

Bloomington Montessori School

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2024, 6:00 pm, Zoom

Board Members Present

- Janelle Terkhorn
- Allison O'Boyle
- Christine Lovelace
- Joanna Woronkowicz
- Tracey Warren
- Hilary Kanyi
- Ge Yan
- Anne Sterling
- Chad Lochmiller
- ~~Russ Clark~~

Staff Members Present

- Quinn McAvoy
- Jess Davis
- ~~Gyndi Williams~~

Preliminaries

Janelle Terkhorn – President – **6:05 pm**

Welcome

Approval of Minutes from the March Board Meeting

- Allison motioned to approve the minutes and Joanna seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Call for issues not on the agenda

- Tracey mentioned the large hole in the city street when exiting the school parking lot. Quinn said she would reach out to the city to ask for it to be repaired.

Finance Committee

Joanna Woronkowicz, Treasurer

Committee Business

- The Finance Committee met on 12/9 and reviewed a new set of FAQs to post on the BMS website. These will be finalized and provided to the staff to post by the end of the calendar year.
- Quinn and Cyndi also presented the draft 2025 budget to the Finance Committee for discussion.
- The Finance Committee wants to review with the BoD the process of using investment returns in the operating budget.
- The school's financial audit, year ending July 2024, is complete and is overall positive with an unqualified opinion.
- Next meeting: April 7, 2025 from 6-7pm

Financial Review

- The school's financial position is relatively similar to this time last year, with around \$1.822 million in cash and investments. Current assets are up approximately 1.63% over last year, and total liabilities are down by 5.48% compared to last year. Equity is up by 4.63%.
- As of December 3, the current investment balance is \$682,900.46. We regained October's loss, plus more. Since July 1, the school's investment funds have generated \$29,450.27 in returns (net of fees), gains of 4.51%.

Current Projects

- The Finance Committee continues to monitor investment performance, which involves checking in on the investment accounts monthly and discussing them at each Finance Committee meeting. [1C]
- The Finance Committee is in process of creating a FAQ page for the website and this will be completed by the end of the calendar year. [2A]
- Christine is taking the lead on reorganizing the Google drive and will loop in Joanna when appropriate. [4C]
- The 990 will be filed this month and will be posted on the new BMS website's FAQ page (see 1C). [2B]
- Guidestar is automatically updated by the IRS. Quinn will update Guidestar with the auditor's financial report now that it's complete. [2B]
- The Finance Committee will address Scholarships in the 2025-2026 academic year. [3]
- Joanna thanked Quinn and Cyndi for managing the finances so impeccably.
- Joanna brought attention to some vague language in the Investment Policy Statement in regards to using up to 5% of the Long-term funds to support the school's mission. It says "The Finance Committee has the discretion to approve needed spending out of the Long-Term Fund and disbursements are subject to the same financial policies that BMS uses for expenditures." The ambiguity lies in whether or not the full Board needs to vote if the 5% is above the max expenditure stated in the financial policies for expenditures.
 - This will possibly be relevant to next year's budget.
 - Allison mentioned that when this policy was created, this language was purposefully left vague so that changes in expenditure policy would not require a change to the Investment Policy.

- There may be circumstances when the amount of spending out of the long term account falls within the threshold for expenditure without Board approval. Currently, 5% of the long term fund would be above this threshold and would need Board approval.

2024-2025 Budget Review

Quinn McAvoy, Head of School

- Tuition increases are going to increase by market rather than a standard increase across the board so that tuition is comparable to other regional programs for preschool and elementary private schools.
 - Half Day is 3%, Full Day is 3%, All Day is 5% and Elementary is 4.75%
 - Quinn would like to increase staff benefits
 - School would contribute to a 401K account regardless of whether or not a staff member can contribute
 - \$4600 full-time stipend (pays for healthcare premiums)
 - 3% staff increase
 - Market adjustment for administrators - based on AMS survey of administrator salaries.
 - It seems that we will need to go back to two classrooms for upper elementary, so an additional non-lead may need to be added.

