

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 18, 2025, TUESDAY – 6:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Jess Goff, Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Jean Melancon, Alyssa Schwartz, Carolyn Ganz, Rachel Droogsma, Rohan Chougule, Sarah Stocco

Board Members Absent:

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell, Megan Reimer (6:04), Joe Aliperto (Dieci Finance 6:18-6:27)

Meeting called to order by Julaine Roffers-Agarwal, Board Chair, at 6:02 pm.

AGENDA

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

- Megan Reimer - Literacy Specialist at CMES - here to watch and learn and listen

Consent Agenda

- Draft Previous Month's Meeting Minutes
- 2024-25 revised CMES school calendar

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA. CAROLYN SECONDED THE MOTION. 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	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

RACHEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING'S AGENDA. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION. THERE WAS NO FURTHER DISCUSSION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Board Member	Aye	Nay
Chougule	x	
Droogsma	x	
Ganz	x	

Goff	x	
Melancon	x	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

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

Head of School Report - Alyssa

- Upcoming events Board members are welcome to attend
 - Conferences 3/27-3/28
 - also could support staff by feeding them!
 - Cornerstone Café 4/11 8:30-9:30a
 - Very well attended recently - good chance to see families and children and work
 - Contact Alyssa to schedule a time to observe in an environment
- Parent survey results
 - The spreadsheet contains 32 responses from parents regarding various aspects of community engagement and events at Cornerstone. See below for some examples:

Question	Responses
Barriers to Participation:	Many parents cited the time of day/day of the week as a significant barrier to attending events.
Parent Partnership:	Responses varied between those who prefer social events , those who regularly attend , and some who were unaware of existing opportunities.
Events with Children:	A common interest was open park dates with their children. Some mentioned clubs and sports as a way to connect families.
Events Without Children:	Some parents showed interest in parenting workshops/lectures and online meetups , while others were indifferent.
Preferred Timing:	Mixed preferences, with some favoring weekday evenings and others preferring weekends. A few respondents mentioned having no free time.
Preferred Location:	Many parents preferred events at Cornerstone or nearby locations . Some expressed a strong dislike for virtual events.

Building a Stronger Community:	Suggestions included getting to know other families and staff better . Some emphasized the need for more public exhibitions of student learning .
Additional Comments:	Some parents mentioned not knowing many other families in their child's class , indicating a potential area for community-building initiatives.

Treasurer's Report - Carolyn, Chris, Joe

- Current enrollment is 135, if enrollment holds, we'll be at around ADM 133.3, we are budgeted for 138, paid for 140
- Good cash balance and CD balance
- 67% of the way through the year, 68% received, 70% spent
- Grants - no change from January
- Holdback is still 10% - this will be part of working out the ADM issues
- Some monies to be recoded to Prairie Care grant
- Some grants that we've been holding on to are past statute of limitations
- More details in reports - everything healthy and nothing unexpected

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY FINANCIALS. JEAN 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	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

- Donations in February
 - \$100 from Blackbaud Giving Fund
 - \$197.54 from Slow Road Photography

SARAH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY DONATIONS OF \$297.54. 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	

Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

- 2024-2025 Budget Revision (Joe)
 - Talked through the budget revisions
 - Adjusted to account for ADM
 - Overall about \$51,000 reduction in revenue from lower ADM
 - Some of the federal grants had higher allocations, also have St. Paul Foundation (\$30,000) and Bigelow (\$30,000) grants - very helpful
 - Overall, revenue went up about 252,000
 - Some adjustments to purchased services - food service is a hot topic, much conversation about how to help schools balance budgets, etc
 - Cash balance actually projected to be slighter higher than earlier budget despite lower ADMs
 - Lots of discussions and work to get the budget to look like this
 - Question: on the horizon - will Federal income or something else be a risk moving forward? Answer - supposedly net positive, but it's not clear at this point. Joe is keeping an eye on many things legislatively, and there will be more info as time goes on.
 - Discussion of ADM to make sure that term was clear.

JEAN MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE 2024-2025 REVISED BUDGET. 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	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Director of Budget Operations - Chris

- Current Enrollment - 135
- Current applications looking ok (30 K, 3 first grade, 2 second grade)
- Sibling applications
 - currently 18 applicants of siblings
 - plus we expect to have more - at least 20 total
- Question: any insights about how families found the school?

