

Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2020
Via Zoom
6:30 PM

I. Opening (6:30) – Jana Heisler-White

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 – Jeff Verosky reported a new 5th grader started today. He was nervous at the beginning of the day and by the end of the day he was having a good time and reported having a great day.
- B. Roll Call- All board members are present
- C. Approval of Agenda* - Josh motions to approve agenda and it is seconded by Megan.

II. Minutes

- A. Approval of Minutes, Board Meeting July 30, 2020
- B. Approval of Minutes, Board Meeting August 27, 2020
Section A Jeff Verosky was listed as a board member and needs to be changed.
Josh motions to approve agenda and it is seconded by Megan

III. Audience Communication – no audience communication

- A. Teacher Representative- no teacher representative is present
- B. Open communication- n/a

IV. Financial Report- July financial report

- A. Review and Board Action to Approve Financial Reports from July 2020
Monies have started being shifted to church for monies owed to them and getting monies owed to us back from the church. Working on handling adjustments for July once the new lease goes through and making appropriate measures.

Josh motions to approve and it is seconded by Megan

V. Reports

- A. Director's Report – Jeff Verosky – The final fall field trip will be K-2 and will go to Hidden Falls. The next field trips will be Winter Field Trips and will begin in December.

Academic testing has been completed on all grade levels. Teachers were pleased with where students were after missing time in spring. Teachers are working closely with Title staff (3 staff members) who are pulling students to gym and title room to work with them when necessary. Next week Grades 1-3 will be doing the first WY-TOPP practice tests. Teachers agree that those tests are important for them to get practice in, as the wording in the questions can be tricky. Every student has a folder and we are keeping all testing information for that student in that folder and keeping them locked up in the title room. It's important to keep historical testing information to see where students need assistance and to see their growth to ensure we are being successful in helping students.

The SIT team (Student Intervention Team) – has started that process. Students who are in need of academic and/or behavioral assistance are recommend by their classroom teacher and if interventions and/or accommodations need to be implemented we can help teachers come up with solutions to help those students. We are working with students and parents, if parents would like to be a part of the group, to come up with solutions for the students.

Tomorrow Jeff has meeting with the Montessori Preschool Board. They want to meet with him to talk about the future of the preschool and want to make sure Mont is moving forward with Title before they make a decision on what they are going to do with preschool. Jeff would like to try to bring Preschool students into Montessori. If this happens they will have 2 years with the kindergarten teacher and help them grow. Jeff is hoping to have Preschool move into Montessori next year.

Enrollment is down some. Jeff attributes it to what is going on with COVID. A majority of student who we have lost have gone to home school. If you look at our virtual numbers they are fairly similar over the past 3 months. We have had students come back to us and others move to the virtual program. Those numbers are steady, but our in-person enrollment has dropped some. We got information on some local media resources and will get with them over the next couple of weeks to let them know what the benefits of Montessori are.

We had 64 students with one new enrollment today, bringing the total to 65 students.

We are still having issues with accessing the Laramie Montessori Facebook page, but we think we have the info we need to get in a change the password.

Jana Heisler-White mentioned that enrollment trend is overall down all over. This year is not an accurate representation of enrollment and she is wondering how this will effect budget cuts. Virtual academies have had an increase in students.

Jeff and staff are working with Scott James and ACSD #1 to figure out the Title process. The approval from Title should come in Spring and can be used for Preschool students. The paperwork will be done this year, although becoming a Title school probably wouldn't start until summer or next school year. Jeff needs to get more information and will clarify at a later date.

Preschool would not have to pay tuition if school wide Title is implemented. Jeff Will come back to the Board with a presentation before a decision is made. It's a huge departure from a typical charter school and we may need to consult with Megan Hayes before a decision is made. The current Montessori Preschool would be willing to pass all materials etc. to LMCS. We should reach out to Carol Koblenicky to invite her to the board meeting in October to gain some insight. How does adding Preschool effect the Charter? Charter will already be in place if the change happens.

COVID update- There have been two associations with COVID this year--- an Intern with the counseling program from UW tested positive but had not been in building for 2 weeks. Jeff spoke to Public Heath and they said we did not need to put out a notice. The second incident was a teacher, who, two weekends ago was with her partner and his daughter. Her partner's daughter tested positive for COVID. Public Health let us know that there is a 48 hour period, employee tested and came out negative but is still on a 14 day quarantine. If there is a positive in the school Public Health will take over, and provide letters etc.

B. Ad hoc Charter Renewal Committee

Two of our Board members, Jana Heisler-White and Ashlee Kupilik are Ad hoc committee members. The committee met on Tuesday. Kathy Kirkaldie will be serving as committee chair, and Jana Heisler-White will be secretary/note taker. The agenda for fall has been set and the next meeting will be at the end of October. Kathy was great at sharing the process and we are looking at an early January submittal. Charter is voted on by ACSD BOE. We are looking at whether or not we should attend the Board meeting during the vote. Dr. Yennie visited LMCS Jeff was able to talk to him about the charter renewal etc. We have timelines and milestones. We will need to reach out and collect information. The board will need to review and discuss the charter renewal document around November.

