

Bloomington Montessori School Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2020, 6:00 pm, Online via Zoom

Board Members Present

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

Staff Members Present

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

Community Members Present

- Molly Pepper
- Tracy Warren
- Christine Lovelace
- Katie Lehman

Preliminaries

Leslie Thomas – President – **6:05 pm**

- Introductions and Welcome
 - Introductions were deferred due to the limitations of Zoom.
- Statement of Ground Rules
 - Leslie read the ground rules for everyone's benefit.
- Approval of Minutes from February's Board Meeting
 - **Allison O'Boyle, Fundraising Director, moved to approve the minutes from the February Board meeting. Todd Schnatzmeyer, Facilities Director, seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objections or abstentions.**
- Call for Issues Not on the Agenda
 - No new issues were added to the agenda.

President's Report

Leslie Thomas – President – **6:08 pm**

- Leslie: “We all have the same questions. We know the school is doing well. We’re taking care of our families and kids. Our staff and admin team are working hard and doing a fantastic job.”
- “Our plan is to keep doing what we always do. Gather information. Look for opportunities. Make decisions with the best info we have at the time.”
- Leslie said she is thankful for Quinn’s leadership.

Operations Report

Administrative Team – **6:09 pm**

Enrollment Update 2019 – 2020

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- We had a few students leave. We are down in enrollment in Lower Elementary and All Day Preschool.
- Quinn is fielding applications through the school’s website and Facebook. She is working to accommodate the lower enrollment in Lower Elementary.

Table of Classroom Enrollment Numbers for 2019 – 2020

Group	April 2020	2019-2020 Budget	Difference
Half Day	39	40	-1
Full Day	7	7	0
All Day	57	58	-1
Lower EL	63	65	-2
Upper EL	35	35	0

Enrollment Update 2020-2021

Table of Prospective Classroom Enrollment Numbers for 2020 – 2021

Group	Intent to Return 2020-2021	2020-2021 Budget	Difference
Half Day	40	40	0
Full Day	7	7	0
All Day	54	58	-4
Lower EL	57	62	-5
Upper EL	45	45	0

Staffing

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Mid-Year Administration Evaluations will be completed 4/14/2020.
- 2020-2021 Employee Contracts will be sent out the week of 4/13/2020.
- Year-End Staff Evaluations will be completed 5/1/2020.
- Quinn is still looking for a Non-Lead Teacher for Walnut classroom to replace Jacob.
- Staff Surveys
 - Stress level and support need
 - General teacher support (troubleshooting, extra hands, etc.)
 - Our Lead Teachers are putting in insane hours with the workload of first year teachers (having to build every day from scratch) under stressful conditions and in service to parents also experiencing high levels of stress. They deserve SO MUCH SUPPORT right now.
 - Summer Camp teaching interest
 - On-campus/distance learning
 - More people want to send their students to campus for summer school rather than do distance learning.

- We will continue to listen to the governor’s guidance on when to reopen schools.
- MCCSC will receive guidance soon about whether they will be having in person or distance learning for summer school.

Student Services

Jessica Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Jess is continuing MCCSC case conference meetings via conference call
- We can’t do any new evaluations through MCCSC right now
- She is working with MCCSC to set up distance education for 2 students. She had one set up for one student and working on discussing the needs of the second student
- Maddy McCallister (After Care) has been trained and is running a math fact intensive group for 6 students who are behind on math fact automaticity via Zoom
- Jess is trying to find opportunities for individualization in our student services

AMS

Jessica Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Jess is working to schedule a fall visit of the school by AMS via email
- AMS received a huge blow from not being able to hold their annual conference this year. 80% of their income comes from that conference. They ended up canceling four hours into the conference.
 - They had to cut much of their staff.
- All we had to schedule with them for our accreditation was a check in from one person on one day in November.
- Jess emailed the president of AMS because he is still receiving email for the organization. She is waiting to hear back from him.
- Susan: “What happens if AMS goes under [in regard to our accreditation process]?”
 - Jess: “They have drastically cut their expenses, so they can be like they were back in the day, doing volunteer work. They believe they can maintain this nuclear business and rebuild it. MACTI is an umbrella organization over AMS. We don’t have to worry about the accreditation going out the window. MACTI is doing much better, so they will take care of our accreditation.
 - Todd: “Probably because they’re a nonprofit that does legislative work, they’ve probably been omitted from the PPP protection because they have no owners. The next round of stimulus funding will hopefully address that.”

