



Board of Directors  
Board Meeting Minutes  
February 11, 2020

Free Horizon Montessori PK – 8

Montessori for the 21st Century - a place to learn, a place to belong

1. Meeting called to order at: 6:02pm
  - a. Board Members Present: Alison Fuhr, Doug Klof, Bekky Robbins, Leslie Arboleda, Diane Fox, John Frost
  - b. Board Members Absent (excused): None
  - c. Staff Members Present: Kresta Vuolo, Cyndi Vosburgh, Jennifer Levy, Kate Powell (Staff Liaisons) Judy Luehring (SAC chair)
  - d. Guests: Tony Schiess, Ben Dodson, Jennifer Grush, , April Couvillion
  
2. Approval of Agenda (including item 3, Consent Agenda) for current meeting: motion to approve by Doug. Second by Bekky.
  - a. Amendments
    - i. Unanimous approval of minutes approved as amended.
  
3. Public Comment and Celebrations
  - a. Alison – saw several times this month, school communication seems great right now, lots of detailed information being relayed in the Fox Flash, teacher newsletters, etc.
  - b. Ben – fun valentines today,
  - c. Jen – teacher said that it felt almost normal today with the Valentine’s day celebrations
  - d. Kresta –
    - i. since last board meeting, all in-person back in the building.
    - ii. Riley starts on Tuesday (new custodian), Gratitude to Jeremiah, on loan from Bell, been filling in as full time
    - iii. Thanks to lead teachers for mid-year special request parent-teacher conference
    - iv. Susan Vallier, Cyndi – preparing survey documents
    - v. Jax Lane class dinners for social support
    - vi. Grub Club – MM and who else?
    - vii. Jane enrollment secretary doing a phenomenal job
    - viii. Donnetta McDonald and Jane for facilitating virtual tours for prospective families.
    - ix. Jeffco HR + payroll
    - x. Shout out to Cyndi to securing documentation related to carry forward funds, have it in writing
    - xi. Amazing school counselor, Crystal, finding creative ways to support social and emotional health of students even though she is working 100% remotely!
  
4. Principal Update
  - a. Since the JAN BOD meeting
    - i. In-person students in the building

- ii. Middle school came back a week earlier than expected
      - 1. Variance granted for 4-day week attendance for Middle Schools, starts next Tuesday
    - iii. Mid-year staff/teacher check-in
      - 1. Participated in declaration of desire for employment, survey questions on feedback on principal goals, scheduling, staffing model, budget
    - iv. Staff participated in workshop on collective efficacy and reimagining the ILT
  - b. Innovation Review
    - i. Staff to have a draft ready for BOD by March 11 meeting for 1<sup>st</sup> reading, will need an additional special meeting for 2<sup>nd</sup> read/approval
    - ii. Will need teachers, administrators, SAC, support
    - iii. Jeffco requested they received application prior to spring break. Once cabinet approves, they create a summary + a recommendation to accept/renew or discontinue innovation status – April 8 or May 6<sup>th</sup>, would go into consent agenda, but any member could pull it out of consent agenda, would need representation in case of questions.
  - c. COVID-19
    - i. Jeffco Schools Dashboard includes quarantine data, Jeffco schools updated quarantine procedures by enabling
    - ii. Educators eligible for vaccine, not a lot of availability yet, not a central district process for that occurring.
    - iii. Don't know when will be available for kids
  - d. 2021-22 Enrollment
    - i. Primary – filling vacant preschool spots
    - ii. Middle school – full
    - iii. Elementary – some spaces
  - e. 2021-22 Remote option
    - i. Will be run centrally for families that wish to remain fully remote, run by central district, specialized plan would be provided centrally.
    - ii. FHM students would remain FHM students
      - 1. 1 year only,
      - 2. Retain PPR with weekly engagement
      - 3. Receive FHM communications and ability to participate in FHM events
    - iii. Potential Variable application process for a school to serve it's own remote students, teachers would have to teach solely remotely or solely in-person
  - f. 2021-22 Budget
    - i. Expect static PPR, but no documentation specifically yet
    - ii. Plan on static funding, enrollment
    - iii. Special service provider allocation guidance decreases some ratios = more staff hours required
    - iv. Still awaiting formal documents with budget, purchased service amounts, and student fee thresholds
  - g. Board input needed:
    - i. Calendar

- ii. School Day schedule – aligning primary and elementary schedules
- iii. Innovation Plan – who on the board will update BOD section, BOD member or two to proofread prior to March 11<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> read
- iv.

