

Coulee Montessori SET Minutes

Feb 18, 2026 5:30pm @ Coulee Montessori/Northside Elementary Library

IN ATTENDANCE (Board Roster):

Kim Shively	Mariah Bigelow	Alex Hiller	Sarah Bradle
Sara Horstman	Ann Epstein	Kathryn Wiegrefe	Andy Thomes

Not present: Lisa Dillon, Alexander Kent,

Other attendees: Jen Cabassa, Jody Colclough

CALL TO ORDER

Technology Use in Classrooms – Jody

Jody, a parent from Northwoods Elementary, spoke about her work to bring awareness to the School District about parents' thoughts on technology use in the classroom. This began with initial concerns that too much free time was being spent on screens, and students were allowed access to content that parents weren't completely comfortable with. Covid caused the use of iPads to be widespread by necessity, but reevaluation on its current place in schools should now be done. There is evidence that physically writing and reading on a real page have greater benefits for learning and retention than using computers and iPads.

Teachers shared about the level of screen use in each of the CM class levels.

- Children's House uses iPads once a week for 15-20 minutes for a reading app, and they use it for Playaway audiobooks.
- E1 use it for testing, to take pictures of works too large to bring home, and listening to audiobooks.
- E2 works hard to be intentional to not use iPads passively –generally only for research with the intent of being creators, not consumers of content. They use Google classroom, which allows teachers to control what the students can search and have access to. 1-2 assignments per week require an iPad to complete.

Montessori philosophy steers kids toward the beautiful materials that they have in the classroom, and screen use is already intentionally limited at our school.

Jody passed around a petition for any interested parents to sign, requesting reevaluation and intentional use of screens in schools throughout the district. She will be speaking at a future School Board meeting on this topic.

Principal Report –Sarah Bradle

Teacher's Assistants: Sarah believes she has enough data to share with the district to fight for keeping the number of TAs that CM currently has. She can demonstrate to administrators that these are critical positions.

4K enrollment: Sarah will be reaching out to each new applicant's family directly to make sure it is a good fit. She will also send them information on the Soup Supper. Seven new students are on the list for 4K. We always need to keep pushing enrollment. E1 should be in good shape next year with the number of kindergarteners moving up, but we need to keep recruiting new students to fill CH.

Testing: Testing starts March 18, with information about it going out in the next few weeks. Some parents opt out of testing, which hurts the overall grade for the school because those students' scores count as a zero. SET could have a role in advocating for the importance of testing, which may carry more weight than hearing this from the teacher or principal. Ann will work on writing something to be added to folders to go home to parents. Parents may not have an accurate understanding of the purpose of the testing – it is more of a guide for the teachers and the staff, and kids don't see their score immediately after testing. It is shared with families a few months later.

Pearl Street Books Event – Kim

SET will have a table set up at the bookstore on Saturday, February 21. There are several volunteers for this, and shifts are covered. Montessori books will be for sale, and any extras can later be used for raffles. This event is to bring awareness about CM's presence in the community.

Board Succession Plans – Kim

Kim, Alex H and Amy will be done with their 3 terms after next year. We can think about who we may want to invite to join us on the board, and have information to share with parents at the Soup Supper. Current members who do not plan to continue should email Kim.

There was some discussion about dividing into two groups and separating SET from PTO. Some members felt there would be a loss of cohesion and potential for missed communication if we no longer meet as one group, and it may be difficult to find enough members to fill out two separate ones. We could instead restructure our meetings to

focus more on what we'd like to talk about. Breakout groups could also be helpful to cover more ground during the same amount of time.

Soup Supper

We can put out a box for freewill offerings to any who want to donate to SET to offset the costs of soup and supplies. Kathryn has a box to use, and Mariah can create a QR code for Square donations to post with it.

Sara Horstman and her family will come early to help with setup.

Jen Cabassa will to put together a raffle basket with School merchandise, books, etc. Mariah and her class will put together a plant basket.

Andy will check with Pickermans and other locations to see about soup donations. SET members can provide additional crockpots if needed. Ann will get extra grocery supplies if needed.

Family Fun Expo

The diaper drive was successful in covering the full cost of having a booth this year! Sign ups are available for volunteering the day of and bringing supplies.

PTO TOPICS

Treasurer's Report – Alex

All CM students participate in an ice-skating field trip to Green Island, and a request for \$400 for bussing was made. Kim made a motion to approve this request, Sara H seconded it, and the motion carried.

Secretary's Report – Kathryn

Ann made a motion to approve the January minutes, Andy seconded it, and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.