C. Committee Reports: PTO, Accountability (Jana); Nominating; Grievance; Policy and Planning (Josh), Finance (Megan), Facilities (Josh), Resource Development (Jana), Marketing (Ashlee)

Sean Bunning is trying to kick off PTO updates.

Josh asked which committees still need to be populated.

- Accountability – Jana was able to get another parent
- Kathy Kirkaldie is going to lead committee with 2 additional members
- Policy and Planning – Josh, Jana and Jeff
- Finance is built out and Megan has a large committee
- Josh- facilities has a couple of people in mind
- Resource Dev is built out
- Marketing is an ad hoc committee

Norman, Jeff are working on putting together a credit card procedure which should be finished soon. It was more a procedure than policy. Jeff would like board to see the procedure before they get the credit card.

PTO had a scheduled meeting but nobody else showed up. We will get with the PTO President for the next date.

Kaylie is working on grants for the garden and other projects. The resource committee will work with her on this. Historically in the past we have reached out to past donors to see if they would still like to contribute.

VI. Audience Communication II – n/a

VII. New Business

A. Policy updates to Parent-Student Handbook and Personnel Handbook

We are undergoing a process to update handbooks. Jeff, Megan Hayes and Jana are working on this and it will likely be on the agenda for the next board meeting. Megan has been reviewing and making sure we are in compliance with ACSD and federal policy, as well as ensuring we are transparent and compliant. There may be slight changes, updating standards, and they should be ready for the next board meeting.

B. LMCS Strategic Plan Update

Jana will be sending out the strategic plan. We will have to pay close attention to this while we are working on the charter renewal. We will want to update the strategic plan in the spring or next year to bring it up to date with our new charter.

C. Board Goals

We should establish board goals for next year. Jana will reach out to us prior to the next Board meeting to share information on the charter renewal, supporting school with Title 1 application, etc.

VIII. Old Business

A. Lease Update

Jana signed the new lease and it is now in place and is dealing with issues of the retroactive nature of it. There are pieces that are still being worked out with the lease. We are trying to get monies recovered and Jeff will try to work it out with church without getting attorneys involved.

B. Grievance Policy Revision Update

Went to Megan Hayes, she spent a lot of time on it, made a significant amount of suggestions and revisions to ensure that it is compliant with respect to teachers, staff, families, community members. This will come to board for review, public comment and vote before it is put into place.

IX. Adjourn

Josh moves to adjourn, Megan seconds

**Consent agenda items- items approved simultaneously with approval of agenda, unless exceptions are noted.*

Laramie Montessori Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2020
Via Zoom
6:30 PM

I. Opening (6:30) – Jana Heisler-White

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
- B. Roll Call – All board members are present

Ashlee moved to approve agenda Josh seconded

II. Report/Update on School Opening Plan

Jeff Verosky reports that daily staff meetings, with the main point of the meetings being processes and procedures. He has received great feedback. The kids have been great and are excited and attentive. Staff is ensuring that areas are clean and that everyone is washing and sanitizing their hands, as well as keeping a safe distance and adhering to mask policies.

Things are running quickly and smoothly after minor changes. The playground has been divided into four quadrants using cones and will be painted at a later date. Each grade level gets a certain quadrant daily. Quadrants are changed each day. The lunch process is going smoothly, although Food Services is still making some changes.

Possible foreseen issues with construction on Sheridan by bus lane. Jeff will touch base with Simon Construction Company. Will implement alternate route if bus lane closes.

- Call for start of school question and staff comments on start of school. There were no questions or comments.

III. Audience Communication

A. Teacher Representative

Kaylee asked Heidi Kindsvater to take over the teacher representative position this year and Heidi accepted. Heidi reports some frustration to having to open with sanitizing and masks. That subsided after the first day after seeing how well students did. Students were excited to be in class both physically and virtually. It is a huge benefit for virtual students to be able to see classmates. September 3rd is Title Night.

Janelle, who is a Lower Elementary Teacher reports that students are doing incredible with their masks and have been extremely pleased to take them off for snack and lunch, but that they go right back on afterwards.

B. Open communication

There are a lot of Montessori elements that are being rolled into this process and are being shared with students to keep them safe.

IV. Reports

A. Committee Reports:

PTO-

Accountability-Jeff Verosky and 2 additional members (standardizing test scores, etc. Supports director in role of accountability) Jana Heisler-White has volunteered to be on this committee and will try to find another parent to serve as well.

Nominating-Will reach to a parent who may be interested. This committee should have at least 3 members. This committee will give nominations for the Board.

Grievance- This is a non-Board committee. This committee has had 2 community members in the past. There is a parent who is potentially interested and Jana will reach out to find 2 additional members.

