

Bloomington Montessori School Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2022, 6:00 pm, Online via Zoom

Board Members Present

- Allison O'Boyle
- Christine Lovelace
- ~~Bridget Stromberg~~
- ~~Russ Clark~~
- Rob Danzman
- Janelle Terkhorn
- Hilary Kanyi
- Tracey Warren
- Ge Yan

Staff Members Present

- Quinn McAvoy
- Jess Davis
- Cindy Williams

Preliminaries

Allison O'Boyle – President – **6:10 pm**

Welcome

Approval of Minutes from November 2022 Board Meeting

- Allison asked for comments, questions, or edits. There were none.
- Rob motioned to approve the minutes and Hilary seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Call for Issues Not on the Agenda

- No new issues were added to the agenda.

Governance Report

Janelle Terkhorn – Vice President- **6:11pm**

Governance

- Currently reviewing new documentation on the preservation and destruction of board materials.
- Currently reviewing a new Acceptable Use policy for board electronic use to be included in the handbook.

- Rough drafts will be submitted next week to the Executive Committee for further editing and approval.
- Still working on creating guidelines for a board performance review that will include individual assessments.
- Researching and discussing possible additions and changes to the bylaws or an addition of a conduct policy regarding board performance and disciplinary or removal actions- more to come.
- Hilary said she would check her resources for policy guidance.

Nominating Committee

- Issued requests to board members concerning their desire to stay on the board or in current board positions. We found two currently open posts need to be filled for prospective Officer positions.
- Some board skills matrix forms need to be returned as soon as possible. Contact Janelle if you need a resend.
- Parent Christi Walton has volunteered for nominating committee this year. Will need to issue another staff request as we had no interest the first round. We will potentially be offering staff the opportunity to skip the interviewing portion as they typically fall during working hours.
- Eve and April both said they would join the committee if there weren't any other takers.

Executive Committee Report

Allisson O'Boyle – President - **6:18pm**

Committee Business

- Security camera research update
 - Siemens did not submit an estimate. Quinn has reached out to Smithville for an estimate; a BMS parent is employed at that company.

PEOP and COVID management

- Minimal cases until the week following Thanksgiving. Several current cases in the Maple classroom. Hopeful that the classroom will not have to close before break.
- MCHD has asked that we increase communication about the general uptick in respiratory illnesses (COVID, RSV, flu) and communicate with classrooms about measles symptoms and vaccine availability.
- The Centers for Disease Control has changed their reporting of county and state level statistics, including case and death updates, to a weekly basis. The current community risk level is medium as of December 8, 2022.
 - Should we go into a high level, a Board meeting will be triggered to decide on mitigation procedures.
- The mitigation testing program used by the school will end on December 31, 2022. The school has rapid tests and the PEOP will be revised to state that staff members who wish to test themselves regularly may use school provided rapid tests for that purpose.

- Many aspects of Covid have changed and the original need to bring equity around the level of protection staff members were offering the BMS community. We now only have one staff member who has not received a Covid vaccine.

Strategic Planning

- A strategic plan performance summary is under development at this time from Quinn, Jess, and Allison. The Board can expect to see a draft in January.

Policy Readings

- **Bullying Policy**
 - Feedback from Daniel Cyr is that as a private school, BMS is not required to have an anti-bullying policy under state law (public school corporations must have such a policy).
 - An anti-bully policy seems appropriate however, and our current policy is relatively sound. In making revisions, Mr. Cyr advised that we be careful about assuming responsibility for interactions that do not occur under our direct observation, and consider carefully what resources and tools we have for managing those situations.
 - This includes bullying that happens off campus, on the internet, outside school hours, etc.
 - Executive Committee will work on redrafting the anti-bullying policy to direct language away from “bullying,” align with AMS recommendations, and define the situations in which the school has a responsibility to intervene.
- **Second reading of Policy Handbook edits and feedback from attorney Daniel Cyr**
 - Added the cause of action statement that Mr. Cyr recommended
 - **Community Conduct policy**
 - Added guardians in all places that state parents
 - Added statement about corrective action at the discretion of the Head of School with review by the Board as recommended by Mr. Cyr.
 - Mr. Cyr did not believe that families’ First Amendment Rights do not impact these policies.
 - No one had objections to the updates.
 - **Website and social media policy updates**
 - Adding definitions for curriculum and school management platforms.
 - Changed explicit to express written
 - Add statement that parents shall notify the Head of School regarding any unauthorized posting.
 - No one had objections to the updates.
 - **Weapons prohibition policy**
 - Mr. Cyr felt that there were some cases that staff may have a right to keep weapons in the glove compartment.
 - It was recommended that we add that we will notify law enforcement and potentially Child Services depending on the situation.
 - Mr. Cyr said that schools have a right to make reasonable searches so long as the search is conducted in a way that does not cause harm, embarrassment, or trauma.
 - We need to seek clarity from Mr. Cyr about whether or not we have an obligation and the ability to extend the weapons policy for staff, students,

