

La Crescent Montessori and STEM School
Thursday, December 21, 2017
Official Minutes
1116 S. Oak Street, La Crescent Minnesota
3:30 PM

The mission of La Crescent Montessori & STEM School is to prepare outstanding Montessori environments with integrated STEM education and rigorous academics, which foster independence, self-assurance, collaboration, and connections to the global community and provide experiences that promote curiosity, inquiry and engagement. LMSS' approach is guided by the principles of AMS Montessori education.

Call to Order: Tara Thompson, Kate Garfin, Melissa K. Johnson

Roll Call:

Present: Tara Thompson, Kate Garfin, Melissa K. Johnson

Absent: Sam Thelemann

Guests: Monica Botwinski, Tammy Stremcha, and Stephanie Wehman

Approval of December 21, 2017 Meeting Agenda – *Included in agenda packet.

Tara motions to approve the December 21, 2017 meeting agenda.

Second Motion: Kate

Discussion: Added the question: "How much money do we have specifically designated for textbooks?"

Motion: Unanimous 3:0

Approval of November 16, 2017 Meeting Minutes – *Included in agenda packet.

Kate motions to approve the November 16, 2017 meeting minutes.

Second Motion: Tara

Discussion: Added the question: "How much money do we have specifically designated for textbooks?"

Motion: Motion carries 2:0 Tara abstains because she was not in attendance at the last meeting.

Community Input:

Monica – I was wondering how we go about -in a very timely manner, what positions are available for next year? What are the steps to find the answer?

Monica has already had discussions with both staff and administration about this topic. She is not looking for a definitive answer, but rather wants to start the discussion to begin the process of setting up a procedure for employees.

It was brought up that at-will employment and budget planning that occurs in the springtime.

Stephanie will be communicating with other schools that have at-will employees to see how they handle the same situation.

Tara Thompson - Informing the board that the next EF Tours location has been set. It is Panama in the spring of 2019. Parent information session will be held January 10, 2018 at 5:00 at LMSS.

Board Committee Reports (20 minutes)

Budget/Finance (Tara) –

November 2017 Bank Statements

Check payable to Stephanie Wehman was reimbursement for hallway seating. Check payable to Tami Holtslander was reimbursement for staff development (AMI Conference). Check to Heth Hardware covered key stamping and insect control. We will be moving to a paperless banking statement system to avoid fee.

November 2017 Financial Statements

New report includes credit card statement so that the board can be more aware of specific funding streams with regards to purchases.

November 2017 Cash Flow Report

The report was as expected. We estimate that by April LMSS will exhaust all of our monetary reserves (checking and savings). The committee discussed the need to generate an influx of cash to complete the year, including the need for a loan. There is a possibility that the G-5 grant may be used to cover some the deficit in Fund 4. This does not impact our bottom line as this is an internal transfer. Stephanie and Tammy are also exploring grants that could be used to cover some of the loss in fund 4 as well. The committee discussed possible changes that may need to be made to the budget for next year. Tammy and Stephanie will explore loan options to bridge the funding gap.

Governance (Tammy) –

The Governance Committee met November 14th and November 28th. The committee evaluated the results of the board evaluations that were completed in June. Areas for growth include: administrative accountability and evaluation; board self-evaluations; committee agendas and meeting minutes; communication between the board, administration and staff; encouraging and voicing different points of view; knowledge of bylaws and policies; understanding the difference between governance and management; and understanding school finances and financial health. The committee drafted a board development plan and adjusted the topics covered each month based on areas for growth and the most appropriate timeline for training.

The committee discussed ways to make financial materials easier to understand- perhaps including bold titles so it is easier to read and find the correct documents for board meetings. It was suggested that financial training may be more

effective if Tammy presents the financials each month until board gets a solid feel for how to read them.

There is a need to number board policies for easier reference as well as develop a policy review cycle. The committee would like to consider moving elections to May in the future, with new members being seated in July, to allow for better training and a more logical seating of members prior to the beginning of the school year.

It was determined that a board election process and supporting documents needed to be created for clarity and transparency in the board election process. The committee reviewed a draft for the board election process. Revisions were discussed in order to better fit the process at LMSS. Stephanie revised the document based on the recommendations and the committee reviewed it again. The process will be the focus of board training at the December meeting.

