



Board of Directors
Board Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2021

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, John Frost
 - b. Board Members Absent (excused): Diane Fox
 - c. Staff Members Present: Kresta Vuolo, Cyndi Vosburgh, Jennifer Levy, Kate Powell (Staff Liaisons) Lisa Kingston, Megan Wells, Donnetta Macdonald
 - d. Guests: Jennifer Riegel, Tony Schiess, Julie Predki-Weber

2. Approval of Agenda (including item 3, Consent Agenda) for current meeting: motion to approve by Bekky. Second by Doug.
 - a. Amendments
 - i. Remove minutes from consent agenda
 - ii. Add SAC Minutes to consent agenda
 - b. Approval of minutes approved as amended – motion by Doug, second by John

3. Public Comment and Celebrations
 - a. Alison – yay for spring! CSN, Spring Fling rolling along
 - b. Jennifer Riegel – did get some volunteers for Spring Fling! Gave ~\$50k to the school for list of needs in the building, Cyndi – have not made a final decision on what the funds will be used for, but ex. More storage for literacy curriculum, partitions for LRT space, shelving and storage units.
 - c. Cyndi – also worked with the CSN to get packets together to give to kids for the master plan survey.
 - d. Kresta –
 - i. Middle school students are in building 4 days a week
 - ii. Welcome Zach, part-time custodian
 - iii. Gratitude to Innovation Review Committee that compiled the Innovation Renewal Application. Specifically to Miera, offered to proofread and offered many valuable suggestions.
 - iv. Facility Manager and Director of Operations, first on scene when we had burst pipe, amazing job of making decisions right away. Jeffco had the problem fixed by 9AM, clean-up took rest of day.
 - v. CSN for Grub Club
 - vi. Kudos to Jen Levy – organizing March reading madness, all school video, helping staff connect and have fun.
 - vii. Shout out to Learning Resource Team, finding creative ways to address needs of kids.

4. Principal Update

- a. Since February BOD Meeting
 - i. Students making all school video
 - ii. Author visits
 - iii. More students returning
 - iv. Joining lunches in classrooms, students like to ask questions
- b. Staff
 - i. PD Day on 3/12
 - ii. Continue to demonstrate flexibility
 - iii. Re-contracting begins next week
 - iv. Asynchronous learning day 3/22 – potentially 17 staff members that will be out, most are classroom-based staff.
- c. Innovation Review
 - i. Draft ready for first read tonight, will address later
- d. COVID-19
 - i. Jeffco in Level Blue
 - ii. JPS Quarantine Protocols have been updated.
- e. Enrollment
 - i. Primary – filling vacant preschool spots
 - ii. Elementary and MS looking good as well.
- f. 2021-2022 Budget
 - i. Plan for static PPR and static enrollment
 - ii. Special Service Provider allocation guidance decreases some ratios
 - iii. Still awaiting formal documents with budget, purchased service amounts, student fee thresholds
 - iv. Jeffco District BOE
 - 1. Anticipating \$54m deficit to fill. Expecting and planning for budget implications over 4 years. Planned spend of reserves over next four years.
 - 2. JPS is eliminating positions from several central departments. In addition, teachers who are on temporary assignment or have probationary status (first two years in Jeffco) are not being renewed next year.
 - 3. 4-day school week and school closures not under consideration for 2021-22 but are for 2022-23
- v. Staffing Model Considerations
 - 1. Will need to add positions, having more children return to in-person.
 - a. 1 upper el lead teacher
 - b. 8 primary assistants + 2 floaters
 - c. 2 elementary assistants
 - d. 1 MS assistant for Humanities
 - e. 1 SPED paraprofessional at .75 FTE
 - f. School psychologist increase from .5 FTE to 1.0 FTE