Executive Committee

Janelle Terkhorn, President

Committee Business

- Met on Nov 7th, 11am
- Next meeting: January 9, 2024, 11 am

Current Issues

- Second Reading, School Policy to Limit Vehicle Idling
 - It is easier to enforce a black or white policy of no idling. It is also the best way to keep the children in those areas safe from exhaust.
 - The board decided to proceed with the statement that “Drivers of vehicles must turn off their engine when their vehicle is parked.”
 - A discussion about exemptions concluded with defining “minimal time” as 5 minutes, changing hot and cold temperatures to “extreme temperatures”, and adding that an adult must be in the car while it is idling.
 - Joanna motioned to approve the Vehicle Idling Policy with the above changes. Chad seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- Adding additional policies required by the Health Department, including policies on animals in the classrooms and a chemical hygiene policy.
- Articles of Incorporation have been reviewed by lawyers and recommendations have been made to address questions. **Update:** We have not found much information on living membership or any reasonable arguments against making public notice that changes will be made to BMS AOI. Recommending to the EC in the January meeting that we proceed with the public notification and begin the process of drafting the new articles according to state guidance.
 - Attempts are being made to contact the original incorporators and/or find any living members who may be able to offer more information or contacts.
 - If we can't find any contact information or leads on former membership, it has been recommended that we make a public notice announcement in the local newspaper to show due diligence.
 - Once public notice has been made, we should be cleared to proceed with the needed changes.
- Work on legacy and guidance documents will continue through November and December. These documents will include workflows for Executive issues and guidance documents for the President's role.
- Christine's work on revamping the drive organization will continue over the winter.

Operations

- Please see Quinn's operations report.

Current Projects

- Adding and updating policies in compliance with ISDH requirements and recommendations. [Strategic Project 2A]
- Guidance documents and workflow charts for EC and the President's role are being generated for review by EC. [Strategic Project 3B,3C]

Development Committee

Allison O'Boyle, Committee Chair

Committee Business

- The Board of Directors is offering a \$3,000 match during the month of December; this will be advertised in mailed campaign materials. Please share the match with potential donors in your network to use our board pledges to best effect!
- Help needed: Thank you notes and merch days
- Next committee meeting: January 27, 2025, 9 am, on Zoom

Current Projects

- The annual campaign is underway with the Giving Tuesday kickoff on December 2, 2024. Seven sponsors participated in Giving Tuesday. Sponsors and donors contributed \$13,629 to jump-start the campaign toward the school's \$50,000 goal.
- The school offered a second RaiseRight physical gift card order window from November 13 to December 4. The second ordering window generated \$252.56 in proceeds.
- Sponsorship packet reviewed by the committee. The Testimonials page remains to be edited. [2A; 2C]

- Legacy packet to be reviewed at a future meeting [1A; 1C]
- Development policy review slated for spring semester [3C]
- Popcorn events are ongoing, including Friday, December 13. Dates for the spring semester are January 31, February 28, March 28, April 25, and May 16.
- Vision statement editing has been returned to the Development Committee for a more formal proposal of how and when to edit. Based on Board feedback, the preference is to make edits as part of the strategic planning process. [2A]
- Planning is underway for the Art to Remember fundraiser in March.
- Planning is underway for February trivia night.
- A parent has volunteered as Box Tops coordinator, reviving a dormant, passive fundraising program. Allison will connect with McKenzie and the parent to log in to BoxTops.

Fundraising Update

(caveat: numbers are reported as soon as the net is available or updated monthly; may not match fundraising accounting)

- Annual Campaign: \$12,539.21 received in FACTS for 2024-2025 Annual Campaign from August to December 7. The number reported here reflects transactions recorded through FACTS Giving and may vary from financial reports based on deposit and data entry schedules.
- \$435 received in FACTS on older campaigns, or not attached to a campaign, since August.
- Believe Kids: \$5,200 net proceeds
- Merchandise: \$3,192.50
- 5K Trail Run/Family Fun Run: \$3,015 net proceeds.
- RaiseRight Scrip: \$847.42 proceeds from August 1 to December 7, with 19 families participating.
- Kroger Rewards: \$387.41 from July 1-September 30, 2024
- Scholastic Books: Fall catalog order went out in October 16 families participating; book fair in January

- Art to Remember: not received to date this year (March project)
- Hilary asked if For Small Hands was still a way of passive income for the school. It is but the Development Committee stopped advertising it because it was not as profitable as other catalogue fundraising efforts.