The following seats are up for election in January: Seat C (currently held by Kate Garfin-Teacher) and Seat E (currently held by Natalie Hafner -Community member). Tammy sent out an email invite and the governance committee will follow the election process to gather candidates for the seats.

A link to the governance committee meeting agendas and minutes has been posted on the school website.

The next meeting is scheduled December 19th at 11:30.

Present Business

Reports –

DO (Tammy):

Tours: We have provided multiple tours to interested families that ranged from pre-k to 6th grade students, some interested in possibly a mid-year transfer, and others interested in next year.

Fall Feast: The fall feast was a wonderful success with visitors and volunteers coming in to our school to help us share our gratefulness with them. Food was delicious, and friends were bountiful J

Worlds Best Work Force: The annual WBWF meeting was held with students, parents, and staff participating in the review of our WBWF goals. Discussion was had regarding our improvements and plans for the future. It was submitted to MDE and ACNW.

Monitoring: I have been working with Acentek and Bankoe to try to get our alarm monitoring service online. This has been more time consuming than was originally planned, but we feel as if it might finally be getting close to the completion point.

JMC/Attendance Modules: I spoke with JMC representatives to discuss possible solutions to our attendance frustrations. Discussions will need to be had with staff to determine what they would like to see happen.

Governance: Attended Governance meeting and helped put together templates and frameworks to better organize our processes for elections. Began working on Bylaws and Articles possible revisions.

Special Education: Met with Mark Krug to discuss fiscal monitoring schedules, requirements, and areas of improvement. We also discussed federal special education dollars, and how they can be spent with the most benefit.

Student Field Trip Forms: Most of the student field trip forms have been returned and have been filed. Updated contact information is being cross referenced this week.

Audit: The audit is getting wrapped up with the completion of the 990 form. Management letter, and financial statements have been provided to the state for filing.

Marss: Marss files have been submitted to MDE, and all errors have been fixed. Warnings have been checked to ensure they are appropriate for our school.

Apparel Order: An apparel order was put together, distributed and collected. The order is expected to be on site for purchase pick up by the last day before Christmas break.

Enrollment Work Committee: Attended a working session for enrollment strategies. A decision to increase our Facebook 'footprint' was agreed upon. I have been increasing my appearance in all of the classrooms to get pictures of students working, to share with our followers on Facebook.

The Nutcracker: Students Pre-K 3 through 12th grade were invited to attend the live performance of The Nutcracker. Students enjoyed the theater experience, and a big thank you goes to Ms. Holly for helping to coordinate that opportunity.

Pictures: Student pictures and class pictures have been delivered. Some issues have come up with the classroom pictures, and we hope to have them solved by the time this meeting is under way.

Finance: see the finance committee report J

Website: I have continued to update our website with new photos and links to administrative committees. The website is current with all legal requirements.

Donation: A box of Apples were provided to us by Van Lin Orchards.

Site Visit: Met with Rhianon and Syneva from ACNW. Discussed financial outlook, re-authorization process, enrollment trends and board documents.

**Natalie joined the meeting at 3:51 pm.*

Epicenter (Tammy): Up to date

Head of School (Stephanie):

The past month has been a busy one. Tammy and I have given several tours for possible mid-year transfers as well as for enrollment in the fall. I have also participated on several IEP teams.

We had an amazing Fall Feast and were thrilled to welcome volunteers and special guests from Army Corp and the police department. Leftover food was delivered to the Salvation Army shelter and they were thrilled.

Tammy and I hosted a meeting of the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Advisory Council on November 28th. The purpose of the committee is to involve the community during the development of the WBWF plan; and to make recommendations to the board on rigorous academic standards and student achievement goals and measures.

School leaders must post an annual report on their progress, hold annual public meetings, and are submit a summary report to the Minnesota Department of Education. Tammy submitted this required report to MDE.

At the meeting, Stephanie explained the World's Best Workforce - where it came from, requirements, goals, and how it we measure them. The committee looked at the school's WBWF goals and results from 2016 and discussed the implications. This same data will be shared with the board at the Dec. 21 meeting.

The WBWF Advisory Council only had one recommendations for the board. It was noted that it was difficult to digest the numbers when they are based on such a small number of students. They recommended that it would be helpful to include the sample size in the report so individuals reviewing the data could take the data into account.

