

Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting – Minutes
Location: Laramie Montessori Charter School
Laramie, Wyoming

April 27, 2023
6:30 PM

On-Line Attendees: Makena Cameron, Megan Hawken, Janelle Still, Jenny Palm, Kaleigh Schilousky, Kayti Parish, Lindsey Salisbury.

I. Opening (6:35 pm)

Mission Statement: “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.”

A. 15 Second Montessori Moments:

- Carter – made cards for child to get ready in the morning and are doing great
- Norm – for admin day all the kids made cards for Mr. Jeff

B. Roll Call: All present (Emily, Rich, Shawn, Carter, Amy, and Megan (via Zoom)

C. Approval of Agenda: Rich moved, Carter seconded – approved. Passed unanimously.

II. Minutes

- A. Approval of Minutes, Board Meeting, February 23, 2023: Rich moved to approve the January minutes as corrected (Shawn caught a typo in the year – 2022 will be corrected to 2023) be approved, Megan seconded. Passed unanimously.

III. Audience Communication I

A. Teacher Representative (Heidi):

- a. Outdoor walks and other spring activities going smoothly.
- b. Upper El is gearing toward outdoor event – Teton Science School – with meeting this week.
- c. Prepping also for summer school program. Norm and Jeff found money for LMCS to hold its summer school programming.
- d. Other teacher updates:
 - i. Jenny Palm – the kids in Upper El are getting really excited about Teton – we’ll be studying water ecosystems in the greater Yellowstone area and Jackson Valley. Also going on a field trip to see the water treatment facilities in Laramie. A little bit of a scare on the financial side, but working that out. Also have taken the state assessments and very rewarding to see. Big class this year, but they

are getting independent and more mature and getting ready to take them to Teton.

- ii. Janelle Still – tomorrow is our last day of WyTOPP and we're very excited to be done. Kaleigh, my assistant is very excited to start her training and learn all she can about Montessori philosophy.

B. Open Communication:

- a. PTO Communication –PTO is not getting enough steam to really be a full board, so planning to organize more as a volunteer group working as they can to support the school.
- b. Spring Clean-Up (around the playground) is one thing they want to help with this year. Details forthcoming.

IV. Monthly Financial Report

A. Financial Statements March (then February in reverse chronology):

- a. Norm noted that the financials are starting to look in format more like they will next year. Do expect that we will be a bit over this year since we had a lot of kids and we had an ADM for a lot less kids than we actually had in the building.
- b. Next month Norm will give a much more in-depth overview of the financials.
- c. Budget will also be available next month. Jeff noted that they have gone conservatively on the projected ADM number to be on the safe side, but can add in additional items they would like to accomplish if the actual ADM is higher.
- d. After school care is also in high demand and may add to revenue stream side.
- e. Rich moved to approve the financials, Carter seconded. Passed unanimously.

V. Reports

A. Director's Report:

- a. Enrollment summary – gained one preschooler this month, but lost 3 students that moved to Colorado. For 2023-2024 preliminary summary – Primary has 4 spots left. Lower EI just one spot left open. Upper EI now has just four spots open now that there will be two classes– approximately 16 per classroom. Still looking at more growth for next year if everyone shows up as they have indicated.
- b. Started hiring season – have hired two new positions over the last couple weeks. We will have a second Upper EI classroom this year and a new ELL/Title teacher. Both positions have been filled. Currently have 2 students needing ELL services, but next year will have 4 students for ELL. This position will also be a half time title.
- c. Resignations – 2 for next year. The special education teacher has retired and an assistant in Lower EI is going back to school full time. The assistant is interested in subbing when possible.
- d. Pre-school scholarship will be available again next year (courtesy of Friends of Laramie Montessori) and this info has been sent out to parents. So far, no one has applied, but Jeff will remind as needed.

