keagle, Director of Development and PR

- Website
  - New brochure text forming the basis for website revisions
  - Updating website with new info, rewrites, and 2020-21 forms
- Planning underway for booth at 2020 Bloomington Street Fair on May 3, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, rain or shine.
  - Must have at least one activity for children
- Ordered BMS logo adjustable tablecloth for use at events
- Planned giveaways for upcoming events
- Continued exploring WTIU/WFIU sponsorship opportunities
- Newsletters sent

- Held Coffee Chat on January 23 with focus on Spirit Shoppe Sale
  - Spirit Shoppe Sale will last through February 20 Coffee Chat

#### Finances

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Main checking: \$49,705.72
- Money market: \$151,085.99
- Certificate of Deposit: \$482,497.59
- Fundraising: \$13,607.04
- Café Account: \$1,556.25
- Delinquency Balance: \$6,715.51 for six accounts

#### School/Board Development

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Continued revision of the Bylaws and Policy Handbook
- Started work on the school's Strategic Plan

#### 9-12 Expansion

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Hiring Committee finished interviewing candidates and made their lead teacher selection for the new 9-12 classroom, to be approved in Executive Session.

#### Treasurer's Report

Phuong Thang – Treasurer – Time: 6:18 pm

- Balance Sheet
  - The IU Café account decreased a bit. We switched to a bi-weekly payroll from a monthly payroll. January had 3 payrolls as will July, so the extra payroll decreased the amount in our checking account somewhat.
  - All other accounts haven't changed.
  - Accounts Receivable had a liability because more people paid for their February tuition ahead of time.
- Profit and Loss
  - January was a consistent month revenue-wise.
  - Tuition and other income are staying close to what we budgeted for.
  - Salaries are a little higher because of 3 payrolls in January and because of the number of substitutes needed due to illness.
  - Building operations was higher because the floors were stripped in December.
  - The free food commodities have kicked in. Kitchen expenses were low due to fewer lunches bought/needed in December because of holiday breaks.
  - Association expenses included the lodging and food for the AMS visit.
  - Computers and Networks expenses were up because of the new laptops bought?

#### Magnolia Room Issue

Parents, Board – Time: 6:23 pm

- A few parents from the Magnolia classroom were present at the meeting to discuss concerns and challenges they've had with the classroom this year. They have had multiple meetings with Quinn, Jess and Anna. They felt they needed to escalate their

concerns to the Board with the enrollment deadline coming up on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Some parents are questioning whether they want their children to return to the classroom or even move up to the Lower Elementary.

- The concerns they brought to the board included:
  - The Magnolia Kindergarteners are not receiving the same classroom experience as other Kindergarteners had in the past. For example, they are not participating in weekly nature hikes due to the need for staff coverage in the classroom.
  - The classroom has two new non-lead teachers. The parents felt one of those teachers is not experienced enough to be in the classroom.
  - Communication about curricular activities or conflicts within the classroom is poor or lacking.
  - There is an age imbalance within the classroom (11 youngest groupers, 9 middle groupers, and 6 Kindergarteners). There is a higher number of youngest groupers than middle groupers and Kindergartners. The parents are concerned about some of the younger students' readiness for the classroom.
- Some ideas/solutions that were suggested at the meeting:
  - The parents were encouraged to share any inappropriate teacher behaviors they might see with Jess and Quinn.
  - Quinn could have a conversation with the entire classroom about steps the administration has been taking and will take to alleviate some of the parents' concerns, including:
    - Classroom observations done by April Waxler, Jess, Quinn, and Kathy Frick, who was a preschool teacher at BMS for many years.
    - Terry Vilaro, a non-lead in the Sweet Gum classroom, has been doing trainings with the new Magnolia lead teachers, working on behavior management. They've also taken a webinar course on behavior management.
    - Another employee along with Jess and Quinn is providing support services within the classroom.
    - Continue to follow our school's Student Services policy with its 3 tiers to provide support to specific children in the classroom.
  - Jess volunteered to do nature walks with the Kindergartners on possibly a monthly basis.
  - Parents could volunteer in the classroom to help with chores or to assist on nature walks.
  - Students from the Sycamore classroom could help in the Magnolia classroom in other ways besides reading to the Magnolia students during their rest time.
- The question was raised about whether, given the circumstances and the looming enrollment deadline, the Magnolia parents could be given some flexibility on when they make their decision on enrolling their children for next year.
  - It was pointed out by lead teachers and board members that many things must happen after the enrollment period ends, including classroom and grade level placement for all enrolled students. It would be difficult on all involved if a delay in enrollment was allowed for a set of parents.

- It was also pointed out that parents thinking of placing their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in ALPS have to make similar concessions, since the ALPS placement happens so much later than our enrollment period.
- Jess told the parents present that if they or other Magnolia parents came up with any other specific solutions to help the classroom, they can bring their ideas to her.
- Leslie asked for any other questions or comments. There were none. She thanked the parents present for attending.
- Quinn asked if Ashley had anything to share about PAC, no

#### Closing

- Quinn asked if Ashley had anything she wanted to share from the PAC. Ashley did not.
- **Janelle Terkhorn, Policies Director, made a motion to move to Executive Session and Closed Session. Scott Pitkin, Long Term Board Member, seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with no objections or abstentions.**

**Meeting Adjourned: 6:54 pm**

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Cook, Board Secretary