

Wausau Area Montessori Charter School Governance

Council Minutes of October 17, 2023 Meeting

Attendees:

Bethany
Stookey
Casandra Feidt
Casey Jensen

Chris Dietsche
Dana Moore
Elizabeth Channel
Julie Schell
Kate Schuster
Tiffany Rodriguez Lee

Excused

Absence:

Alisia Jones
Tyler Berg

1. Call to order & Welcome

- 5:31 called to order

2. Public comments

- No public comment

3. Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Cassandra moved to approve the September 19, 2023 meeting minutes; Chris seconded. ○
The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

4. Head of School report (Elizabeth Channel)

- Thank you to our classroom Guides who are working diligently to complete their Montessori training to ensure that we are offering authentic experiences for our students. I continue to be encouraged by their tenacity and commitment to Montessori education for our students. •

Balance for 2022-23 = -\$2,198.99

(The negative balance due to late-/non-repayment of MMUN fees.)

- Budget for 2023-24 = \$14,974.00
 - September balance = \$15,976.86 (purchase orders awaiting to be paid, so)
- 1 prospective family tours in September
- Current enrollment for 2023-24: 101 (+4 on waitlist). 80.2% of capacity.
No change from last month's numbers
 - 12 Kindergarten
 - 15 First Grade
 - 18 Second Grade - FULL
 - 18 Third Grade (+3 on waitlist) - FULL
 - 17 Fourth Grade (+1 on waitlist - sibling is on the third grade wait list)
 - 10 Fifth Grade
 - 7 Sixth Grade
 - 3 Seventh Grade
 - 1 Eighth Grade
- Supply Packs were purchased by 68 out of 101 students (67.3%) this school year ○
This is both a convenience for parents and a fundraiser (funds going back to classroom supply needs throughout the year).
 - Council suggested that next year we should include a note about how the extra funds from the supply packs go to classroom needs and add an option to make a donation to

the form.

- Professional Development for Paraprofessionals:
 - The paraprofessional in a Montessori learning environment has an important role in supporting instruction, building community, and encouraging growth all learners. The relationship between the paraprofessional and classroom Guide is unique as they work collaboratively to ensure the physical, emotional-social, academic, and cultural needs of all students in the classroom.
 - To support this important role within our school, our Education Department is supporting paraprofessional training offered by the National Center of Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS). This 6-8 week course is led by the Head of School/Principal and is provided in modules. The modules offered have an emphasis on integrating the opportunities for observation, reflection, and discussion to cultivate a true understanding of Montessori philosophy. All of our paraprofessionals will begin this training with me this week!
- The State of Wisconsin requires that all charter schools have a governing council. To maintain that governing council, we have to pay a \$25 fee. This has been paid for the year.

5. District Administration Liaison report (Julie Schell)

- Restructuring updates: There was some anxiousness around the science classroom needs at West. The board approved to add footings and an elevator in order to prepare for the need but delayed voting on the addition of the four labs as the full board was not available at the meeting. Nexus assured the board that the choice to add the four labs would not affect the timeline for restructure (2025-26).
- Testing results (iReady): We are almost at end of first quarter. The district is looking for opportunities to use testing information. Seeing some gains on the learning losses created by COVID. Returning to pre-COVID trends in data, specifically in math.
 - Dana asked if there is a more-Montessori way of reporting
 - One of the math works that Montessori students will be getting is iReady (on the ipads) so they are able to practice and become familiar with the technology and be prepared for testing.
- District is exploring the post-merge elementary schedule.
 - At this point, Montessori doesn't have access to any interventionists. If a student is identified as needing support, the staff first reviews core instruction. Our special education teacher primarily works in the identified student's primary classroom.
- Independent learning day: Approximately 1000 people responded to the survey. Respondents showed mixed opinion: from not enough to just right amount of work, good communication vs. confusion, etc. Staff comments were overall positive.

6. Faculty/Staff Report (Elizabeth Channel for Alisia Jones)

- October virtue is "Initiative"
- CH is working on botany
- E1 is working on collaboration skills, created a collage of Maria Montessori, is studying the solar system, and is going to planetarium
- E2 is working on adding realistic elements to art
 - Adolescents are painting and designing chairs for the fall market. Currently studying the Renaissance, Canterbury Tales, Building a Castle, Pringle cans projects. They have also been looking for "big works" and will be going to Sylvan hill to mark trees/branches

7. Parent Connect Report (Dana Moore)

- Harvest Fest on Friday, October 20 - primarily dancing
- Fall Market is Saturday October 28 - lots of vendors coming, request that we spread the word • Peace Feast in November
 - Looking to include a service aspect (e.g., assembly of hygiene kits, etc.)
- Voted to increase teacher grant to \$200 to help them purchase classroom needs • Checking = \$3,179.81. Savings = \$11.53
 - Papa Murphy's fundraiser raised \$288.50

8. School board report (Dana Moore)

- Julie covered a lot of the restructuring updates in her report. There is still question about what is included in our budgeted amount for the Lincoln renovation.
 - Council requested line-item detail. Julie emailed Keith Hilts and Josh Viegut during meeting to request the information.
- The district has started discussion of the curriculum of for 8/9. Montessori should keep this in mind as we discuss what we want to offer to our students at this level.

9. Enrollment Policy Update

- Families can put in their enrollment with the school starting December 1st • They are reminded to submit the district enrollment starting in early February when it opens • A lottery is held in February for open positions if there are more applicants than availability
- Tiffany moved to open the registration window for the upcoming school year's lottery on December 1 and close it on January 31; Dana seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously
- Chris moved to table additional discussion until Julie reports back on if the district would allow us to stop accepting children for a period of time; Tiffany seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously

10. Strategic Plan

- Continued discussion around adding 3K or 9th grade to current offering for new charter contract
 - Charter renewal opens Spring 2026
- Tiffany moved to update the strategic plan to remove the 3K conversation and dedicate the calendar year to explore options for the 2025-26 school year. Chris seconded. ◦ The motion passed unanimously with no further discussion.
- Requests:
 - Could we have a learning meeting with Odyssey School in Weston
 - Can we get Bruce Trueblood to attend a governance council meeting to talk about the topics that the adolescent class is focusing on

11. Discussion/Action Items

- None.

12. Adjourn

- Dana moved to adjourn; Cassandra seconded.

- The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.
- Meeting ended 7:03