- Chris will share more specifics next time - sibling, website, word of mouth, etc
- Question: Do we have flexibility about the number of students we accept? Could we go from 20 K to 22 for example?
 - not a limit from authorizer or anything, but because K is housed within Children's House, there are DHS ratios and caps in place, plus the financial arrangement with MCM means that CMES should be 1/3 of the early childhood program
 - a little wiggle room, but not tons
 - 5th years leaving before 6th grade

Discussion of Elections

- Currently we have the following positions on the Board:
 - 5 Community Member seats (1 open, 1 will be empty July 2025, 3 filled)
 - 3 Parent Member seats (1 open, 2 filled)
 - 1 Teacher Member seat (will be empty July 2025)
- We have two licensed teachers that are interested in serving on the Board. Governance recommends adding a second Teacher Member seat with a 2 year term from July 1, 2025-June 30, 2027

JUALINE MADE A MOTION TO ADD A SECOND TEACHER MEMBER SEAT TO THE BOARD WITH A 2-YEAR TERM STARTING JULY 1, 2025. SARAH SECONDED THE MOTION THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF LENGTH OF TERMS: ONE TERM WOULD BE 2 YEARS, ONE WOULD BE 3 YEARS. DISCUSSION OF TEACHER MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS - MUST BE A LICENSED TEACHER TEACHING IN A POSITION THAT REQUIRES A LICENSE. THERE IS CURRENTLY NO OPPORTUNITY FOR OTHER STAFF TO PARTICIPATE. WE CANNOT ASK THEM TO BE COMMUNITY MEMBERS, BUT THEY CAN SERVE ON COMMITTEES. TEACHERS THAT DON'T WORK HERE COULD JOIN OUR BOARD. STATE STATUTE MEANS WE CAN HAVE EITHER TEACHER MAJORITY BOARD OR BALANCED CLASS MEMBER BOARD; WE ARE BALANCED CLASS SO MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE TEACHER MEMBER. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN'T BE EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL OR HAVE A SPOUSE EMPLOYED BY THE SCHOOL. LICENSED TEACHER REQUIREMENT GOES BACK TO THE FOUNDING OF CHARTER SCHOOL LAW. 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	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

Chris will send out a solicitation for Board membership email to all the Cornerstone community tomorrow. People can nominate themselves or someone else can nominate them. Applications are due back April 7th and go to the Governance committee.

Equity Committee - Sarah

- Right to Read event - very well attended
- 37 Adults (18 people showed up to watch the movie at 4 before the discussion)
- 33 children
- Good energy and participation, probably could have gone even longer, really good conversation - Megan and Jess did a great job facilitating.
- Kudos to Lindsay for all the help too
- Future events would be good following the same sort of model/template - staff really enjoyed that content was the focus for them, but not thinking about all the planning and logistics - this would be good for equity and advancement to continue to think about handling
- Other things committee have been talking about: federal government statements about equity - no reason for us to back down or hide what we do - lean into protections of our state - federal laws are still there and aren't overruled by executive order
- Jean watched the movie, went to the Marcus school website and thought it had an interesting strategic plan - maybe we should look at it as a board too
- Jean thinking about the benefit of getting a write up about our school published in MACS newsletter/website
- Great job - really fun.

Strategic planning - Julaine

- Update on current tasks document - any feedback?
 - Julaine, Jean, Rohan, and Alyssa met to review current goals and discuss timelines for each.
 - Board will hear updates as appropriate

Board Chair Report - Julaine

- Please respond to the email I sent to schedule a time to meet before the April Board meeting. Please do your best to spend quality time reflecting on your work as a Board member this year.
- Julaine is out of town the first week of April - please schedule with her to fit it in
- Lots of meetings with MCM this past month
- MCM is close to finalizing their strategic plan - expected to include working group to look at children's houses and CMES relationship
- Conferences are next week - Julaine can collect funds and help arrange for food
- Agenda items - send to Julaine

- Feedback on the meeting in general? now or later

CAROLYN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:17 PM. 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	
Roffers-Agarwal	x	
Stocco	x	

The next CMES Board Meeting is Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Jess Goff, CMES Secretary.