- volunteers and parent escorts during trips off of school grounds including hikes nearby as well as field trips in and out of town.
- **Janelle motioned to approve the Community Conduct, and Website and Social Media policy updates, Tracey seconded the motion for approval.**
 - **The motion was approved**
- First reading of general liability statement (recommendation from Daniel Cyr)

Development Committee Report

Allison O'Boyle – President – **7:04pm**

Development Committee Membership and Meetings

- Next meeting: December 13, 2022, 2:00 pm (following meeting: February 14, 2022, 2:00 pm)

Development planning/structural support

- ROI analysis overview
- Upcoming discussion - plan to draw up proposal for allocation of development funds
- Discussion on funding/budgeting for development activities

Development Event Planning

- Upcoming: planning for spring event

Annual campaign

- Board pledge - 89% pledged for a total of \$3,350. Board members can fulfill donations at any time now by writing a check to BMS or donating via the FACTS campaign page. Board pledges have been used to offer a match opportunity during the month of December. Thank for your support!
- Giving Tuesday follow-up
 - 7 sponsors, 27 donors, \$9,837 in proceeds received in FACTS (will be deposited at end of month). \$6500 outstanding in sponsorships.
 - We received \$5700 in checks on Giving Tuesday
 - Many thanks to our sponsors, donors, and volunteers who made the day happen!
 - Allison, Quinn, and Jess will meet in January to debrief.
- Current annual campaign total: \$10,961 received. Sponsorships and \$2,850 of BOD pledges currently unfilled. Deposits will be updated in QuickBooks in December and will be reported in January.

Fundraising Progress

- Fundraising checking account: \$19,254.01
- Fundraising savings account: \$63,674.28
- PayPal: \$1,479.63
- YTD totals NOT from the current annual campaign (sustaining from 21-22, unsolicited donations, Amazon Smile, Scrip, Kroger, Charleston Wrap): \$5245.07

Finance Committee Report

Quinn McAvoy and Cyndi Williams – 7:11pm

Financial Review

- The school maintains a strong financial position with over \$1M in bank accounts and the Live Oak CD. These balances are 18.20% larger than as of November 31, 2021. Long-term liabilities are only \$601,307. As such, the school can cover its debts. There have been suggestions to consider making additional payments on the school's mortgage in light of fluctuating interest rates that could mean money is better spent paying off debt.
- Overall, net income is \$51,634, which is \$18,986 higher than budgeted for the month. Most of the overage is due to lower-than-budget salary expense.
 - There was \$10,000 inflow from grants, \$2,830 from Shopping Percentages, and \$2,494 from Other Programs that was not budgeted. All of these contributed to higher net income for the month relative to budgeted amounts.
 - Training expenses were also higher than budgeted. Training expense is different than budgeted because the budgeted amount is spread evenly over the year whereas incurred amounts vary based on when conferences and training opportunities arise.

Other Items

- Work continues to determine whether BMS can claim a payroll tax refund for the Employee Retention Credit. The School does not qualify under the first of two options. The consultant is working to determine if the School qualifies under the second option.
- There is talk of changing the way the Profit and Loss is reported to the Board because monthly reports are not always an accurate depiction of the financial situation.
- The 2021-2022 financial statements will be reviewed by Desmond & Ahern. BMS has submitted information to Desmond & Ahern for preparation of the 2021 tax return.
- Finance Committee met December 7th to work on the budget.

