

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024, TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Jean Melancon, Alyssa Schwartz, Jeremy Miller, Carolyn Ganz, Rachel Droogsma, Rohan Chougule, Sarah Stocco (6:08-7:52)

Board Members Absent:

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Joe Aliperto (6:19-6:42)

Meeting called to order by Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Board Chair, at 6:04 pm.

AGENDA

Public Comment Period: Comments limited to 3 minutes per person.

- No guests present

Consent Agenda

- Parent Survey 2023-2024
- August 2024 Meeting Minutes

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF THE FAMILY SURVEY NUMBERS AND CLARIFICATION ABOUT VISITS TO THE SITE (38) VERSUS FINAL SUBMISSIONS (27). THERE WAS A QUESTION ABOUT TREND DATA YEAR TO YEAR. THERE WAS CLARIFICATION THAT THERE IS NO DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ATTACHED TO THIS SURVEY. SURVEY RESPONSES HAVE BEEN GOING DOWN SO QUESTIONS MAY BE REVISED FOR THE END OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR. RESULTS WILL BE COMPILED AND INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL REPORT. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	A	

Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

JESS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING'S AGENDA. JEAN SECONDED THE MOTION. NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Julaine asked whether, given the approved agenda, there were any conflicts of interest. None were disclosed.

Treasurer’s Report – Joe

- \$100 donation in August from US Bank Matching Grant

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE \$100 DONATION FROM US BANK MATCHING GRANT. ROHAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

- Audit
 - Audit is wrapping up and we should have the report by next week or so.
 - They will not be presenting in person, but will prepare a recorded report and we will have the opportunity to ask questions (watch and send to Carolyn and Chris, also Joe can answer at next meeting)
- CD at bank (Carolyn)
 - \$200,000 CD maturing before our next Board meeting, Finance recommends reinvesting in another CD to sequester the Employee Retention Credit funds

JESS MADE A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD TREASURER, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, TO REINVEST PROCEEDS FROM THE CD HELD AT NORTHEAST BACK WHEN IT MATURES ON OCTOBER 3, 2023, IN ANOTHER CD (OR CDS) IN AN AGGREGATE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$200,000 FOR A PERIOD

NOT TO EXCEED 13 MONTHS AND AT AN INTEREST RATE WHICH REFLECTS REASONABLE MARKET RATES AT THE TIME OF REINVESTMENT. THERE WAS A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF BUDGET QUESTIONS REGARDING ENROLLMENT. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

August Financials

- Last year ended with 137 students and 138.63 ADM, above budgeted ADM of 138
- Current enrollment is 132.
- The current year budget is based on 138 ADM, so we will need to have a longer discussion.
- We have good cash balance and money in CDs as well
- ESSER money is expiring on September 30, 2024
- Other grants are \$30,000 from St. Paul and Minneapolis Foundation for general operations, \$19,966 from Prairie Care for social-emotional learning, and some money from farm to school grant for local food for snacks.
- Federal money from COVID funds is going away so things will be a little tighter.
- Strong healthy cash balance, typical beginning of the year expenditures and such.
- Overview of financials in reports

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST FINANCIALS. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION, THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	

Stocco	x	
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- Enrollment Conversation - looking at comparison budgets from Joe
 - St. Paul and Mpls Foundation grant was not in original budget - that's \$30,000
 - Lease aid revenue dropped in new budget - but expenditures also go down
 - Enrollment concern is not as dire - but also
 - Fund balance conversation
 - above our policy (target is 20-25%), how does this contribute to larger money conversation
 - getting rid of funds that are less secure
 - thinking about monies that we need to protect (ERC for example)
 - Lease minimum is about 125 students
 - Big concern is about trend - this is not an emergency, but were it to continue, it would greatly affect our budget and fund balance
 - Question about SPED population increase - wouldn't affect much unless bigger increase (like 50%, currently around 30%)

Head of School Report – Alyssa

- 2024-25 school year underway
- Fully staffed - will be as of Monday 9/23
- MCA results publicly available

Upcoming events Board members are welcome to attend – great opportunities:

- September 20 11:00 International Day of Peace
- September 23 5:00-6:30 Parent Partnership
- Cornerstone Café in October, 10/11 8:30-9:30
- Contact Alyssa to schedule a time to observe in an environment

2023-2024 Assessments

- MCAs
 - We encourage everyone to participate – tests demonstrate that your children are learning in comparison with other schools; children who do not participate actively count against our scores
- ACCESS
 - Given in winter to children K-6 for whom English is not their first language
- FastBridge
 - Reading, math, and social-emotional assessments given 2-3 times/year

State-required standardized tests – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA)