Policy and Planning- Josh, Kathy & Jeff will be members on this committee

Finance- Megan, Jeff and Norman will be members on this committee. Megan will work to find additional members.

Facilities- Josh and Norman will be members on this committee.

Resource Development- Ashlee will be a member on this committee

Marketing-Ashlee will be a member on this committee.

Charter Renewal Committee- Jana, Jeff and Ashlee will be members on this committee.

B. Director's Report

Enrollment numbers are lower, down to 70 students. Losses in student population from moving and homeschool. Looking into advertising for students to move into Montessori. There are potentially some advertising opportunities with Laramie Boomerang and local radio stations. The biggest feedback from student and staff is the wearing of masks. We are following ACSD #1 policy to wear masks at all times in the building. Students get tired of wearing the masks. If they are focused on mask rather than learning it is going to prevent them from getting anything from the lesson. Some districts are allowing students to take off masks in classroom while socially distant. We are currently hesitant to make changes from ACSD 1, as they have done a lot of research and surveying to come to this decision.

With this policy, similar to many policies, we try to follow what the district does, unless there are specific reasons apart from those. The District is trying to keep with local health orders and recommendations. We would be hesitant to part from district as they put research into their plan and the board recommends that we think critically about departing from those. We do recognize that masks can be challenging for students. From the reading of District policies, it seemed the policy is written that masks will be used if 6 ft will not be available we should try to mask up for at least the next two weeks until we get a handle on how people feel and if the virus comes back around. Students can take masks off during the day outside with social distancing, during recess as well as long as they are social distancing. Inside we are sticking to keeping masks on. Teachers have done a great job of doing social distancing in classrooms. We have been able to do curriculum and activities with social distancing, but have been wearing masks indoors. If we decide to part from the district guidelines, we will need to consult legal counsel.

We are making sure that areas are well ventilated. It can be difficult to keep windows open with the smoke in the air. Looking into the possibility of hiring an HVAC consultant. There will be a representative from Albany County Public Health that will meet with Jeff and staff that could possibly look at the ventilation system and give us additional resources.

The district is moving to Canvas and that is better than what we currently have. Teachers will get tomorrow and the weekend to put some plans together that will work better with Canvas.

Title Night next Thursday- We talked to Public Health and they gave recommendations for our Title Night. We are going to do rotation stations with small groups. A potato bar will be served by staff members to adhere to suggested guidelines. Title paperwork has been accepted by the state--- additional paperwork will need to be filled out throughout the school year. We will need to have meetings, including parent meetings to get school wide Title.

Jeff has been inundated with requisitions from teachers and has asked the board for a credit card to be issued to the school. Jeff would be the main cardholder with a checkout policy in place if the card is needed by other personnel. Norman and Jeff will put together a credit card policy and bring it to the Board for approval at a later date.

Jeff has been contacted by a UW professor about the possibility of having UW students work with our PE teacher, Eli. This would not start until September or October and would come with the UW students being tested extensively for COVID before entering Montessori. If our Director decides on this route, he will send out a survey to get parent feedback before making a final decision.

Board co-chair Josh has been working on starting a Text Tree. This will be beneficial when volunteers are needed, etc. We will reach out to parents for their preferred mode of contact.

V. Audience Communication II

There was no communication from the audience.

VI. New Business

A. Board Action to establish ad hoc Charter Renewal Committee – Megan Hayes spoke to the District and was told that it would be very difficult to defer the charter at current. A decision was made to move forward with the ad hoc committee to renew the charter. This committee will start meeting in September and will meet monthly until the charter has been completed. At that time the committee will be dissolved.

VII. Old Business

A. Grievance Policy Revision Discussion and Board Action – Megan Hayes will review the Grievance Policy and it will be posted for public comment.

VIII. Review and Board Action to Approve New Lease

IX. Executive Session

A. Personnel (WY Stat 16-4-405)

X. Adjourn

Megan Hayes- We have been directed to enter into full service lease by the legislature. The church will receive more money and will have more obligations. Many of the safeguards for Laramie Montessori have been transferred over from the previous lease. The new lease began 1 July 2020 and is a 2 year lease. Monies will be sent to ACSD #1 and passed through to the church. Our attorney, Megan Hayes, has encouraged Jana Heisler-White to sign the lease on behalf of the Board. Megan will pull the appraisal from a couple of years ago that lists everything that is wrong with the building that the church has yet to repair. The state is paying of the lease.

New custodial staff will be starting next Monday. With the new full service lease the church will pay for utilities and custodial staff. Jeff will ensure that the new custodians have gone through a background check. Discussion was had about whether or not Montessori is due reimbursement from the church for the months that Montessori paid for custodial staff. Megan will speak with the church's attorney about reimbursements. Megan- PG 7 PARAGRAPH 9B --- condition of the premises. Facilities committee when lease is signed ask the church to come and show them the deficiencies that have been noted in the premises. Effective date is 1 July 2020. Should indicate to church that there are deficiencies that church should remedy as their obligation under the lease.

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