#### 5. Staff Update

- a. Jen – very exiting month, having all students back in the building. Excited about PD day tomorrow. In the survey, question about saving money, where do we have wiggle room, what could we restructure, everything takes more people right now, but hard to see anyone in the building as not essential, will be a challenge to balance the budget.
- b. Kate – Back in September, collective concern, knew we were going to have to be remote, go into quarantine, in addition, bracing for mental health struggles. Caution was appropriate when it came to quarantines, going remote. Coming back in January, mental health wave hitting us hard, honeymoon period lasted a long time, but has passed. Teachers facing challenges, full spectrum of classic defiant behaviors, power struggles. Also students communicating suicidal thoughts/feels, don't want to come to school because I don't feel safe, don't want to go home because I don't feel safe. School counselor not on site, setting up to meet virtually, taking teachers or assistants out of the classroom for up to 30 minutes.

#### 6. Review Proposed 2021-22 Calendar

- a. Created two calendars, based off of a starting place for the district, with the district calendar. Most difficult part of calendar is that knowing the budget we have to work with, we are planning based off feedback received from staff in surveys, eliminating two days for each staff member next year. That won't even cover the deficit that we will probably have, but will be a start. Staff indicated that was preferable to job cuts and all other possibilities. Will be building into new calendar. Not done lightly, as Jen and Kate alluded to, not really anyone at school that isn't essential. One day off from beginning and one day off at the end.
- b. Will ask for approval for the calendar that was approved by the majority of staff members.
- c. Staff are contracted based on days work, different classifications have different thresholds of days worked.

#### 7. Finance Update

- a. Doug – Cyndi continues to create great presentations for finance committee, available on Sharepoint folder.
- b. Since November
  - i. Budget was provided to Jeffco Budget Office
  - ii. Jeffco Budget Office loaded our budget in January
  - iii. Innovation Option School, holidays and new employees – several delays
  - iv. Several discrepancies resolved
- c. For 2021-22

- i. Surveyed staff for input on budget and calendar, trying to collaborate with staff, keep them apprised of plans.
  - d. Snapshot of where we are at: halfway point, so actuals-to-budget should be ~50%. Seen a decrease in FTE, which affected PPR amount, slight bump in 5A money,
    - i. Revenues
      - 1. PPR decreased ~\$7k
      - 2. Tuition and fees anticipating a decrease of ~\$18k
    - ii. Expenditures
      - 1. Salaries decrease \$75k
    - iii. Carry-Forward
      - 1. 2 funds (contingency and Carry Forward) that were kept separate at Jeffco until this year, have combined into one carry forward account. Last year, spent 156,956 – final carry forward was 1,741,637 to start the year. With expenses for this year, current FY21 Carry Forward is ~\$1.4 million.
      - 2. How to best encapsulate how the carry forward should be used.
      - 3. Other K-8 schools, highest carry forward is \$637k, average is \$274k
      - 4. Money required in reserve – operating reserve (3/3/2020)
        - a. Money for unanticipated items
        - b. Money for facilities (Bond Fund 2022-23 – Approx \$1m)
        - c. Other?
      - 5. Recommendation: yearly vote included as part of budget approval when we have a starting balance each year, how we want to divide the carry forward.
        - a. FY21 Example Beginning Balance: \$1.74M
          - i. \$84k reserves
          - ii. \$1M facilities reserve
          - iii. \$350k special operational reserve
          - iv. \$306k Other
        - b. Doug – we will put together some proposals for next year and bring that to the next meeting.
        - c. Cyndi – right now, have 1/3 students remote. With the new announcement that will go to all in-person, is a big question mark. Planning on two budgets: 1) realistic but doom and gloom; 2) more optimistic
        - d. Alison – also approve, if we have more \$\$ than expected, where it would go
        - e. Diane – before we go into March meeting, what is our priority? Do we want to try and keep as whole as we possibly can or keep our eye on the long-term improvements? What will keep the school whole short term and long term?
        - f. Alison – if we are ending up with a surplus, is there something we could do to support mental health services for the kids?