A recruitment committee was formed and met on December 5th. I also met with a parent who did not want to be part of the committee, but wanted to share feedback and suggestions to bring to the group. The committee brainstormed challenges to the school in the area of recruitment as well as potential solutions or opportunities. A comprehensive list of strategies was developed and the committee and administration will work together to determine an overall plan for this area, beginning with advertising and events in January to coincide with the time that parents begin looking toward next year's enrollment. Following this meeting, Tammy and I met with the parent leading the charge for PR to discuss next steps.

A pedagogy committee was also formed. Required members include at least one educator from each level and the Head of School, however all educators and interested parents are invited to participate. At this time, we have not had any parents express interest in joining this committee.

The purpose of the committee is to inform and advise administration regarding pedagogy-related issues, which may include but are not limited to the content and structure of learning experiences offered at the school. The committee advises administration on issues related to pedagogy including pedagogy development, delivery methods, staff development efforts, educator evaluation and parent education. They also review existing and proposed policy when directed and assists administration to write procedures that comply with existing board policy.

The committee created a list of work to be done including:

- Educator evaluation
- Look into AP college opportunities
- Create curriculum review cycle
- Continue Summer slide program
- Develop parent education opportunities
- Create "portrait of a graduate" for each level
- Better define AP program- what makes it different from other schools?
How does it look in the Montessori program? Not as visual/work is more abstract- for example, one can't see differences as easily as when one walks into CH (AP team/Stephanie are working on this and will bring back to pedagogy for review)

The group identified the following items as priorities: educator evaluation, parent education, curriculum review

The group discussed parent education opportunities. A survey was sent to parents to determine interest and topics. Several ideas for topics were discussed and included on the survey. It was also determined that the group will plan moving-up nights in January to give parents more information about the next level.

The committee also discussed the educator evaluation process- what has gone well and areas for growth. The Head of School will serve as the summative evaluator. Educators will serve as peer observers and will observe one other educator each year to minimize time out of the classroom. Peers will use the short observation form to record observations but will not assign a score to any components. The short observation form contains the domains and components from the Danielson Framework and will be a good supporting document for the formal observation form completed by the HOS. I will draft a revision of the evaluation policy and bring it to the committee for review as well as revise the evaluation forms.

Zach has completed his student teaching and has graduated from Winona State University! He and I met with his University Supervisor in early December to finish final evaluations. Congratulations Zach!

Ashleigh and Sam will graduate tonight with their Masters Degrees from the University of St. Catherine. They presented their action research papers at a recent staff meeting and we are so proud of their accomplishments. We have an amazing group of educators!

As the Homeless Liaison for LMSS, I am required to complete 8 hours of annual training on the McKinney Vento Act. MDE offered this training on December 8th in Anoka and I attended. The majority of information was not new, but the keynote speaker grew up homeless and gave an outstanding presentation of his experiences and how schools/educators can support kids and families in transition.

Audubon was at the school on December 13th for a site visit. Two members of their reauthorization team spent time observing classrooms and meeting with administrators, teachers, students, parents and board members. Audubon will provide the school with a written evaluation compiled over the contract period as the next step in the reauthorization process.

Tammy and I met with Brenda Kes and Mike Duscher from Bergan KDV in November to begin a discussion about potential services the school could purchase to add an additional level of financial oversight and segregation of duties. I met with them on December 1 to go over the proposal for services. The proposal will be shared with the finance committee in January.

The AP team and I have met a few times to work on defining the AP program and creating a solid framework for curriculum, outings and connections to experts in our community. This is a monumental work. For that reason, we have planned to spend the January 18th staff workday on this topic. Because concentrated time away from school can provide a more conducive environment to accomplish work, I am looking into affordable lodging for the night so the work can continue through Saturday afternoon. We hope to walk away from these 2 days with a fairly complete draft of the plan for AP which will then be brought to Pedagogy for review.

The school received a \$100 gift card from Aldi in response to a request for the Fall Feast.

LMSS received the MDE 2018 High Quality Charter School Designation. Out of 161 charter schools 40 were chosen.

Board Training (20 Minutes) – Board Election Process *Included in agenda packet.

The letters will be sent out to potential community members and teachers. The process was reviewed. The biggest change will be there will be no more “floor nominations.” All must be done ahead of time. Everyone feels comfortable with the way this will take place.

Approval of September 2017 Expenditures – *Included in agenda packet.