Curriculum

Jessica Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Distance Learning Benchmarks
- Weekly meetings with Early Childhood Lead Teachers, Elementary Lead Teachers, and all Lead Teachers for troubleshooting, planning, and consistency conversations
- Jess is teaching Writers’ Workshop weekly lessons to Kindergarteners – 3rd graders by class/age group. She is about to teach graduation speech writing to 6th graders in the Sycamore class.
- Parent Surveys
 - A Half Day lunch survey was sent.
 - Survey on Summer Camp Interest
 - On-campus/distance learning
 - Survey on Distance Learning

- There are a wide variety of parent opinions, but the majority of respondents reported “liking” how distance learning is going and thinking their children were engaged for a “good amount of time”. Elementary families reported higher satisfaction than Early Childhood families, which is probably inevitable due to the inherent mismatch between three-year-olds and distance learning on a screen.
 - Teachers are working on organizing Zoom links, etc.
 - There have been tweaks to schedules to address feedback (too much screen time, not enough individualization, or accountability).
 - Jess sent clear communication of expectations based on “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs”:
 - Just do as much as your family is able (especially Early Childhood).
 - Work your way up to full participation if and when it works for your family.
 - Parent support will be a service that can fill the gap created, and Jess is working on the blog as well as a couple of webinars targeting FAQs.
 - Jess created a blog in response to requests for resources and also requests for less emails.
 - The Distance Learning survey contained an opportunity to ask for a personalized call. 10 families requested a call, and Jess has been making those calls to help troubleshoot. She has been brainstorming ideas to help families in various ways.

Advocacy

Jessica Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- Jess sent letters and made calls to legislators urging them to include non-public schools in the CARES Act (They are, with “equitable share” language like special education dollars. The money is calculated by student as an equitable share overall given by the state.).
- A couple of governors wanted to ban private schools from the CARES Act.

Professional Development

Jessica Davis, Director of Montessori Programs

- The school received funding for an Orton Gillingham reading intensive (distance learning).
- Jess is supporting staff with finding professional development opportunities for them.
- The school is taking advantage of many networking and workshop resources in the state and country (“Montessori schools have come together in a real beautiful way.”) on distance learning platforms and curriculum, crisis management for schools and families, etc. These have been through sources such as AMS, MPPI, INPEA, UMSI, etc.
 - This has resulted in other schools around the state being interested in what we are doing at BMS, as we seemed “ahead of the game” in some of these meetings. Jess ran a couple of presentations for leaders of other schools about BMS distance learning via Zoom. They have sent their packets, etc., to us to use if we want in return.

Administrative

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Enrollment
 - Quinn prepared class placement lists for re-enrolling students (1st and 4th grades).
 - Stacie said she has received questions from parents wondering when teacher assignments will be communicated to incoming 1st and 4th grade families. Quinn said an email will go out on Thursday, April 16.
 - She continued outreach to new families (resources, offers, ECRCs, etc.).

- Implementation of FACTS/SIS system was 2 weeks ago. Quinn is working on getting families into the system. She is pushing it through for May deposits and next year's enrollment to be done online, which is convenient at this time for everyone.

Facilities

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Maintenance
 - Pending:
 - Installation of the bike rack – Racks to be donated by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission
 - Remodel of Sycamore classroom
 - Install STOP sign at the end of our driveway
 - Relocate DO NOT ENTER sign
 - Dead trees
 - The apartments next door to the school are concerned about some dead trees. Quinn is trying to get information about whether the trees are on our property or not.
 - Garbage pickup is on hold. Staff cleaned out the school fridges. We are trying to cut costs as much as we can.