First Reading of the 2023 Budget

- 8.7% increase in staff salary
- Lunch program fees will be set in July, so this number may change if it is not \$4.40

- Took a more conservative stance on seats filled this year
- Took out the IT position
- Added an Interventionist position
- An equipment purchase is included for new furniture in Hickory classroom
- Medicines include first aid items, bee sting supplies, etc. from Cinta
- Bonuses: holiday bonus are a set number based on full time and part time posts, yearend bonus is 1.5% of annual salary based on 360 review process (goal setting, peer review, attendance, participation, parent feedback)
- Communicable disease line includes masks and other Covid supplies that used to be covered by grants.
- Travel includes Cyndi’s gas when she needs to be in Bloomington. Field trips and staff development do not go under this line.
- FACTS is wonderful for tuition and development. It does the data collection and record keeping. This system relieves the staff hours of processing payments by check, etc. There was an ongoing tuition increase that pays for this fee when FACTs was activated.

PAC Report

Tracey Warren – PAC Co-Chair - **7:31pm**

Monthly Zoom Meeting: December 7, 2022

- The December 7 PAC meeting is postponed until the return of school in January 2023.
- In the interim, a debrief meeting will be held with the PAC chair, BOD chair and Head of School prior to end of school break, December 2022.

Operations Report

Quinn McAvoy – Head of School – 7:45pm

Enrollment Update 2022-2023

Group	Actual 2022-2023	Classroom Capacities 2022-2023	Budgeted Spots
Half-Day	51	54	54
Half-Day Lunch Program	21	21	0
All Day	58	60	60
Lower EL	62	66	57
Upper EL	43	48	45

Enrollment:

- One new All-Day EC student started in Sweetgum this month.
- One student withdrew to attend a school that can support their needs better.

Staff:

- Tessie Word was hired to fill the nonlead Willow position.
- Jai Holt was hired to replace Lydia McCray as the Hickory AM assistant. Lydia will remain the Upper Elementary Aftercare lead and return to the substitution list.
- Hired Catherine in the floater position.
- A new substitute Margot Brennan was hired.

Curriculum:

- Jess is a mentor teacher to two adult learners, Nick for his Transition to Teaching program and Sam for his Montessori Training. She meets weekly with them and completes observations twice a month.
- Jess has wrapped up teaching Universe Book lessons in Maple and Walnut to first graders (weekly session in each class).
- Jess is doing some direct student service intervention (exceptional rate of high needs in the school right now)
 - Kindergarten Orton Gillingham reading intervention group for kids needed additional support
 - Running one twice-weekly lit group in Upper Elementary for students needing extra support
- Jess is teaching the Willow writing curriculum until Tessie is up to speed.

Student Services:

- Quinn and Jess attended MCCSC team meetings for ISPs for students and led in-house accommodation plan team meetings.
- Quinn and Jess are completing student and classroom observations

Advocacy

- Three of the four new Early Learning commissions with the state of Indiana will have Montessorians on the commission (first time).

Professional Development:

- Quinn is completing her dissertation on Montessori benchmarks and assessment
- Sam is working on completing his Montessori teacher certification.
- Nick is working on completing his Transition to Teaching program at IU.
- Jess is working on the IU master's program: Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum.
 - Wrapping up fall class; enrolled for the spring semester.
- Jess is completing two online Classes (through Trillium Montessori):
 - Onboarding Montessori Substitutes
 - Montessori Substitute Orientation Course
- Jess completed the "Achieving Annual Sustainability" class through IUPUI School of Philanthropy. She will take "Developing Major Donors" in March.
- Jess is auditing the Certificate in Reading course newly offered by AMS.

Administrative

- Quinn and Jess are scheduling tours and enrollment
- ABAR committee is developing a Diversity & Inclusion survey that will go out to parents and finalizing an ABAR commitment statement to be adopted by the school. Crossroads will attend ABAR Committee meetings in February and April to provide consultation and guidance. Crossroads is also reviewing our commitment statement and providing a committee education recommendation.
- Submitted all documentation to the accountant for the ERC credit.
- PEOP
 - Continued to attend Department of Education and Indiana State Department of Health briefings monthly
 - Continued updates
 - Tracking and documenting all illness absences per PEOP protocol.

