

Bloomington Montessori School Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2020, 6:00 pm, Online via Webex and Zoom

Board Members Present

- Allison O'Boyle
- Leslie Thomas
- Phuong Thang
- Amanda Cook
- Janelle Terkhorn
- Todd Schnatzmeyer
- Christine Lovelace
- Russell Clark

Staff Members Present

- Quinn McAvoy
- Cyndi Williams

Community Members Present

- Marcy Hintzman, ADA-IN Chairperson

ADA Training for Board Members

Marcy Hintzman – ADA-IN Chairperson – **Time: 6:09 pm**

- ADA training for Board Members was done via the teleconferencing website, Webex.
- Highlights from the training include:
 - People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the United States, making up an estimated 20% of the total population. Any of us could become a member of this marginalized group at any time of our life.
 - A person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.
 - ADA stands for the Americans with Disabilities Act. It prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs and services.
 - A public accommodation may not discriminate against individuals or entities because of their known relationship or association with persons who have disabilities.
 - Schools must generally make their facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Existing facilities are subject to the readily achievable standard for barrier removal, while newly constructed facilities and any altered portions of existing facilities must be fully accessible.
 - “Readily achievable” means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense.
 - Schools must provide auxiliary aids and services needed for effective communication with children or adults with disabilities, when doing so would not constitute an undue burden on the school or fundamentally alter the school’s programs.
 - An undue burden is defined as “significant difficulty or expense.” It is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

- When a public accommodation can demonstrate that the removal of barriers is not readily achievable, the public accommodation must make its goods and services available through alternative methods, if such methods are readily achievable.
- The priorities for barrier removal include:
 - Enable individuals with disabilities to physically enter a facility.
 - Provide access to those areas of a place of public accommodation where goods and services are made available to the public.
 - Provide access to restrooms, if restrooms are provided for use by customers or clients.
 - Remove any remaining barriers to using the public accommodation's facility by, for example, lowering telephones.
- Continual maintenance of accessible features of a facility is important. Accessible routes must remain accessible and not blocked by obstacles such as furniture, filing cabinets, or potted plants. Accessible doors must be unlocked when the place of public accommodation is open for business.
- Removal of communication barriers is also important. Public accommodations should consult with individuals with disabilities wherever possible to determine what type of auxiliary aid is needed to ensure effective communication.
- A public accommodation's electronic information, including its website, should also be accessible to persons with disabilities. A facility should make their website, documents, and videos more accessible so individuals with disabilities can use, understand, navigate, communicate with, interact with and contribute to the web and/or other electronic platforms or tools.
- The school should have a Reasonable Accommodation Process in place for students or families who may need accommodations. It should include the following:
 - Do you have a timely standardized process?
 - Is the individual conducting the evaluation knowledgeable in the ADA?
 - Do you have forms and template letters for the process?
 - Is there a grievance/appeal process that families can follow?
 - Evaluators begin their role in the interactive process.
 - They obtain pertinent medical information.
 - They review the accommodation request.
 - They make a final determination based on the information they've reviewed.
 - They assess the effectiveness of each accommodation determined to be needed by the student/family.
- Is information on the school's Reasonable Accommodation Process easy to find and accessible to all (school families as well as the public)?
 - Can it be found on the school's website, in registration documents, and in the syllabus or curriculum?
- Document! Document! Document!
 - It is important for the school to demonstrate an interactive process and they put in a good faith effort to accommodate the student/family.
 - The interactive process is an ongoing conversation between the school and the student and parents. This productive dialog needs to accomplish two purposes:

- It provides the school with the information necessary to make the school place adjustment consistent with the school's commitment to equal opportunity.
 - It demonstrates the school engaged in a good faith effort to resolve the school place challenge with the individual.
- It is important to remember that all medical information shared with the school staff or administration is kept confidential.
- If a student is deemed a direct threat to other students or staff or others at the school, the school does not have to provide accommodations for the student and can ask the student not to return to the school. The public accommodation must determine that there is a significant risk to others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by reasonable modifications to the public accommodation's policies, practices, or procedures or by the provision of appropriate auxiliary aids or services.
- The determination that a person poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others must be based on an individual assessment that considers the particular activity and the actual abilities and disabilities of the individual.
- Individuals who exercise their rights under the ADA, or assist others in exercising their rights, are protected from retaliation.
- It is important to remember the power of words. Words and phrases shape perceptions. Use first-person language when ever possible and avoid language that uses stereotypes/grouping.
- The key points to remember:
 - Demonstrate and document a good faith effort.
 - Use an interactive process that includes communication. People are typically experts on themselves and/or their children.
 - There is usually more than one way to complete a task, and there are usually different types of accommodations to be used to remove barriers and provide equal access and nondiscrimination.