Technology

Teresa Mandell, IT Manager

- Teresa updated laptops for use by teachers. She delivered one to a teacher's home. She updated Windows and added user-accounts so the teachers could install Zoom and use the laptops for remote teaching.
- She is familiarizing herself with the FACTS System by watching online help videos and using the system as a Parent, Staff, and Admin. She is creating sample menus for use next academic year. She has yet to drill further into the reporting aspects of FACTS for kitchen and teacher use.
- She is supporting parents with Facebook memberships (some are just now joining Facebook Classroom Groups). She does get messages from parents through Facebook, which is her second tier of receiving requests or questions. She asks that parents email her first if they have an urgent need.
- She is supporting Admin and Staff with technology questions and hardware when requested.
- She updated the .ORG site for newly developed admissions applications and procedures using FACTS.
- She investigated and instituted Google Gmail accounts for the Sycamore Classroom. Restrictions of senders and receivers were all done in Google Apps for Ed.
- She helped with Zoom questions from Lead Teachers.
- She is helping students/families/teachers maneuver through the joys of Gmail accounts and setup. A Training Aid was created and sent to Nick. Students with issues require lots of help and that means after school and early morning so as not to interrupt the school day.
- Clem and Teresa had phone conferences with FACTS and are working on the lunch program to get it settled for next year. It's a give and take in regard to what FACTS will do for us and what we can do on our end. There will be a learning curve for teachers when doing lunches in this new system.
- Phuong asked about Zoom: "Have we experienced any issues with it?"
 - Jess: "Zoom has been going well. We've been following Zoom's guidelines about adding security with passwords. We implemented the 'Default to Waiting Room' feature, which means you have to be admitted into the meeting by the host."

- Teresa said that IU is still using it as their platform. MCCSC is using the Big Blue Button, and it's not going well. Google Meetups is not working as well, either. Zoom seems to be the one that makes people the least irate.
- Noriko said she has resources from IU to help make Zoom more secure and will send them on to Jess.
- Quinn: "We're allowing the 9 – 12-year-old students to use their Google accounts to email teachers. They are only allowed to email their teachers."
 - Nick said it's been helpful so far.
 - Scott: "Are there no other tech shenanigans going on in the room?" Nick: "The whole 'virtual background' in Zoom is where they're having fun. They've been very mature with it."

Development

Karen Keagle, Director of Development

- Spring Parent Social: Help Willow Grow
 - The social has been postponed, with no fee incurred.
- Received Charity Gaming approval from the state which we needed to do the raffles for the Spring event. They need the date of the event to finalize their approval.
 - Will provide a date to them when one is established
- Spring Fling Fundraiser
 - Cancelled
- Spring annual appeal push suspended. It seemed ill timed.
 - Karen will encourage giving in other ways, such as in the announcement that no fees will be assessed for unfulfilled volunteer hours.
- Staff Appreciation Day
 - Quinn's goal is to raise \$2500. We are not at \$1000 yet. The deadline is May 1st.
 - Staff Appreciation was moved to online, promoted through the newsletter and forthcoming stand-alone emails.
 - Phuong asked how it was launched. Karen said in the newsletter. There will be two more stand-alone emails.
- Spring t-shirts and magnets finished
 - Karen is working to arrange payment and pick-up of products. The vendor has reduced hours.
 - She is working to update the Gala Ticket Purchasing shopping cart to sell BMS t-shirts, magnets, and yearbooks online.
 - She will schedule a virtual Fundraising Friday, featuring these items and yearbooks, and will encourage donations to BMS and other nonprofits in Bloomington helping those in need.
- Net Fundraising Income through March: \$15,499.94
 - We have been running a little ahead of where we were last year, but we probably won't meet our goals that we have due to current circumstances.
 - Our final fundraising numbers will be below our goals for the year due to:
 - Cancellation of the Spring event, fundraiser at Spring Fling, and Spring appeal push
 - Reduced ability to promote other fundraising opportunities
 - No fees assessed for unfulfilled volunteer hours
 - Increased need in the community to address COVID-19 related issues
 - Todd asked about Amazon Smile and Scripts.

