

# Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees

## Regular Board Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2023

6:30 PM

**Location:** Laramie Montessori Charter School

**Zoom:** <https://acsd1-org.zoom.us/j/93415596199?pwd=WThlaEJURExzNUV6R1JyNWVoVEFnQT09>

### 1. Opening (6:34)

*The Mission of Laramie Montessori School is to support the development of the whole child through an authentic Montessori environment that honors the child's intrinsic motivation to learn and supports each individual's unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.*

#### 1.1 15-Second Montessori Moments

- Jeff: The weather balloon launch didn't go as planned because the wind picked up too much. Gave two weather presentations for the kids: one for lower elementary and one for upper elementary. He was impressed with how into it the kids were.
- Carter: Their house is very much designed for things to be within easy reach, and the kids decided to access the closet filled with arts and crafts.
- Kayleigh: Has holiday committees in her classroom. A group of students gets together to acknowledge what they are going to do to celebrate the holidays. Some students have even come in during lunch to work.

#### 1.2 Roll Call

- Present: Emily, Carter, Shawn, Rich, Megan
- Absent: Amy

#### 1.3 Approval Of Agenda

- Motion: Carter motions to approve, Megan seconds. No discussion. Unanimous approval.

### 2. Minutes

#### 2.1 Approval of Minutes

- Motion: Carter motions to approve, Megan seconds. No discussion. Unanimous approval.

### 3. Audience Communication

#### 3.1 Janelle

- Janelle and Bethany presented on holidays around the world:
  - **Why do we celebrate other cultures?**

- Diversity
- Insight into other countries
- History and Geography
- Different Perspectives
- **How far do we go?**
  - 16 different countries across the world
- **What do we learn?**
  - Traditions
  - Holiday meanings
  - Foods
  - Fun Facts

### 3.2 Teacher Representative

- Heidi
  - Planning the Winter Solstice event next week
  - Administering winter assessments before the break.
  - The “Informance” is tomorrow night (12/14).

### 3.3 Open Communication

- No open communication

## 4. Monthly Financial Report

### 4.1 No Financial Statements

## 5. Reports

### 5.1 Director’s Report

#### 5.1.1 Attendance Report (Enrollment Summary)

- Down 3 Students
- 2 were a family that moved away.
- 1 student was transferred to his local school after many discussions with the mother and the Student Intervention Team (SIT).

#### 5.1.2 Increase Family Engagement

- Fall Fundraisers
  - Papa Murphy’s
  - Winter Performance & Auction
- Java With Jeff
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter get together to be scheduled in January.
- PTO
  - Reached out to Friends of Laramie Montessori

- Parent Involvement
  - LMCS Winter Solstice Spiral
  - LMCS Silent Auction
  - Staff Christmas Bags
- Parent Volunteer Program
  - Talks have started with FLM to combine fundraising efforts.

### 5.1.3 Experiential Education

- It's fun to meet with Kaylie Vendela because she is so excited.
- There are many businesses that kids can visit and that can come to the classroom.
- Practical Life Classes
- Instructional Facilitator
  - The visit to Fort Collins was not ideal.
  - Kaylie is reaching out to additional schools to visit.

### 5.1.4 Community Relations

- **Website:** The website is up and running with some glitches that are being worked out.

### 5.1.5 Facilities Growth

- Nothing to report.

### 5.1.6 Internal Operations

- **Life Skills Classes:** Working with all classrooms with work on snacks and classroom skills.
- **Communication:** Interschool newsletters and communication is growing with a daily update along with more thorough weekly newsletters from the director.

### 5.1.7 Bomb Threat

- Jeff: Talked to the police officer and based on the language and the wording it didn't seem like an imminent threat.

### 5.1.8 "Informance", Silent Auction, and Spiral

- "Informance":
  - Tomorrow night (12/14)
  - Props to Norman for doing a tremendous job getting businesses to donate.
- The "Spiral":
  - Next Wednesday (12/20) at 6 pm.
  - Each family that comes will get their own candle.
  - Potluck dinner. School is providing homemade pizza as part of the practical life class.

## 5.2 Committee Reports

- Facilities
  - Carter: There has been some activity in the facilities committee, but they didn't officially meet.
  - Emily: Megan Hayes explained that we start the process by reaching out to the school's attorney to renew the lease. It should be a simple process this year given that we have a good working relationship. Since the provision for breaking the lease is already in there.