- Given to 3rd through 6th graders annually in the spring
 - Math and Reading to all grades

- Science to 5th grade only
- Four outcomes: exceeded standards, met standards, partially met standards, did not meet standards
- Children who do not test are counted as “did not meet standards”
- Assessment for districts to consider curriculum, not necessarily to define how a child is doing or even a school as small as ours
- Our scores went down this year
 - disappointing, but not necessarily surprising
 - also SPED population is going up - which can affect
- Numbers assessed are very small, which can lead to large fluctuations year to year
- Very hard to look at growth over the last few years: no assessments 2020, 2021
25% did not participate,
 - However, starting to see patterns emerge: consistent growth over 2019 (last “normal” year) and percentages fairly consistently positive 2021-2023
- Minnesota Report Card
- Discussion of what we do to support student skills - how we approach these tests scores
- Question: How do we share with families? Alyssa presents to families who come (very few). It’s more likely that a family will bring a troubling score to the lead guide and/or Alyssa
- How is it viewed by UST? We end a 2 in the rubric, as we have for the last 6 years. We tend to score 4s in lots of other areas.

Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell

- Enrollment
 - 132
 - We lost some new children at/after the open house.
 - We lose some children and have no wait list - this is different than earlier years. Some people have been offered and declined because they got off a waitlist elsewhere.
 - This year’s kindergarten class is the toddler class from COVID - it reflects the enrollment gap that we have seen before moving through
 - Do we know why families declined? hard to say - often we never hear from them
 - Do we know why families are leaving? sometimes, but not a trend that we can identify
 - How do we build a waitlist?
- Food service concerns - trying not to overorder, but also meet everyone’s needs. Chris threatens to resign if we are so far over-budget again (she’s kidding!)
- Buses - new company - seems to be working well - staff on site the first day was a good sign

Board Education – Jess

- Discussion of draft agreements - reworking some language and details - see notes below

DRAFT

Relational Agreements- Draft statements

Communication

We seek to communicate directly and respectfully. We listen as well as share, and we aim to engage in clear, honest, and responsive communication in person and online.

Time

We make time individually and in meetings to process information and gather perspectives.

Operational Agreements- Draft statement

We support each other and our work in many ways. Specifically, we agree to:

- 1. Revisit board member roles and agreements every year during our September meeting.*
- 2. Provide board meeting materials to the board chair by expected deadlines.*
- 3. Read board emails and respond as requested within 48 hours.*
- 4. Read board packets in full ahead of time.*

REVISION

Relational Agreement
Communication

We seek to communicate directly and respectfully. We listen as well as share, and we aim to engage in clear, honest, and responsive communication in person and online.

Time

We make time individually and in meetings to process information and gather perspectives.

Operational Agreements

We support each other and our work in many ways. Specifically we agree to:

1. Distribute existing agreements in the July board packet and revisit board member roles and agreements every year during our September meeting.
2. Provide board meeting materials to the board chair by expected deadlines.
3. Read board emails and respond as requested within 48 hours.
4. Read board packets and other materials in full ahead of time.
5. Attend at least 2 school events in the course of the year

Governance Committee

- 692 Outside Provider Policy

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE POLICY 692: OUTSIDE PROVIDERS. CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	

Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Marketing Strategy Task Force - Jeremy

- Update: Slides summarize work so far and current brainstorming about next steps
- Enrollment stability seems like the priority right now and can look at larger long-term planning
- Idea about Outreach Coordinator (could share with MCM?)
- Typically board has some resources in our members, but we haven't been able to do that so adding to the staff would be a solution
- We should be looking at enrollment over time - yes we need outreach, but what is our real target? This is a bigger conversations to have - with more data in the future
- Lots of this will be a good discussion for our retreat
- What's the ideal number for our waitlist? What do we want to advance?
- Concern about sharing a staff member with MCM - we have worked hard to separate so would that muddy the waters again?
- We just really need to figure out how to reach out and find the families we want
- It seems like we need to find money to hire someone. How do we figure out who to hire?
- This would really help admin staff in terms of capacity.
- Alyssa is in charge of operations - so we are here to support her to figure this out (we are a governing board, not operations)

Board Chair Report - Julaine

- No replacement Advancement committee chair at this time
- Finance is taking the lead on Give to the Max Day.
- Liza Davis has been named the Interim Executive Director for MCM
 - o she has great experience with CMES, with Montessori, with community
- Please email any agenda items to Julaine for the next meeting.
- Board retreat is October 26 from 1-5

Feedback - what went well?

- Appreciate time, patience, and attention!

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:58 PM. RACHEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE VOTES WERE:

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	
Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Miller	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	A	

***The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 6 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.***