- Karen said Amazon Smile brings in a small amount. She hasn't received a recent statement from them. They send them quarterly, so maybe later this month.
 - Todd suggested sending a reminder to the community about using Amazon Smile since many people are shopping online now.
 - Karen hadn't checked our fundraising from Script numbers. Quinn said not much has come in from Script of late.
- Phuong: "Our 'Help Willow Grow' fundraising is postponed. Are we still going to get something up and running to fundraise it? People may be more inclined to give before the construction begins."
 - Karen: "The plan is to have an event to support the classroom, understanding that it will be a little difficult after the fact than before. We still want to do the raffle and activities in the fall. We don't want to detract from our ability to bring in funds from those activities."
 - Karen believes people will understand that the event was postponed because of current circumstances, and they will be willing to give in the fall.
- Noriko: "What is the current situation with GoMontessori?" Quinn said that it is currently on hold.
- Leslie: "I think it's important to note that within our community there are families that will need financial assistance, and we have families that are able to help more financially, so raising awareness is important. The best thing we can do to support our teachers is through Staff Appreciation, financially."
- Quinn said she could look at adding a "Help Willow Grow" button to the school's online shopping cart.
 - Scott: "Based on the enrollment numbers, there seems to be a clear case for Willow."
 - Quinn: "Once the reenrollment deadline has passed, I will reach out to people who didn't reenroll online to get a clearer picture of enrollment numbers."

PR and Communication

Karen Keagle, Director of Development

- Website
 - She updated it as needed with information about school closures.
- 2020 Bloomington Street Fair on May 3: Postponed
 - It will be rescheduled for later in 2020, more info to come.
- Newsletters sent
 - Karen photographed bulbs on campus that were planted during Fall Beautification to remind families of their efforts.
- Yearbook
 - The Head of School letter is drafted.
 - Class lists and faculty/staff lists have been provided to the yearbook editor.
 - Karen helped with the proofreading of the yearbook and to sort out questions/issues.
 - She promoted the sale of the yearbook through email, newsletter, and Facebook posts.
- Community Service Day
 - It has been moved to an online giving opportunity featuring the organizations who would have benefitted from the projects.
- Emails
 - Karen has sent various emails, including some with updates to the school community about changes due to COVID-19.

Finances

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Main Checking: \$87,804.59
- Money Market: \$151,329.44
- Certificate of Deposit: \$484,444.65
- Fundraising: \$15,329.44
- Café Account: \$1,565.86
- Financial Assistance given as of 4/12/2020: \$4,598
- An application for the Paycheck Protection Program was submitted on 4/8/2020.
 - Todd: "If we do get funded on this, the one thing that may become important is to put those funds into a separate account. That will give you an auditing trail to track." Quinn: "Our bank does not offer the program, so we had to go to a different bank to apply for the program. Our account for this program will be with that bank."
 - Phong: "What is the timeline?" Quinn: "I submitted three different applications. When the first application was submitted, some of the rules for the program had changed. For the second application, the bank wanted Board minutes saying I had authorization to fill out the application for the school. They allowed to have the information they needed given directly from Leslie."
 - Quinn submitted the documents they asked for. She will check in on the application process on Wednesday, April 15.
- Quinn said the snapshot of our financials is from March 31, so the impact of the current situation on our finances is not shown in these numbers.

School/Board Development

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- The Bylaws and Policy Handbook are to be reviewed by a law firm.
 - IU School of Nonprofit Law is no longer working, so Quinn is looking at a list of resources Susan gave her.
- Strategic Plan is on its final review.

Strategic Planning

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- We're concentrating on strategic planning of curriculum goals over the next 3 years (in areas such as Anti-Bias, Anti-Racism in Education [ABAR], Math, Writing, and Reading).
 - Jess contacted ABAR training, and they gave us three options. It is a three-year training that costs between \$8,000 and \$15,000 over three years. We'll look at how to build that into the budget moving forward.
- Quinn said there are two objectives in the review we had not talked about. Those will be pushed to year three of the plan.

9-12 Expansion

Quinn McAvoy

- Quinn will review an updated quote for the expansion in Executive Session.
- Matt Metzler submitted his application to attend the Midwest Montessori Teacher Training Center summer training.
 - He is in contact with them if they can't meet in person.
 - His backup is to do online teacher training through CGMS, the only accredited online teacher training. It still requires a small summer residency. It remains to be seen what they will do.

- Jess said it is best to use a program that is already used to being online.