- i. Kresta – we couldn't wait until March meeting if we realistically want to do something for this school year.
  - 1. Alison – can have a special meeting if exec team brings an idea
- ii. Cyndi – have informed the staff that if we have enough surplus, may be able to rescind the final furlough day.

#### 8. FHM Culture Improvement Initiative

- a. Back in October, BOD received a group of emails of concerned parents, some stated that the school did not follow policy. Did not follow conflict resolution policy, cannot discuss confidential cases at a board meeting. Alison and Kresta reviewed the cases, reviewed policy that the school followed. Confirmed, in every instance, policy and procedure were followed. Mission was followed in each of these cases. Was good to look back and determine if things could have been handled better. There was effort and thought going through each case.
- b. Put back out to BOD, a healthy, culture and Montessori philosophy, if you have a conflict, need to go directly to person or entity that you have the conflict with.
  - i. When we talk to members of the community, need to make sure that we are spreading that culture.
  - ii. Kresta – when elevated situations occur, community superintendent is always involved. Our school's practice is first and foremost to approach things from a learning perspective and not a punitive perspective.
  - iii. Diane – were families informed that process is essentially resolved? Alison – all families were offered a chance to pursue the conflict resolution policy, but none opted to follow that path.
  - iv. John – my recollection was that the parties had grievances with administration. Seems like a lot of communication between both affected parties. May not be the formal entering into conflict resolution policy, but if those were the two parties involved, already been in this dialogue. Leaving dialogue with continued conflict – but these were not addressed to Kresta.
  - v. Alison – the parties still need to come together. John – did families understand that if they pursued the CR policy, that the BOD would be involved? Want to make sure there is some resolution. Alison – several family members did sit down and discuss goals, many said there was no outcome, just wanted the BOD to be aware, some did not want to go through the process. All were offered assistance from the BOD through the CR policy.
- c. Next Steps from Community Superintendent Listening Tour
  - i. Kresta - Matt identified two themes: desire to enhance shared leadership, increase trust via more transparent communication. What have we done already for these things? What work can we do to move forward? How can we measure it? Will attend PDD tomorrow, sharing information directly with staff results from the listening tour. Get input on how to measure improvements on these themes. Meet regularly, he wanted full staff to be in attendance. Will have more information next month.

- ii. Already things that came out of sitting down with staff: revamping ILT, what does a good ILT look like, what should members be focused on. More collaborative work is occurring among the staff, making sure they have the opportunity to provide input.

#### 9. FHM Principal Goals Presentation

- a. Each year, every staff member has an opportunity to set annual goals. Encourage staff to pick one thing that would have the biggest impact on their skill set, work life balance, something they can really focus on.
- b. Description: Supporting a collaborative environment
  - i. Solicitation of direct feedback for growth and process enhancement
  - ii. Instructional Leadership Team – how can it grow and become better, use resources from district + engage staff
  - iii. Welcoming all stakeholders
- c. Empathy and vulnerability – will add in some pieces that could be measurable (i.e. meeting/working with Matt Walsh, education via literature, do 5 significant things to improve empathy and compassion. Alison and Kresta will discuss, Kresta will bring an updated to next BOD meeting. If board members have ideas, please send to Alison in the next week or two, aim to approve goals next meeting.
- d. Possible to keep the aboard abreast of what's going on in principal updates, not a review of goals, but just keep informed. Could do a mid-year check in.