- g. Anticipate Integrating Tech Specialist and Library Specialist into one Digital Teacher Librarian. Ms. Lynne, was on leave this year, has given notice. Mr. Seth will have the opportunity to step in.
- h. Elimination/Reduction of 2.5+/- FTE in Administrative positions (to be finalized after March economic forecast by CO Joint Budget Committee and PPR assumption).
- vi. Budget Assumption Baseline
 - 1. Reduction of 2 contact days for all
 - 2. Salary freeze
 - 3. Use of \$13k in Cares Act funding
 - 4. Stated READ Act funding of \$12k
 - 5. 5A Mill Reduction to \$60k
 - 6. Use of \$50k in Carryforward
 - 7. 355.48 FTE (at 349.56 2020-2021)
 - 8. Still reflects \$15k deficit
- g. Board Input Sought
 - i. 2nd read of calendar
 - ii. School Day Schedule – 5/6 of leads said yes, please align elementary/primary schedules.
 - iii. Innovation Plan – added suggestions, please send via email by 5pm on Saturday

5. Staff Update

- a. Jen – Confusion over vaccine was hard to follow. From admin perspective, investigating childcare management software that we will demo. Help streamline some of the systems, sign in, out, attendance tracking. May make payment easier. Looking forward to Spring Break.
- b. Kate – it is “that” time of year, lots of changes to group. CMAS dance, getting ready for testing. Comes with a lot of mixed feelings. Finding ways to have fun within our cohort.
- c. Alison – thoughts on Board visits to classroom, interaction with the staff? Seems like it would be overwhelming?
 - i. Kate – could there be some kind a glimpse of what it looks like when kids get a lesson, doing work, at recess, some kind of filming aspect. Won’t need to be polished. Also ok with some kind of zoom set up. Still photographs? Is a spectrum. Also, could Jen and Kate give a sample lesson? Need to know what BOD desires are in terms of what you want to see.
 - ii. Jen – hard to get scope from the Zoom perspective. Like the idea of a video montage, things from all the classes, remote classes, specials.
 - iii. Alison – love the idea of a video montage
 - iv. Kresta – 76 kids that can’t be on video. Would take some care that those children aren’t included. Can also see that this is a time capsule moment, interesting for the future to look back on it.
 - v. Jen – can work with staff to set up. Maybe first week in May? Alison will send a doodle poll for BOD members.

6. Board Self Evaluation - Julie Predki-Weber, Chair of Governance Committee
 - a. Broad-base picture overview of current themes. Lot of good feedback. Can send out a copy of the short response questions. Good constructive feedback for planning sessions. Can also send the spreadsheet with numeric rubric answers on it.
 - b. Summary of Evaluation
 - i. Overall - Impact of COVID and meet remotely, difficult in many respects. Hopefully will improve with in-person meetings
 - ii. First section: Principal section
 1. No clear expectations or metrics to measure the performance and qualities of principal. Being addressed with a task force to re-vamp the evaluation
 2. BOD received concerns from community that BOD is too 'close' to Principal, work to show community that BOD is truly a third party.
 - iii. Strategic Planning: took a back seat to many things in the era of COVID
 1. Lot of strategic planning done year before last but fizzled with board member terming out.
 - iv. Financial – BOD has good grasp of financials, good that BOD gets regular budget updates. Good to focus on long-term planning
 - v. Community – One of the goals for BOD was to have better communication with the school community. Many felt that it has definitely improved, with roadblocks with COVID, outreach is helpful. Would be good for BOD to be supportive of input and constructive criticism, get more input from the community. Maybe set up additional Town Hall meetings or in monthly BOD, if guests come on, have them introduce themselves. Can continue to improve when we are back in -person
 - vi. Meeting
 1. Not everyone's voice being heard during the meetings, could introduce more of a round robin, where each member gets a set amount of time to comment/ask questions
 - vii. Training
 1. Could be some improvement in the training department. Governance has been discussing this, brought up that more formal training with follow-up, would be helpful. Check list with required reading, guiding training. Make sure it's followed-up with to make sure members went through with training.
 2. Sunshine Law, Innovation Plan, BOD Policy Manual, reviewed on a regular time period
 3. Governance is planning to develop a more formal training:
 - a. Checklist of reading online, trackable
 - b. CDE training, could pick the most appropriate modules to complete
 - viii. General Themes/Responses
 1. Needed to be better follow-up with different tasks and issues. Some things get mentioned, but no follow-through or action. BOD needs to

come up with clear expectations and roles within the group. Revisiting this could help with action and follow-through.

