

Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees

Regular Board Meeting Agenda

February 22, 2024

6:30 PM

Location: Laramie Montessori Charter School

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

1. Opening (6:33 PM)

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

- **Carter:** Oliver started preschool on Tuesday. Charlie and Oliver have been Montessori kids since birth. Though they occasionally bicker at home, at school Charlie has been proud of all the lessons he's been giving Oliver.
- **Emily:** Had a conversation with someone who was subbing at Snowy Range, where 15-minute recesses were "too long" and led to bickering among children. She contrasted this with her appreciation for the Montessori's conflict resolution curriculum, noting its positive influence on student interactions.

1.2 Roll Call

- Onsite: Carter, Emily, Shawn, Megan, Amy

1.3 Approval Of Agenda

- Carter motions to approve, Megan seconds. No discussion. Unanimous Decision

2. Minutes

2.1 Approval of Minutes

- Carter motions to approve, Megan seconds. No discussion. Unanimous Decision

3. Audience Communication

3.1 Andrea

- Andrea was unable to attend so she shared a video presentation.

- **Continent Study:** Aims to immerse students in the cultures, landscapes, and traditions of different continents, enriching their global perspective and sense of citizenship. The video touched on learnings from Australia and Asia.

3.2 Teacher Representative

- **Heidi**
 - Taiwan Connection: There was a good turnout.
 - Upcoming Spring Events:
 - Read Across America
 - WY-TOPP Assessments
 - Title Night
- **Jeff:** Both lower and upper elementary levels are looking forward to Engineering Days, with collaboration from University of Wyoming (UW) professors and students.
- **Kayti:** The Special Education (SPED) department welcomes the addition of a new paraprofessional.

3.3 Open Communication

No open communication

4. Monthly Financial Report

4.1 January Financials

- **Norman**
 - The current financial status is in line with expectations.
 - December saw reduced hours for hourly employees, but this is anticipated to increase moving forward.
 - There are concerns about the professional development budget, specifically regarding Montessori certification for teachers.
 - Suggested implementing amortization of assets for professional development costs, spreading the expense over four years to mitigate immediate financial impact.
 - Clarified that while payments for training are made upfront, budgeting for these expenses would be distributed over four years.
 - The savings account holds approximately \$0.5 million, indicating sufficient savings to cover professional development costs.
- **Jeff:** highlighted the importance of Montessori certification for accreditation, noting the specific needs of staff members Kayleigh (in-progress), Andrea, and Raven for certification.

4.2 Approval of Financials

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

5. Reports

5.1 Director's Report

- **Enrollment summary:**
 - Currently experiencing a slight increase in student enrollment compared to the previous year, with 2 new primary students added recently and another prospective student scheduled for a tour next week.
 - Already starting to get calls and emails from families of preschoolers and kindergarteners.
 - The school has made efforts to establish connections with the state regarding the acquisition of a portable classroom. The official student count for October will be 91, as used by the state for Average Daily Membership (ADM) calculations.
- **Legislative Engagement:**
 - Last week's visit to the Capitol was a great experience for the kids, with students witnessing a live debate and voting session, meeting Chuck Gray, Megan Degenfelder, and having an interactive session with Governor Gordon.
 - Discussions with national charter school representatives also took place.
- **Professional Development:**
 - We might have to have some conversations over the next couple of months about how we want to accomplish that with our two teachers.
 - Do we want to continue sending our staff to Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (MECR).
- **Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Communication:**
 - The WDE is seeking feedback on the Chapter 32 bill. The bill's implications for Laramie Montessori are minimal, with most changes not directly affecting the school's operations.
 - However, the renewal application process has been revised, but all the requirements are already being met by the school. The format has changed and is due on March 15th.
- **School Calendar:**
 - The school district is releasing 4 candidates for the 2025-2026 school year.
- **ACSD School Board Update:**
 - ACSD is addressing financial challenges.
 - There were discussions around staff reductions and incentives for early resignation or retirement, though these measures are not expected to directly impact Laramie Montessori.
- **Principal's Association**
 - Jeff is running for a leadership position in the principal's association.
 - The vote will happen in March.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - A significant grant from Big Brothers Big Sisters will support the after-school program for five years, allowing for the inclusion of Montessori elements and potentially extending to summer programs.
 - The possibility of requiring a lottery for enrollment due to increased demand was mentioned.
 - A humorous note from Jeff about signing his emails with "Lord Jeff Verosky" due to a family land purchase in Scotland.

5.2 Committee Reports

5.2.1 Facilities

- **Carter:**
 - Facilities met with Megan Hayes and discussed renewing our lease.
 - In a future facilities meeting, there needs to be a discussion about contingency plans.
 - Initial conversations have taken place with Father Dominic regarding the lease renewal.

5.2.2 Accreditation

- **Emily:**
 - The Accreditation Committee has been established but has not yet convened.
 - Jeff is actively working on obtaining verification for the school as a recognized Montessori institution.

6. Old Business

6.1 Director Evaluation Process

- **Emily:** Working with Christina to schedule with staff.

7. New Business

7.1 Celebrating Kaylie

- Hooray! Kaylie landed a portion of the Daniel's fund grant.

7.2 2024 Annual Meeting

- A date needs to be selected for the 2024 Annual Meeting
- These have been historically held near the end of the school year.
- Jeff will identify potential dates and email them to the board.

7.3 Personnel Update

- **Jeff:**
 - Jenny has resigned from her position to pursue a career in real estate, having discussed her reasons for leaving with Jeff. Raven (Upper EI) expressed her desire to continue with the school.
 - **Upcoming openings:**
 - Eli, serving as both primary and PE coordinator, will be deployed with the army national guard from November 2024 to October 2025. A partnership with UW's Physical Education department will ensure continuity, with a graduate student and senior students fulfilling Eli's roles.
 - Christina, the administrative assistant, is moving to New York. The search for her replacement is underway.

7.4 District Fees

- **Emily:** Raised concerns about a 3% passthrough fee decided by the district a year ago, questioning the options available to contest this decision.
- **Jeff:** Noted the policy is stringent and largely at the district's discretion.

7.5 School Board Nominations

- The need for new board member nominations was discussed.
- Members whose terms are concluding were asked to communicate their intentions regarding re-nomination or departure.

8. Audience Communication

No audience communication.

9. Adjourn (8:01 PM)

Carter motions to adjourn, Megan seconds. No discussion. Unanimous decision.