Update on the Beginning of the School Year

Quinn McAvoy – Head of School – **Time: 7:39 pm**

- Quinn gave the board members present an update on the beginning of the school year. Some students are enrolled in in person instruction while others are enrolled in distance learning or a home partnership program, depending on their age/grade level.
- As of the meeting:
 - 13 students had withdrawn since the July 21 board meeting.
 - Between August 1 and August 23, 9 additional students enrolled to BMS.
 - There are four enrollment spots open in Upper Elementary.
 - Lower Elementary enrollment is full, according to the adjusted ratios of students to teachers under the school's Reopening Plan. If we get five additional students, we'll hire another teacher, and those students and teachers will be placed in Maple Classroom.
 - There are 9 openings in all day preschool. Quinn and Jess continue to do tours with prospective families.
 - There are 6 openings left in half day preschool program.
 - We have 157 students enrolled: 47 enrolled in online instruction and 110 enrolled in in person instruction.
- Quinn said that school was going well for everyone on campus.

- Students and staff are following the rules and protocols put in place under the Reopening Plan.
- The students are having no difficulties with wearing masks during the day. Quinn has to remind adults, especially parents in the parking lot, to keep their masks on while on campus.
- Jess and Quinn have finished the latest update to the Roadmap to Reopening Plan. They are finding opportunities for parents to volunteer around or outside of the school.
- Quinn said the teachers are doing great. Matt is doing well as the lead teacher in Sycamore.
- Some of the Preschool lead teachers were nervous about their students remembering to social distance or wear their masks, but their group seems to be the best at following the rules.
- The Centers for Disease Control seemed to realize there is no way for young children to social distance while they are outside, so they wear their masks while they play.
- Eve has set up an outside class for the Walnut classroom. She uses a pool noodle to help the students learn how to social distance.
- Cardinal Spirits provided 200 bottles and 12 separate gallons of hand sanitizer to the school.
- Amanda, Leslie, and Christine all shared positive comments about how the distance learning and home partnership programs are working for their students.
- The school was fortunate to be highlighted in an article about schools reopening in the Herald Times recently.
- Update on Pending Maintenance Projects:
 - Sycamore Classroom is finished.
 - Magnolia Classroom is still waiting for the poured rubber for their playground. It is scheduled to be installed in early September.
 - A temporary fence was built between Hickory and Sweetgum's playgrounds.
 - A temporary playground has been erected in the side yard and fenced off for Magnolia to use.
 - There is a new "Caution: Children Crossing" sign near the brick walkway where Sweetgum students must enter the school.
 - A tree fell parallel to the school during a storm. It did no damage to the school, but it needs to be cut into smaller pieces for removal.
- Cyndi is finishing up the Paycheck Protection Program forgiveness application. She is now the school's accountant, since Clem retired at the end of July.
- She talked to the school's banker about the Paycheck Protection Program loan on August 12 and was filling out the needed schedules on August 13. The banker believed the school could use the EZ forms for our application.
- Quinn had an appointment scheduled with Sara Rogers at the bank to introduce Cyndi to her. They plan on discussing our potential budget and our projections for the upcoming year.
- Quinn said she continues to try to get new students enrolled at the school and is trying to keep the staff morale up.
- Leslie asked about the new FACTS system. Quinn: "FACTS is great. It's a little slow going for the teachers with all the new rules for the pandemic on top of a new system to learn, but they're getting the attendance down. We're giving them time to adjust to the new system."

- Leslie asked if the board needed to do anything to help Quinn and Jess. Quinn said they didn't need any help at that time. She met with Allison and the rest of the admin staff to discuss the year and school activities.
 - They plan on creating a small PAC group and scheduling activities virtual activities, like monthly parent education meetings on Zoom.
 - They might contact the library and create some community outreach programs using these parent education meetings.
- Phuong: "Once we have the loan forgiveness application for the Payment Protection Program submitted, how long before we hear back?" Cyndi: "It could take up 90 days." The banker she's working with thinks we'll be fine, but she doesn't know. The federal government just started accepting applications that week. Quinn asked if we'd need to make a payment in the interim.
- Cyndi has been keeping a tally of what our income will be based on new enrollments and tuition payments, and we're already \$15,000 more than we thought we would be.
- Allison: "It would be great if the newspaper did a follow-up article showing that we're doing so well."
- There were positive comments made about the students being so adaptable to the changes in classroom routines and the thought put into the setup of the classrooms.
- Quinn said Jess is keeping on top of everything. She watches all the webinars on the pandemic provided by the CDC and the government.
- The Board's first official meeting of the school year is scheduled for the second Tuesday of September.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:11 pm

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Cook, Board Secretary