2. Remember that FHM is a Montessori school, this should be a guiding principal
 3. Refer back to these results when having the annual BOD strategic retreat.
7. 2nd Read of Academic Calendar for 2021-22
- a. Motion to Approve: Doug, second: Leslie
 - b. Doug – Not easy for BOD to make a decision like 2 fewer contact days (and thus reduced salary)
 - c. Vote – unanimous approval of calendar as added to SharePoint
8. Board Policy Updates
- a. Alison – subset of us met to improve the principal evaluation process.
 - b. Changes in Section 3.9
 - c. Changes in Section 4.2, table/timeline of who does what when in the principal eval process.
 - i. Change in the Evaluation Committee, adding District Community Superintendent (and third party eval, if hired). Wanted to explicitly bring in the District Community Superintendent.
 - ii. Including District resources and other sources in the ‘gather data’ section, include DCS in the gather data step.
 - iii. DCS
 - iv. Others as presented to Board
 - v. In step where Eval Committee reports to the rest of the BOD, Board identifies strategic objectives for the principal and vote on letter of intent.
 1. Kresta suggests checking with Legal, cannot vote in executive session, think about timing and cultivating the message.
 2. Alison – we wanted to be able to give a consensus message to the principal
 3. John – we wanted to make sure that the BOD gives better guidance for the principal as to what needs to improve via setting the strategic objectives.
 - vi. Doug – document with options to think through evaluation, don’t have any BOD input on approach, except for the two that are on the evaluation committee. Should the eval committee be the decider and executer? Or should full BOD have input on the approach and then the eval committee is executing that approach?
 1. John – could BOD ask eval committee for regular updates? Would too many people cause a lot of issues? We do elect Principal and then select second member.

2. Alison – usually have conversations naturally about what tools to use, etc. One other thought, proposal to do an eval at every meeting, other responsibilities are just as important.
 3. Doug – nothing formal, timeline might not work out, should organically happen. Maybe opportunity for feedback on approach?
 4. Alison – include in second process document that guides the nuts and bolts of the eval process/best practices document.
- d. Under general guidelines for 3rd party evaluator, can bring one in, remove timeline provision.
 - e. Section on role of President – 3.4.1.1 – added line that President needs to have open lines of communication with District Community Superintendent
 - f. Questions
 - i. Kresta – state law changed on Jan 1, each employee signs JD on annual basis. Had been brought forward for a potential update. Will make sure to sign current one that is from 2012. Have updated other JD's to reflect Innovation status, etc. If BOD would like for staff to update, they can but want to make sure BOD knows.
 - ii. Alison – could get that on the April agenda – do we need two reads?
 - iii. John – I don't think that would require a change to the policy manual, but add into the best practices document to refresh/review JD ? Would be too big of a job?

9. Innovation Plan Renewal 1st Read

- a. Kresta – wasn't a lot of guidance in terms of what they wanted in an Innovation Renewal. Some other districts have templates, based on conversations with two chiefs of schools and Community Superintendent, came up with a rough list. Wanted us to provide how transition has gone, academics, UIP, goals moving forward. Cover page is similar to that of the plan itself. Contents:
 - i. FHM Accomplishments
 1. Enrollment
 - a. Increasing seats for students
 - b. Reviews capacity, increased capacity while simultaneously decreasing class size
 - c. Choice enrollment applications up >400%, evidence of continued desire for Montessori education
 - d. Enrollment by year (FTE lower than enrollment because most preschool don't count towards FTE).
 - e. Looking at 88% of retention for 2021-2022
 2. AMS update, will submit for Step 7 prior to end of school year.
 3. New reading curriculum
 4. Academic Results
 - a. School Performance Framework – based completely on CMAS data. Hasn't been updated since 2018-2019 school year because

no CMAS last year. Not sure what will happen this year, if state adjusts testing to not be the full range of testing.