Treasurer's Report

Phuong Thang – Treasurer – 6:48 pm

- Phuong: “The impact of the COVID situation is not very visible in our statement yet.”
- Profit and Loss Sheet for March 2020
 - “Our net income in March was a little higher than we budgeted for. There was a slight decrease in the lunch program because we were out for 2 weeks. We got some money from the National School Lunch program.”
 - “Our expenses were a little bit lower because of the closure. There were fewer expenses for the kitchen. We kept our net income as budgeted.”
 - “According to March, we’re still on track for everything, but we need to consider how the next couple of months will go. We’ve had some financial assistance requested by families for April, and there may be more requests for May.”
 - “There was nothing weird trending in the Income Statement. Net income was a little lower because of the closure.”
- Balance sheet for March 2020
 - “Our cash balances were fairly consistent because the March income came in. Not a lot of movement in the school’s liability.”

Presentation of Board Slate

Stacie Farmer – Vice President – 6:51 pm

- Stacie presented the Board slate for the 2020 – 2021 academic year
- Stacie: “Due to the new board structure, we have a slate for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and eight At Large Members.
- The Slate for 2020 – 2021:
 - President: Allison O’Boyle
 - Vice President: Leslie Thomas
 - Secretary: Amanda Cook
 - Treasurer: Phuong Thang
 - Members At Large:
 - Todd Schnatzmeyer, Janelle Terkhorn, and Jennifer Diaz, who currently serve on the board
 - New Member At Large: Christine Lovelace
 - Christine was recommended by Allison O’Boyle. She has a son in the Hickory classroom. She volunteers a lot in the classroom, and her mother is a Montessori teacher elsewhere. She has been an Executive Assistant to various companies throughout the country. She brings a high level of organizational skills to the board and has good coaching and leadership skills.
- Stacie said Russ Clark, the consultant who worked with the Board on their Strategic Plan, has expressed interest in serve on our Board as an At Large Member.
 - Stacie said if we’re done paying him for his services, she thinks maybe we can potentially add him to the slate.
 - Someone said it would be great to have Russ as a non-parent member of the Board.
 - Eve: “What is the motivation for a person who is not a BMS parent to serve on the BMS board?”
 - Stacie: “Just from getting to know Russ and his experience working with BMS, he has a desire to help out in the community.”

- Quinn said she approached Russ to join the Board. Her last school Board was mostly not parents, because they bring a different perspective with them and can come to the table unbiased without having any kind of motives, which can be helpful when making hard decisions.
- Also, being on our Board will look good on his resume. It will help give him new experiences. For some occupations/positions, it's a thing to be on all kinds of boards. Noriko said IU appreciates community service, so it could count toward his employee evaluation.
- Jess: "He was blown away by our school. He wishes his kids were young enough to go back to school, so they could attend BMS."
- Allison said she thinks there are a lot of advantages to the school to recruit a few external members. The By-laws still dictate that we have a majority of members who are parents on the Board. External members will extend our connection to the community and have the potential for gaining the school more donors from the community.
- Todd: "It's also nice to get that first [external] person on board, because that might help us network and bring in more interest in the school from the community."
 - It was recommended to add Russ to the slate as an At Large Member contingent on him accepting the position.
- **Todd Schnatzmeyer, Facilities Director, moved to accept the proposed Board slate along with the contingency for Russ Clark to be added as an At Large Member, if he accepts the offer. Phuong Thang, Treasurer, seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objections or abstentions.**
- Stacie thanked Scott and Susan for their many years serving on the Board, and the Board extended our thanks to Stacie for her years of service.

Closing

Leslie Thomas – President

- Eve asked to say, regarding Staff Appreciation, "On behalf of all the teachers, I have never felt appreciated as a teacher in my last twenty years as I have in the last few weeks. I have been overwhelmed by all the thanks from parents, staff, and Admin. Montessori schools all over are closing because they're not supported."
 - Nick seconded Eve's comments, and Alice thirded them. They appreciate the support they've been receiving from their students' families.
 - Jess: "We are surviving well."
 - Leslie: "I love that you're continuing to do what you do and are being leaders in the Montessori community."
- **Meeting adjourned: 7:05 pm**

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Cook, Board Secretary