

Mountain West Montessori Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 16, 2023

Location: MWMA Library, 4125 W. Foxview Drive, South Jordan, UT 84009



In Attendance: Steve Barnes, Corbin White, Andrew Marx, Nelson Altamirano, Gimenia Palmer

Others in Attendance: Brandon Fairbanks, Dawn Kawaguchi, Angie Johnson, Cathie Hurst, Sheri Ebert

Founded upon Montessori philosophy, the mission of Mountain West Montessori Academy is to facilitate student-centered learning and intellectual curiosity through an individualized and interdisciplinary curriculum, hands-on experience, and community involvement.

MINUTES

2022-2023 BOARD PRIORITIES

Continue with the Computer Science Trajectory

Celebrate Teacher Excellence

Positive Community Communication

5:11 PM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- Call to Order – Steve Barnes
- School Mission – Andrew Marx
- Montessori Mastery – We took a field trip down to an upper El class to visit their geometric city. There was so much to see and the imagination of the students were incredible.

There was no PUBLIC COMMENT.

REPORTS

- **Board of Directors**
 - Financial Update – Andrew Marx reported on the financials as of April 30, 2023. There was a discussion on the kinder construction including spreading the cost over two fiscal budgets, how it is going to be paid, complying with our bond covenants and when it will be complete. There was also discussion on expenses from one year to the next. Cathie welcomed the new board members and gave them a quick timeline of how the monthly financials are shared with the Board.

CONSENT ITEMS

- April 24, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion. **Corbin White made a motion to approve the consent items. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**
 - Steve Barnes – Aye**
 - Corbin White – Aye**
 - Andrew Marx – Aye**

Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Motion passed unanimously.

Steve made a quick change to the agenda at the request of Brandon. He move the Amended Administration of Medication Policy to the beginning of the voting items.

VOTING ITEMS

- *Amended Administration of Medication Policy* – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Administration of Medication policy. The proposed amendments are meant to cover the medication administration requirements and update outdated Utah Code references more thoroughly. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the amended Administration of Medication Policy. Andrew Marx seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- *Amend Employee 401(k) Plan* – Angie Johnson stated that she would like to change the 401(k) plan to a Safe Harbor plan plus increase the 401(k) match to 4%, with a 100% vesting, and reduce the waiting period from 1-year to 60-day. There was a discussion on the Helpside employee handout’s vesting schedule, having employees automatically opting into the 401(k), and the wait period. **Andrew Marx made a motion to approve a Safe Harbor plan with a match of 4%, 100% vesting schedule, with a 60-day wait period, and allow the Board President to sign on behalf of the school. Nelson Altamirano seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- *Mental Health Screening Program Determination* – Angie Johnson reviewed the state available mental health screening program. It is an opt-in program. Angie is recommending not doing this the first year because there are so many ambiguities to the program and she would like to wait to see what happens with the program. **Nelson Altamirano made a motion to approve to not administer a mental health screening program during the 2023-2024 school year. Gimena Palmer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- School-Based Mental Health Qualifying Grant (SBMHQGP) – Angie Johnson reviewed the mental health grant (HB373) and what she can use the money for including a license clinical social worker, support staff working under a qualified licensed person (i.e. counselor, school nurse, etc.), school nurse, as well as behavior and social emotional support. The school would qualify for about \$38k for next school year. Angie also reviewed the school goals associated with the grant. The board is required to approve the application of the grant. **Corbin White made a motion to approve the USBE School-Based Mental Health Qualified Grant Program application as presented. Andrew Marx seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Audit Engagement Letters – Andrew Marx asked Cathie Hurst to discuss the audit engagement letter. Cathie stated that we will be using Eide Bailly again. The audit will be for FY2023 but they start the prework next month. Eide Bailly will be sending the letter out via DocuSign to the Board President. Cathie explained what requires a single audit but MWMA has never qualified for a single audit thus far. **Nelson Altamirano made a motion to approve the engagement of services provided by Eide Bailly for the year ending June 30, 2023 and allow the Board President to sign on behalf of the school. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- AMI Conference Trip Expense – Angie Johnson stated that this conference is scheduled in August but we will need to book the travel pretty quick. They still don't have actual numbers on who is attending due to passport issues. The employee will be paying \$1,400 of their own money for the airfare. The funds would come from several different areas including TSSA and SLT. This will give us the experience of global Montessori. These types of trainings/conferences differentiate us from other schools and helps with teacher retention. It also gives Angie an upper edge on recruiting great teachers along with our increasing robust compensation packet. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the professional development trip for teachers to the Association Montessori Internationale conference not to exceed \$37,400. Andrew Marx seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

➤ Calendaring – ALL

- Next Pre-Board Meeting – June 14th @ 5:00 p.m.
- Annual Board Meeting – June 26th @ 5:00 p.m. – There was a discussion on changing the date.
- Schedule a Dinner with Lois sometime in June – Tentative dates were discussed during the break.