b. Overall trend of improvement

5. DIBELS – 5 minutes or less, 3 times per year for Kinder – 3rd grade. Students that test “well below” two in a row are put on a reading plan. Compare favorably to the district.

ii. UIP

iii. Operational Updates

iv. Facilities/Move

v. Management Services – some have adjusted from 3 years ago.

vi. Revisions to Innovation Plan Narrative – States case for Innovation Status – we are the only school in CO to use the Innovation framework to offer alternative academic pedagogy to public school students. Just some changes to text to reflect changes that have occurred (i.e. Communication Policy is no Conflict Resolution Policy).

vii. Clarification Related to Collective Bargaining Agreements (request from District legal)

1. Asked to clarify about FHM and employee exemption of all employees from CBA.

viii. Future Goals

1. Educational Program, Academic performance, AMS, School Climate and Culture, Operational – more fully integrate into the district PeopleSoft system.

ix. Will have Appendices, School Performance Framework, UIP, School Summary.

- b. Cyndi – might be beneficial to mention how we’ve been able to move through this financially difficult time without district assistance. Important for the District to understand our financial model. Kresta – will add a fiscal health section.

10. BOD Strategic Goal: Communication

- a. One of the suggestions from BOD in self-evaluation, how can we be more available and communicate more to the community. Coffee chats have the intent of making ourselves available to the community, intent was for them to be Town Hall style.
- i. Might be better to move them to later in the day, after hours. Add as we publicize that, add the words “solicit feedback” to make it clear that it is open for the community.
- b. Community is built through common goals: as we think about communication with the community, common goal is Montessori education for the kids. How can we make sure that common goal is at the center of how we come together?
- c. John – think the BOD has made substantial progress in communicating OUT to the community, need to take a moment to recognize that communication isn’t just talking to someone but also hearing them. How to get more information to come back in, want to make sure that information is being received as intended, or aware of other community needs.

- i. Kresta – championing for everyone to complete surveys when put out, and then demonstrating how the information from those surveys is used to inform decisions or take action.
- ii. Alison – how do you communicate these kinds of things in an effective way in a medium that the community will actually read?
- iii. Jen – so many surveys are lengthy, boring, same survey over and over again. Do we have any vehicles to gather data that is most important? Kresta – could look at lower scores, put out that we want feedback on low items at the next Coffee Chat, for example, then communicate that we are doing it and that we are acting on suggestions.
- iv. Doug – have an event for someone to come talk about Montessori education, get the community together. Bring us all back to what we are doing for the kids and the community.
- v. John – carline/pick-up – some more clarity on if we can talk with the community (individually)? Feels like the BOD is very formal. Could we informally talk with community members at drop-off and pick-up? Wear our badge, introduce ourselves, etc. Alison – just spread the word that committees are available, can come to the BOD with issues, etc.
- vi. Cyndi – could we have themed coffees? Focus on Primary or Upper EI, etc.
- vii. Kresta – don’t assume all feedback is negative or a complaint – many may not feel like they need to participate because they are happy with the status quo. Maybe pick a Montessori topic a la Book-club style.

11. BOD Strategic Goal: AMS Step 7

- a. AMS - Still on track to submit by the end of the year.

12. BOD Strategic Goal: Board Knowledge

- a. DIBELS update from Alison

13. Assignments

- a. Alison to send Doodle Poll re BOD class visits
- b. Alison to check with legal about voting on principal offer letter.

14. Motion to adjourn: Doug, Second by John, end at 9:05

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