Governance Committee

Allison O'Boyle, Vice President

Governance Committee Business

- The committee met on November 13, 2024.
- The committee is reviewing information identified from the National Association of Independent Schools and BoardSource.org. Bylaws edits are in progress and will be provided to the committee for review by the end of the semester.
- The committee discussed board recruiting and potential advertisement options for board positions. Based on initial response, if needed the advertisement will be placed in local news and shared with local professional organizations. Board members also will be asked to recruit on campus.
- Governance received notice of one more member exiting at the end of this academic year. Members staying on the Board include Christine Lovelace, Anne Sterling, Janelle Terkhorn, Joanna Woronkowicz, and Ge Yan. Members exiting the Board are Russ Clark, Hilary Kanyi, Chad Lochmiller, Allison O'Boyle, and Tracey Warren.
- Next meeting: January 8, 2024, 11 am

Current Projects

- Research proceeding on best practice recommendations for board member requirements in bylaws. [2B]
- Research proceeding on best practice recommendations and models for board member evaluation, conflict resolution, and conditions of leaving the Board. [2B]

Nominating Committee Business

- Committee members are parents Eric Walsh-Buhi and Sierra Lee, staff member McKenzie Holmgren, and board members Hilary Kanyi, Anne Sterling, and Allison O'Boyle.
- The Board member application was opened on November 15, and has been advertised to date on the current parent email list, the alumni/supporter email list, and shared directly with several recommended applicants. There are 5 applicants for the Board at present. The application will remain open until January 20, 2025.

Parent Action Committee

Tracey Warren, PAC Co-Chair and Board Member-at-Large

Committee Business

- PAC has met its bi-monthly meetings; so there was no meeting for December 2024
- During PAC event downtime doing activity/event assessments and pre-planning
- Discussion with co-chairs regarding PAC inclusion in website/FACTS
- Next meeting: January 2024, AM

Current Projects

- Re-reaching out to other Montessori schools regarding their PACS
- Creation of PAC Committee Overview
- This is in conjunction with the prior PAC chair end of year report
- Organizing PAC drives
- Including transferring information from co-chairs personal laptops
- Placing minutes from secretary in appropriate space
- In January, communicate with Board Secretary regarding best folder organization

Operations

Quinn McAvoy, Jess Davis, and Cyndi Williams

Enrollment Update

- Enrollment tours continue.
- Two students withdrew at the end of November: one from Magnolia and one from Forest.
- We have a waitlist for the all-day middle group and lower elementary programs.

| Group | Actual October Enrollment 2024-2025 | Classroom Capacity 2024-2025 | Budgeted Spots 2024-2025 |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Half/Full Day | 37 | 54 | 49 |
| Half-Day Lunch Program | 18 | 24 | 19 |
| All Day | 55 | 60 | 60 |
| Lower EL | 66 | 66 | 64 |
| Upper EL | 38 | 39 | 39 |

Advocacy

- Jess continues her work as President of the United Montessori Schools of Indiana.
- Jess has resigned from the Montessori Public Policy Initiative and has feelers out to organizations that might have more to offer the school directly (most of what's helpful from MPPI we can access through her role at UMSI as chair of the Advocacy Committee).
- Quinn is joining the Board of UMSI and writing a chapter of a book with AMS.

Student Services

- Ongoing ISP and accommodation plan review meetings with families/teams.
- We have four children who are going through the referral process with MCCSC.
- Behavioral and mental health services with Sky have been added to our student services guide, available to parents on the Resources tab of the website.

Professional Development

- Jess continues a master's degree in Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum
- Jess is continuing the AMS Emerging Leader Fellowship.
- Jess is completing an Ages and Stages Developmental Screener in Montessori Settings training December 7,8, 10, and 11th
- Sam Cusack is in his final year of Montessori teacher certification training.

- Jess hosted an online workshop for AMS China on strategic self-development for educators using Montessori pedagogy as a theoretical framework. 990 people attended.
- Staff CPR and First Aid training is scheduled for Feb. 20th, and a co-op grant will pay for ⅔ of the staff to receive training on campus (2:3 sessions for the day covered by the grant, with the third session provided at a discounted rate because we needed more people trained than the grant could cover).

ABAR

- Working to hire grad students to be interviewers; Jen Silva will train
- Interviews in January
- Data analysis after spring break

Administrative

- Checking in with Luke Frydenger on BMS promo video and website images regularly.
- NSLP: Annual 2023-2024 Report filed.
- Staff annual campaign complete and raised over \$400
- Board annual campaign is almost complete; we are waiting for one more pledge form/donation
- Giving Tuesday
 - Live Content
 - Video Content
 - Sponsors and sponsor promotional videos/posts
 - Results
 - Higher sponsorship income and more consistent promotion of sponsors
 - \$13620 was raised for Giving Tuesday!
 - Annual campaign mailers were sent out on December 6th.