Community Partnerships

- Continuing discussions with IU Department of Education regarding a Montessori Teacher Education Program.
- IU Permaculture class will donate their time to design value-aligned landscaping for campus.
- Sycamore Land Trust will work with most classrooms on service projects about native vs. invasive plants and accompanying learning/presentations this year.
- Jess is a BMS representative in planning the City of Bloomington MLK, Jr. Remembrance Walk in April (will take place near Fairview, a historian-guided walk mixing MLK info with a walk around Black Bloomington historical locations).

Facilities:

COMPLETED:

- Sweetgum and Hickory playground mulched

PENDING:

- Hand sink in Walnut, scheduling in progress
- Commons bathroom drywall repair and painting
- Magnolia gate repair – scheduled for 12/19
- Security cameras – awaiting a final quote
- HVAC replacement – awaiting grant funds from the school CoAg grant
- Floors stripped and waxed; carpets cleaned – scheduled for winter break

Communications:

- Bi-monthly Newsletters, emails to the community
- Facebook posts
- Event Flyers
- Website updates

- Parent Informational meetings

Finances as of 11/30/22:

• Main checking:	\$270,670.48
• Money market:	\$181,269.85
• CD-IUCU:	\$238,295.15
• CD-Live Oak	\$238,847.60
• Fundraising:	\$84,407.92
• Café Account	\$2,890.71

- Tuition delinquency - \$11,048.75 (Two families are delinquent over 30 days and have entered into a payment plan to bring their accounts current)
- IUCU Loan balance - \$ 601,306.68

Marketing, Communications, and Development Discussion

Rob Danzman – Member at Large - **7:40pm**

- As part of bringing in more professionalism in the Board, how can we communicate to donors who we are as a private school, Montessori School, etc.
- Is Montessori education elitist when in the private school context and with the limitation in who we serve as a school?
- Bring more clarity around who we are and who we want to attract.
- Allison commented that we embrace openly that we are a non-profit and, though it will not happen overnight, the vision is that we have a sliding scale for all families and scholarship funding.
- Our partnership with Indiana University is an opportunity for funding so that they have a more diverse training ground.
- We are not just a private school – we provide an important environment to raise children who show up in their communities in an empowered and impactful way.
- There is a united goal to have a school community that reflects the diversity of the Bloomington community. This needs to happen in a step-by-step manner that starts with the creation and focus of the Development Committee.
- Financial assistance and sliding scales for tuition would help us be the diverse community we strive to be.
- For AMS, we measure our diversity against the Bloomington demographic. We fall short of meeting the socio-economic demographic because 26% of children live below the poverty level in our town. The staff discount attracts quality staff and also brings us closer to matching the socio-economics demographics of Bloomington. We are doing pretty well in matching other diversity markers.
- We gave \$48k in scholarships and \$15k in staff discounts. These are unfunded and come out of our budget.
- Harmony School has a sliding scale tuition model but it also has a large endowment.

- It might be beneficial to have a unified story/narrative about who we are as a school, where we are going, our impact.
- There is a perception that Montessori is only for the smart kids.
 - As a Board, we need to be able to hear these perceptions and not respond defensively but let it help us develop a strategy for communicating and marketing.
 - Check the reality of what the perception points to.
 - Start with the data/reality so you know where you were, where you are and your goals for the future.
 - As compared to MCCSC, we are on par with the county. We don't offer an isolated classroom for what is called "severe" but we have more "moderate" students than any other private school other than St. Charles (who has huge funding for resource staffing). 30% of our students are receiving special services.
- Showcasing how we are involved in the Bloomington Community.
- Development can start to gather the data and create a narrative that could be shared with the Board and also included in the Annual report.
- Maybe we need to delve into why (or why not) saying "private school" is an issue.

Closing

Allison O'Boyle – President – 8:09pm

- Allison thanked everyone for attending.
- No closed session this month.
- Meeting Adjourned: **8:22 pm**

Respectfully submitted by Christine Lovelace, Board Secretary