- Carter:
  - Met with Chris Rothfuss who is on the school facilities board. Carter wanted to know how charter schools might get built one day. Going into the budget session in February it's highly unlikely that things will change. It would be at least 2 years from now before that process would get started.
  - Carter also wanted to understand where we are in line. Chris sent a list, and the Montessori was not on that list.
  - School facilities meet 2-3 times a year. They send out a big binder to all the districts. The districts get to comment on changes. It would be beneficial to use to ensure LMCS is a part of that conversation.
  - The last meeting happened in October.
  - The next meetings are normally in June and September
  - \$165 million will go to building schools, which is a very small amount. And that money is going to very desperate places.
  - The first step is to get on that list.
- Shawn: The district's list has omitted us – at least for a while.
- Carter: There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party that would come out and assess the building
- Megan: The facility was evaluated in 2019.
- Carter: Things have probably changed since the initial evaluation
- Megan: Before they didn't want to buy the building because there was excessive deferred maintenance. This may have changed.
- PTO
  - Jeff reached out to families last week and will make another push on Friday for teacher appreciation gifts.
  - A parent reached out to come fill bags on Monday (12/18)
- Finance
  - The auditors are submitting the final draft to the "head honcho", implying that it is complete.

## 6. Old Business

### 6.1 Director Professional Development Proposal for 23-24

- Emily: Investigated the charter application and it doesn't say anything about the Director being Montessori trained.
- Carter: Is there a need for the director to be certified for Montessori Accreditation?
- Jeff and Emily met last Friday and talked about the week-long professional development.
- Jeff:
  - Has weekly meetings with other principals where they discuss concerns and problems throughout the state.
  - The American Montessori Society (AMS) collaborates with principals across the country and a couple in Qatar.
  - Participates in Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and AMS training.
  - The Charter School Association is now up and running.
- Megan: When is the conference?

- Jeff:
  - March: There is a discount if done by Jan 1.
  - The conference is \$2000-\$2500 (all inclusive)
  - Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR) is in the range of \$12000 (tuition alone)
- Carter: Would love for Jeff to get Montessori-trained.
- Shawn: Agrees and is inclined to encourage attendance of the conference but would also like to see MECR certification.
- Motion on the floor to authorize Jeff to attend the AMS National Conference
  - Shawn creates motion, Megan seconds.
    - **Discussion:**
      - Emily: It makes sense to attend the conference.
      - The cost is \$2000-\$2500. Is that a concern in the budget?
      - Megan: We might be okay?
      - Jeff: Found a grant to help pay for Lindsay and are working on grants to supplement the budget.
      - Norman: There is about \$6000 left in Professional Development (PD) that isn't allocated.
      - The duration of the MECR training period is 1.5 years and the bulk of the expenses are up front.
    - **Unanimous approval.**

## 7. New Business

### 7.1 Zoom Recording

- Kaylie asked if we could record the Zoom so she could watch the meetings after the fact.
- Jeff: Brought this up previously and was told not to record by an earlier board.
- Shawn: If we create a digital public document of this nature?
- Emily: Going to reach out to Megan Hayes and report back.

### 7.2 Director Evaluation Process

- The current process wasn't ideal for evaluating the director last year.
- Evaluation Process Proposal:
  - Create and send a survey to families.
  - Focus groups with teachers.
  - A list of specific questions will be developed in partnership with Jeff.
  - Data will be collected and provided to Jeff in a written format.
  - Emily: Will reach out to Megan Hayes about teacher focus groups and report back.

### 7.3 Montessori Accreditation

- Accreditation is a priority.
- Jeff provided "AMS Accreditation Standards".
- Typical accreditation timeline is 18 to 24 months.
- Charter renewal is in 2 years.

- \$800 application fee

#### 7.4 Snow Day Policy

- LMCS does not send computers home with the kids like the rest of the district.
- LMCS will send out a packet instead and students will work on that work at home for the day.
- Special services will be available for students on IEPs.
- Motion to Adopt Proposed Inclement Weather Day / Virtual Day
  - Carter motions, Megan seconds. Unanimous approval.

#### 7.5 Accounting Firm

- High Point CPAs raised our rates by \$150 / month because preschool is now a part of it.
- This brings the total to over \$875 per month.

#### 7.6 Wyoming Charter School Association

- Jeff had a meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> with the Wyoming Public Charter Schools Association
- The association now has a president and vice president.
- The association is going to push for a time limit on when the money comes from the state to the district for it to be delivered to a charter school. The proposed limit would be 5 days.

#### 7.7 Department of Homeland Security

- 3 representatives from Homeland Security toured the school:
  - They mostly had positive feedback.
  - 3 recommendations for the school:
    - Using keycards to get into the building.
    - Add a PA system to the building.
    - Add a front entrance vestibule.

### 8. Audience Communication

- No audience communication

### 9. Adjourn (8:52 pm)

- Carter motions to adjourn, Megan seconds. Unanimous approval.