Community Partnerships

- Trine University reached out to see if we were interested in discussing being a satellite location for a training center. We still hope to have this relationship with IU, but we will learn more from Trine. BMS would receive in-kind support (free training for employees), and a lot of work would be involved.
 - Our IU contacts are no longer in that department so Quinn was introduced to the new contact who will be coming to tour the school and restart discussions.
- The holiday Food Basket drive for MCUM is in full swing. Each classroom is creating one basket for one family.

Facilities

Completed

Pending

- Replacement of toilets in Magnolia: The repair is scheduled for December 23rd and 24th.

- HFI contractors are building two Heat Recovery Ventilators to address the main building and annex air quality issues; awaiting an estimate.

Communications

- Bi-weekly newsletters, Facebook posts, flyers
- Luke Frydenger is helping with social media (his area of expertise), and I am building a strategy document based on his recommendations (he recommends we move away from school account posting goals and use funds to target search results).

Finances as of 11/30/2024

- Main checking: \$91,356.05
- Money market: \$219,622.07
- Café Account \$7,024.24
- Fundraising Accounts: \$53,957.75

Investment Accounts:

- Fundraising: \$65,888.10
- Cash Management: \$101,701.43
- Long Term Fund: \$516,273.11
- Tuition Delinquency - 2023-2024 - \$3,505 (one family; they have asked for consideration for the time being before we send their account to collections), 2024-2025 - \$10,010.87 (three families).
- IUCU Loan balance - \$ 477,709.67
- Received \$700 grant from the Monroe County Master Gardener Association for the Lower Elementary winter service project (urban greening).

Strategic Plan Accountability

Project Updates

Operations-Curricular

Executive Function focus→first phase complete, second phase will be completed in May.

Operations-Organizational

- Project: Increase Student Diversity-THREE-YEAR ABAR STRATEGIC PLAN IN PROGRESS-SEE DOCUMENT;
- Project: Investigate and Implement Extracurriculars for Elementary Students-Taekwondo (STATUS-ONGOING, BUT GOALS HAVE BEEN MET)
- Project: Consistent Social Media presence-great parent resource helping with vision-level guidance, SEO/analytics, and content! (In progress)

- Project: Website Review and Revisions-COMplete
- Project: Higher Receptive and Expressive Communication Engagement with Families-
 - Changes have included:
 - Exit survey implemented
 - adding a table of contents to the top of newsletters
 - shortening them when possible with a link to the blog for more info for those who are interested
 - Engaging families and students in creating content
 - Walnut is creating a newsletter about their winter service project that will be shared
 - Families have been invited to share cultural experiences through writing an article for the newsletter, and our first is about to be submitted.
 - Will also be trying:
 - smaller embedded images to make newsletters feel shorter so that people are more likely to look at the whole thing
 - Results so far:
 - Newsletter engagement has had a 50% increase during this strategic plan.
 - Newsletters continue to have an open rate between 70-85% (previously in the 50's).
 - Click rates fluctuate between 5-15%.
 - Stand-alone emails have a 50-60% engagement rate.
 - This is pretty good engagement!
- Project: Parent Event and Task Engagement Improvement-
 - Sign-up genius has been implemented for volunteers and this seems to be working (vs. just email announcements and responding)
 - People sign up well at the beginning of the year, so we will add more things earlier to see if we have better sign up
 - Next experiment
 - Online form with Parent Volunteer preference information that is required during the enrollment process each year
- Project: Foster Community-5K was a great success for this. This will never be “done”, but goals have been met.
- Project: IU Teacher Education Program Exploration-ON HOLD

Next step: They want an intro adjunct course to help gauge interest. Jess plans to develop and teach Fall 2026 and has reached out to IU for forming an agreement around this.

Value-Alignment

- Project: Evaluate Solar Possibilities-COMPLETED, though may have a phase 2
- Project: Hire Interventionist-CONTINUING SEARCH-ON HOLD (Financial reasons, and we have a full time special education para and one-day special education teacher from MCCSC right now)
- Project: Hire Counselor/Therapist - COMPLETED, Partnership with Counselor Sky Adams
- Project: DEI Survey-SEE ABAR STRATEGIC PLAN
- Project: Equity Audit-SEE ABAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Closing

Janelle Terkhorn – President

- Janelle thanked everyone for attending.
- Meeting Adjourned: **7:42pm**

Respectfully submitted by Christine Lovelace, Secretary