



Free Horizon Montessori January Meeting Minutes

Jan 8th, 2026

Attendees:

Board Members: Kristy Kibler (KK), Becky, Lisa Smith (LS), Matt Muhm (MM), Josh Camp (JC), Rae Lyon (RL), Erin McGrath (EMG), Josh Camp (JC)

Staff: Donetta McDonald, Lisa Kingston, Elise, Julia Halsey

Additional: Brittany – CSN President

Call to order @ 606 by Kristy Kibler

Reading of Mission, Vision and Values by Matt Muhm

Agenda/Reports/Minutes:

KK add New item 7: Discussion on Primary Changes to add a Toddler room.

KK motion to approve agenda as amended. BR seconded. Motion carried.

Celebrations & Public Comment:

- 6th grade changes call was well handled and well communicated
- Transition back to school being well handled by staff
- Public thank you to all Spring Fling Committee members from the CSN President (Brittany)

President Updates

- Dept of Education has approved charter contract. Jeffco school board now has to approve – there is an option for Jeffco to make changes to the contract but cannot deny us a contract. Do not anticipate controversy/changes. Jeffco Vote on Jan 15th. Board members can feel free to attend in person or virtually but please let Kristy know so Taio knows we are in attendance.

Principals Update

- Celebrate the teachers – call to action to help push for enrollment/re-enrollment. Numbers increased as a result of this and it is very much appreciated. There are a number of people who we are still awaiting action on. Enrollment clinics went well.
- Enrollment is down overall in Jeffco, we still have good enrollment numbers with a number of families that have yet to take action. But we are not immune to the overall trend. We are ahead of last years commits at this point. Still have a waitlist.
- Jeffco budget deficit increased – causing some nervousness and there may be additional cuts at the district.
- Not going to get CCAP funding, lapsed accounts have impacted a couple of families. Mallory has reached out to CSN to potentially establish a scholarship for families impacted.
- Mr Matt got a grant which he will use for the Musical and other Music Programs.
- Barnes and Noble event raised \$750 which will likely go to Teacher Professional Development

Toddler Classroom Addition

- Want to explore adding a toddler classroom. Can use middle school areas which are licensed for childcare. Some changes would be needed but are licensed. Ratio of 1-5, 18mths - 3 years. High demand. Potential additional revenue.
- Early analysis underway. No need for additional market research etc. at this point but may be needed in the future. Update as part of the budget discussion.
- Board noted and appreciated the adaptive and dynamic thinking as to ways to improve the school offering and revenue.

Staff Liaison Update

- Elise provided update on survey results. Points to note:
- Good to be back. Appreciate the family support for the classrooms.
- Was difficult to come back without a day of prep.
- Calendar differences between FHM and Jeffco can cause confusion for families with kids in multiple JeffCo schools. For teachers can reduce access to Jeffco collaboration/training opportunities.
- There are impacts on days worked etc. that have a revenue impact/salary impact.
- Alignment with Jeffco calendar does not always facilitate alignment with Jeffco training as in school trainings will take priority
- Board will discuss policy on board approval on the calendar in February meeting. This would give Admin full responsibility for the calendar.

League of Charter Schools Conference

- League of Charter Schools Conference – 26th – 28th Feb. DTC.
- Mallory to attend the conference for admin.

- Opportunity for board to also attend. Some relevant sessions. Registered participants get access to recordings.
- Motion from KK to Approve Carry Forward spending to pay for 2 admissions to League of Charter Schools Conference, approximately \$1000. Second RL. Motion Carried.

Succession Planning

- Discussion on need for and approach to board recruitment. Need to identify potential people to approach. Some actions to start to gather names.
- Desire to have committee recruitment and chairs to be in place by end of school year.
- Potential for specific event – volunteer recognition, education/recruitment for committees.
- CSN will support as needed.
- Also noted that teacher of the month should also be recognized on a similar level.

Committee Reports

- **Facilities Committee:** No update.
- **CSN:**
 - Meeting 1/13.
 - CSN is engaging with Moola for caps. Boxtops is minimal funding but will push again.
 - Spring Fling Planning beginning in gusto.
 - Family Game night in February.
 - Working on committee recruitment for next year.
- **Governance Committee:**
 - Self-evaluation for board has been sent out. JL to present in March.
 - Intend to run form is under review and will be shared.
 - Still working on onboarding checklist.
 - Governance Committee formally taking over on training/tracker with support from Board Secretary.
- **SAC:** January Meeting not held yet.
- **Finance Committee:**
 - Current year budget on Track.
 - Next school year budgeting underway.
 - Mallory meeting with Jefferson Academy Charter School who are providing information and knowledge on financial operational considerations etc.
 - Discussed increasing marketing budget to support enrollment. Need clarity on plan for spend.
 - Discussed allocating funds for an operational position. Continue to consider cost/benefit/timing. General agreement that position is needed – shift away from

instruction happens in second semester as admin is stretched more by enrollment/marketing activities in this semester.

- No update on facilities use agreement from Jeffco.
- KK -raised the potential need for a policy change to remove any potential Conflict of Interest for tuition paying parents. Need to look at voting for budget/tuition and also board positions that may be impacted.

Assignments

Meeting Assignments:

- Include discussion/vote on policy changes for calendar approval in February Meeting – LS/KK/BR
- All Board Members to complete their mandatory reporter training and update tracker.
- All Board Members to complete their forms on Box and update tracker.
- Staff survey for Feb to include question on potential parents to approach for board/committees - Elise
- Matt to email Jesse for list of potential parent names.
- Kristy to discuss volunteer recognition – operational considerations etc. with Donetta. Will include part of your Presidents update in future board meeting.
- Kristy to share Rockies event information with CSN
- Board members to complete eval by February meeting. Intend to provide update in March.
- Lisa S to send training information from State to Becky/JL for governance to review and provide guidance.
- Lisa K to send POI form to Lisa S to distribute and add to tracker.
- ALL board members to complete mandatory reporting and POI forms by Feb meeting and return to Lisa K.
- KK/BR – take question on policy changes around Col for tuition paying parents and voting on tuition/budgets to next governance committee.

Motion to Adjourn made at 8.14 by KK. Seconded by RL. Motion passed.

Lisa Smith

Secretary

In accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law, also known as the Sunshine Law, the Board must give notice to the public anytime they schedule a meeting of more than three (3) board members to discuss business concerning the school. The Colorado Sunshine law does allow for the meetings, or portions of the meetings, to be held privately when the subject matter being discussed must remain confidential so long as no formal action is taken during the private portion of the meeting, called the "executive session". The Sunshine Law strictly defines eight (8) criteria under which a private executive session can be held, personnel discussion being one of them. The law also states the community must be informed of the meeting and the criteria under which an executive session must be called.