#### 10. Review Proposal for Ad Hoc Committee to Review Principal Evaluation Process

- a. How does the role of our Board need to change now that we're no longer a Charter School? Policies and how we operate were made when we were a Charter. What resources can we get from the district? Engaging with Community Superintendent. As we went through the process this year, Jeffco has professionals that create surveys and can do employee development. Board members are re-doing these steps and are not professionals. Proposing that we do a principal evaluation process review. Part of the Board policy manual, need to do 2 reads and presented to Jeffco Board of Ed. Any changes would need to be approved by this board to be submitted to Jeffco District in time. Ad hoc committee would be during Feb and first part of March. Committee to meet, come up with a proposal, bring it to BOD March meeting.
  - i. Diane – when we were charter school, didn't have district option available to us. FHM always operated with a level of transparency and accountability that most of the fellow charter schools did not. Did not feel comfortable engaging district to perform these tasks. Wasn't always same process we went through this year, generally hired a consultant to come in, at considerable cost, did not have the district knowledge.
  - ii. Alison will reach out to include someone at the district, will schedule a meeting for the committee.

#### 11. Governance Committee Update

- a. Please fill out self-evaluations
- b. In process of gearing up for elections. Once we have some candidates and process is a little more in motion, will bring that information to the board.

#### 12. Facilities Committee Update

- a. Cubbies are completely installed, look great
- b. Chris Caruso is hitting the ground for the school gardens. Waiting for approval for water access, applied for numerous grants for tilling and adding new soil
- c. Request for wish list item from CSN:
  - i. Partitions in the LRT space
  - ii. Adding teacher storage above cubbies
  - iii. Cafeteria tables
- d. Cyndi, John, Megan completed response to Standard 6 of AMS Step 7, includes data on grounds, facilities, geographic reach of enrollment, transportation, offices/classrooms, etc.
- e. Master Plan/HCM
  - i. Cyndy pushing back on HCM to make sure we include input from community and students. Students will get a survey packet. Prompt will be a video shared with community and students [shared with BOD during meeting]

#### 13. BOD Strategic Goal: Communication

- a. Doug – next coffee with the BOD Feb 15
- b. Alison – communication is a hard goal, but it is making an impact, a lot of which is Kresta taking the goal throughout the school.
- c. Is there something as a Board that we want to communicate? Had discussed previously that we'd give a finance update
  - i. Facilities committee will add to agenda, communication about presenting the Master Plan plans, delicate communication in a tough year (i.e. money coming 2022-2023 for building, can only be used for building improvement, enhancing security, etc.).
- d. Julie and April doing a lot of communication as subcommittee of BOD

#### 14. BOD Strategic Goal: AMS/Innovation Plan

- a. AMS - Still meeting, still on track to submit by the end of the year.
- b. Innovation Plan – need BOD volunteers to review for edits before March meeting, also need some additions specifically from BOD: about the revisions to the Board Policy manual to be reflective of new status of school. All BOD members will read prior to March meeting.
  - i. Alison will send out a Doodle poll for special meeting after March 11.

#### 15. BOD Strategic Goal: Board Knowledge

- a. Education programs at the school – MAP data has come in, reviewed at SAC meeting. Summary is, the numbers are in, but as a whole hard to pull information out of because some students did them remotely, lots of inconsistency. Extra stress in COVID ye

16. Assignments

- a. Alison and Kresta to discuss goals pertaining to increasing empathy and vulnerability
- b. Alison will reach out to schedule a special ad-hoc committee meeting to review principal evaluation language in the Board Policy Manual.
- c. All BOD members please fill out self-evaluation
- d. Alison to send Doodle poll for special March meeting.

17. Motion to adjourn: Bekky, Second by John, end at 9:38

*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.*

*Bekky Robbins*