- e. Some end of year dates to share: Thursday May 4th – Papa Murphey’s fundraiser (a percentage on all pizzas they sell that evening). Thursday, May 11th will be the annual meeting (and a combined Spring Fling event). Production of Aladdin is Wednesday, May 17th. Third annual Color Run Fundraiser on Friday, May 19th at old Deti Stadium. May 22nd-25th will be the Upper El Teton Science School trip.
 - f. Funding for free STEAM program this summer is coming from Big Brothers Big Sisters.
 - g. Also using some Title money for summer catch-up schooling.
 - h. Approval from the District for ESSER funds to continue to pay for counseling services three hours a day to make the position full time. Hoping that the following school year (2024-2025) those ESSER funds will only be available half the year, and then unused funds have to go back to the federal govt. So, hoping that we can use those for one more semester at least.
 - i. Requested a portable building for our school – if the state provides it, we’ll put it right outside the north/west door of the school. We should get an answer soon so we can start our planning for next year. School is at capacity and we’ve added a second Upper El class, so we are getting creative with space.
 - j. Finally, need some additional funding to get full Montessori training for new staff hires. Norm mentioned that Friends of Montessori has enough funds for approximately 2 staff members, but we don’t want to deplete that funding too much, so may split it across additional staff needing training. To be discussed in May.
 - k. Emily asked what the Color Run fundraiser monies might go toward. This year they’ll support Upper El’s trip to Teton Science School Considering different ways to pay for the program in the future. This year only 22, but next year the full class is looking like it will be 33 and that would be over \$20,000 for the whole class to go. This year, the staff members going are Jenny, her assistant Josie, and Sam.
- B. (circling back to Kaylee’s “going out” activity after she arrived) – wanted to go in the direction of really becoming an outdoor education school, and also wanted to ensure we are being true to an “authentic” Montessori school as stated in our mission. Title of presentation: “Practical-Life Opportunities”. This is just an idea for how we can potentially help be both authentic Montessori and an outdoor education school.
- a. At many Montessori schools, kids have a capstone going out experience in the community and bring the experience back to the school community. Kaylee went on a similar going out experience to try it out.
 - b. Where: Compass Golden school – public charter (Jefferson County Public Schools), Montessori Toddler-High School Farm Activities school. Showed photos – kids made many of the things (benches, etc.) in the farm setting at this school.
 - c. Kaylee proposes a grant-funded position to coordinate this kind of going-out experience for each child at LMCS. Offering practical life, student choice, curriculum & lessons; cosmic education curriculum; etiquette lessons; caring for garden/future animals; field trips; community studies.
 - d. Jeff mentioned that this is indeed intended to be a grant-funded position to start out with. We’ve struck out with most of our grant leads so far, but are still waiting to hear back from the Daniels Fund (not sure of their feedback timeline).

- e. Kaylee intends to position to support lead classroom teachers also. Norm mentioned that a portion of this overlaps with what we're thinking about for the CCLC (after school learning, project-based). Perhaps this could help fund it, but would require the person also be involved in the after-school work.
 - f. Amy asked what elements of this are already present in the Montessori day curriculum. Kaylee noted that there is already a Cosmic Education Curriculum album, a gardening, and an outdoor education emphasis. But this position would consolidate and connect it all. Amy noted that there are opportunities to bring in literacy, etc. into this as well and help make that rationale. Norm and Heidi both voiced support and noted that the other teachers also see it as helping to keep an essential part of Montessori in the school. Kaylee asked for any input and ideas to help refine this idea. Jeff and Kaylee have talked about how they can integrate this into the school. Jeff hopes getting this activity out into the community could help with inspiring parents and exciting them about LMCS so that they will send their kids here, increasing enrollment, and thereby increasing funding to help fund this position.
- C. Committee Reports:
- a. Finance Committee: Has met regularly.
 - b. Facilities Committee: Jeff noted that there is some movement in the legislature that may affect how much funding they will make available for school facilities.
 - c. Development Committee did not meet.

VI. Old Business

- A. Amended by-laws have been publicly available and are ready to approve. Rich moved, Megan seconded that the amended by-laws be approved. Unanimous approval.
- B. Board Elections – in the past, candidates for the Board have been voted on at the annual meeting. Emily noted we'll try to get back on that timeline.
- C. Full Title application is needed to the District next week. Have completed almost all the documentation needed. This year, we'll likely be completed before school is out with all this documentation. The District wants it by next week since they present it first to the District Board, then on to the State after that. [CCLC is 21st Century Learning Communities].

VII. New Business

- A. Have a calendar for next academic year included in the Board Packet. However, the District has informed us that we won't be able to have different days off from the ACSD calendar because the deadline for submitting those to the WDE has already passed. Jeff working with WDE on this. The only change in days from the ACSD calendar would be to November, when LMCS would have school on Election Day and take the week of thanksgiving off. Parent teacher conferences will also be different on the LMCS proposed calendar. Emily will call for a virtual ad hoc vote after WDE responds with their decision.

- B. Board nominations: Jana, former board chair, will lead the nomination committee and hold elections. Emily and Carter both running, Amy is on the fence. Three open seats available, 2-year terms.
- C. Not in agenda, but we are a year into the new strategic plan. Emily would like us to review year 1 soon and then prepare to purposefully enter year 2. Would like to have a conversation with interested staff at a time convenient with the school's calendar. Anyone on the Board or parents interested would be most welcome to come also. Informally, we are making good progress in year 1 also with the addition of what Kaylee has been working on and presenting. Need to work on plans for year 2.
- D. Executive Session:
 - a. Megan moved that the Board move into Executive Session according to Wyoming State Statute 15-1-105 to discuss personnel matters. Rich seconded. Passed Unanimously.
 - b. Resumed regular meeting after conclusion of executive session.

VIII. Audience Communication II

N/A

IX. Adjourn

- A. Rich moved, Shawn seconded the meeting be adjourned. Passed by consensus.