6:26 PM – Steve Barnes made a motion to take a RECESS for a quick break. Andrew Marx seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

Steve Barnes – Aye

Corbin White – Aye

Andrew Marx – Aye

Nelson Altamirano – Aye

Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

7:01 PM – Nelson Altamirano made a motion to RECONVENE. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

Steve Barnes – Aye

Corbin White – Aye

Andrew Marx – Aye

Nelson Altamirano – Aye

Gimena Palmer – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

STRATEGIC BOARD TRAINING

- State of the School – Angie Johnson reviewed the current board priorities. She highlighted how they are celebrating teacher excellence which included the Teacher Appreciation Week done by the PTO, Teacher retention, and AMI Conference. *The Board would like to get retention numbers through all the years.* Next, she highlighted the positive community communication which included our AMAZING PTO and all that they did for our Teacher Appreciation ii. Week and our HOPE Squad. Angie also reviewed the executive function skills pilot program she did in 2018. ***Executive function skills are working memory, self-regulation, attention, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control. Executive function leads to goal directed behavior.*** Angie recapped last year's boards and administration's strengths and opportunities. She presented her recommended board priorities.

- INDEPENDENCE: Promote executive function skills in students, staff, and parents
- COMMUNITY: Build school community by sharing events, Montessori philosophy, and education topics with stakeholders through the school podcast

The most current strength is the new kinder classroom & EC Team and the recent challenge is computer science staffing.

- Set 2023-2024 Board Priorities – Brandon asked the Board about Angie's recommended priorities. There was discussion on deeper information on building community by sharing events including the podcast, community events, encouraging more parent involvement.

Angie will come back with broader defined priorities. There was a discussion on a possible third priority regarding mental health. Brandon passed out a sheet of paper with four quadrants which were Board Strengths, Board Growth Opportunities, Admin Strengths, and Admin Growth Opportunities. He asked the board and Angie write down up to three items under strengths and one under opportunities.

➤ Strengths of the Board

- Diversity
- Independent learners
- Socially conscious
- Gracious
- Eager to learn
- Positively promote the school
- Funny, positive
- Transparent
- Respectful
- Open minded
- Civil discussions and open to different opinions
- Extremely collaborative
- We make a good team
- Diverse experience and expertise
- Good listeners
- Cohesive
- Friendly
- Committed
- Supportive
- Collaborative
- Trusting

➤ Opportunity for Growth

- More knowledge on current challenges facing youth
- Montessori Mastery
- Meet/greet parents & families & teachers
- Abs
- Being able to identify growth opportunities
- Engaging with kiddos, parents, faculty and admin
- Participation in school events or assisting school in various capacities
- Willing to help the school with personal resources (i.e. posting on social media, attend events, advertisement truck, etc.)

➤ Strengths of the Administration Team

- Focused
- Caring
- Outward thinking (serving)
- Hilarious
- Resilient
- Dedicated

- Full of enthusiasm & joy
 - Create synergy
 - Keep the best interest of the children in mind
 - Excellent communication skills
 - Highly focused on what is best for students
 - Builds trusting relationships with all stakeholders
 - Organized
 - Goal driven
 - Student-centered thought
 - Love of the school/teachers/students
 - Committed to Montessori philosophy
 - Positivity & leadership
 - Hardworking
 - Committed
 - Interested in ideas
- Opportunities for Growth
- More realistic (sometimes we need to focus on the negative)
 - Specific targeted praise
 - Hold teachers accountable
 - Continue nurturing positive culture with teachers and students
 - Catering to helping those students who don't thrive in a Montessori learning environment
 - If it ain't broke, don't fix it!
 - More opportunities for promoting travel field trips and learning opportunities professional development for teachers
- Open and Public Meeting Act Training – Brandon told the board that he will ask five questions on the OPMA and if you answer them all correct, he will just go over closed session information.
- What constitutes a meeting? What is a quorum? There was a discussion on emails.
 - What is the deadline for posting a meeting?
 - If you have an electronic meeting where no one is here, what are the requirements on an anchor location?
 - Are closed meetings reordered or not? They discussed the two exceptions.
 - After every board meeting, the minutes the were approved from the last board meeting and the audio recordings must be posted within how many days? Brandon stated that Dawn takes care of all of these compliance items. There was a discussion of the purpose for the Open & Public Meetings Act and public comment.

Cathie mentioned that there is another training that the new board members need to complete before the next board meeting. Angie also let the board know that there is a new mandate for approving curriculum. She will need to have an electronic board meeting to approve curriculum that she received the quote for this morning. It requires two board meetings to allow public comment.

8:26 PM – Nelson Altamirano made a motion to enter a CLOSED SESSION to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual pursuant to Utah Code 52-4-205(1)(a) in the library. Andrew Marx seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

9:01 PM – Steve Barnes made a motion to exit the CLOSED SESSION and ADJOURN. Corbin White seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Corbin White – Aye
Andrew Marx – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

Mountain West Montessori Academy
Board of Directors
Closed Session Statement
Monday, May 16, 2023

Location: 4125 W. Foxview Drive, South Jordan, UT 84009



CLOSED SESSION SWORN STATEMENT:

*At a duly noticed public meeting held on the date listed above, the board of directors for **MOUNTAIN WEST MONTESSORI ACADEMY** entered into a closed session for the sole purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual in accordance with Utah Code Ann. 52-4-2(1)(a).*

I declare under criminal penalty under the law of Utah that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed on the 16th day of May, 2023.



Steve Barnes
Board Chair