Kate motions to approve the September 2017 expenditure.

Second Motion: Tara

Discussion: These had not previously been in the agenda packet.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Approval of October 2017 Bank Reconciliation- *Included in agenda packet.

Kate motions to approve the October 2017 Bank Reconciliation.

Second Motion: Natalie

Discussion: The finance meeting was held after the board meeting this month due to MEA.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Approval of October 2017 Expenditures – *Included in agenda packet.

Melissa motions to approve the October 2017 expenditure.

Second Motion: Kate

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Review of Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash flow, Enrollment Reports, and Financial Statement Report for October 2017 – *Included in agenda packet.

The finance meeting was held after the board meeting this month due to MEA.

Approval of November 2017 Bank Reconciliation- *Included in agenda packet.

Kate motions to approve the November 2017 Bank Reconciliation.

Second Motion: Nat

Discussion: All questions were previously brought to finance.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Approval of November 2017 Expenditures – *Included in agenda packet.

Tara motions to approve the September 2017 expenditure.

Second Motion: Kate

Discussion: All questions were previously brought to finance.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Review of Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash flow, Enrollment Reports, and Financial Statement Report for November 2017 – *Included in agenda packet.

From Last Meeting: Tammy will look into... (September 2017) *Changes included in agenda packet.

Line item #50 on the financial activity sheet.

Money was spent on administrative supplies, general administration supplies, business support service supplies, building supplies, and classroom supplies.

Will look further into line item #43 on financial activity sheet.

Line for repairs and maintenance. Currently the cleaning service comes out of this account. There is an option to move this from object code 350 to 305. However, with the information that there is not an overbudgeting error, the board chooses to keep the services in object code 350. Tammy will change this to reflect the expense percentage appropriately.

Will look into why 114 on profit/loss doesn't match #64 on financial activity.

Please bring this revised to the next meeting.

An error occurred on the profit and loss statement: the sites and buildings program section. Other Purchased Services and utilities were overstated (too much was reported as being budgeted). After that error was rectified, the total expenses were correct.

Why haven't we spent Professional development money?

Tammy and Stephanie will tell the board at the next board meeting how much we have for professional development?

A breakdown sheet was provided.

How much money do we have specifically designated for textbooks?

Since the budget has been revised, there is no budget specifically set aside for textbooks.

A comment was made as to concerns about eliminating line items that we see value in.

Approval of the changes made to the Board Policy Development and Revision Policy –

*Included in agenda packet.

Tara motions to approve the changes made to the Board Policy Development and Revision Policy.

Second Motion: Kate

Discussion:

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Approval of updated FY18 School Calendar – *Included in agenda packet.

Melissa motions to approve the updated FY18 School Calendar.

Second Motion: Kate

Discussion: March 22 as a school day and March 23 as a professional development day. We will use one day as a professional development day. This will assure AP hours are met. Stephanie will talk to staff to see how they will best benefit from this day and compile an agenda to share with the board at a later date.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Review form 990 – *Included in agenda packet.

Approval of SHIP Grant (Tammy) –

Kate motions to approve the SHIP Grant.

Second Motion: Melissa

Discussion: Ship stands for Statewide Health Improvement Partnership. The total grant amount is \$1080. Used for various indoor projects and recess items.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Approval of Hiawatha Education Foundation Grant (Tammy) –

Tara motions to approve the Hiawatha Education Foundation Grant.

Second Motion: Kate

Discussion: Will help to reduce the cost of tuition for families who qualify for free and reduced programs. The possible grant amount is \$25,200.

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Review of WBWF Summary – *Included in agenda packet.

One person was actually overheard saying, “Keep up the great work, LMSS!”

Approval of Board Development Plan – *Included in agenda packet.

Kate motions to approve the Board Development Plan.

Second Motion: Melissa

Discussion:

Motion: Unanimous 4:0

Review First Reading of LMSS Strategic Plan – *Included in agenda packet.

The board likes the direction of the document. We are asking Stephanie to move forward with this and include timelines and detailed short and long term goals. A second reading and approval will be held at the next meeting.

Future Business

Adjournment –

 Melissa motions to approve adjournment of the board meeting at 5:04 PM.

 Second Motion: Natalie

 Discussion:

 Motion: Unanimous 4:0

* Next board meeting date: January 11, 2017 at 3:30 PM.