



Board of Directors
Board Meeting Minutes
November 12, 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: 6:04pm
 - a. Board Members Present: Alison Fuhr, Clark Frye, 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)
 - d. Guests: Parents, community members, staff;
2. Approval of Agenda (including item 3, Consent Agenda) for current meeting: motion to approve by Clark. Second by Doug. Alison – remove SAC update from consent agendas, will discuss later in agenda. Motion to approve as amended by Leslie, Clark seconds.
3. Public Comment and Celebrations
 - a. Kresta
 - i. Wonders Curriculum arrived on 3 pallets a couple weeks ago, thanks Rachel Duncan, Jen Levy, Cyndi V for unpacking, distribute, etc.
 - ii. Shoutout to Ms. Julia, Ms. Jo, and Mr. Seth, first group of quarantine, amazing and quick transition to remote learning. Learned that contact tracing is on the school to do.
 - iii. Megan Wells and Mr. Seth for weekly Tech Tuesday events, support students, parents, with everything tech.
 - iv. Celebrating Team Walking Foxes – Walktober, Walking Foxes was second place in district.
 - v. Mr. Jesse has found a way to replace Hot Dog Fridays, breakfast burrito Fridays.
 - vi. Grateful to guardians and teachers for teacher conferences, strong turn out, heard from families that they hoped virtual option would be there in the future.
 - vii. Entire staff, things are changing daily and they are adapting with flexibility, grace, and a positive attitude, doing an amazing job.
 - b. Cyndi – shoutout to the parents that have brought treats for the staff. Entire staff wanted to convey thanks.
 - c. Alison – celebration that most kids will make it until Thanksgiving.
 - d. John – Susan Vallier with assistance with Town Hall
4. Principal Update
 - a. Campus Development Plan – staff has had an opportunity to answer survey, will solicit feedback
 - b. Enrollment selection for second semester is currently open. At this point 8% are requesting changes, mostly from remote to in-person.

- c. Round 1 for choice enrollment, applications open in December and lotter in mid-January.
- d. Staff development day, Ms. Crystal has returned part time, virtually to help support students.
- e. Staff have been planning for learning model adjustments. Some heads-up from the district. Working to make sure transition is as smoothly as possible.
- f. District having issues getting enough guest teachers to fill needs in-person. Many schools have had to shut down for 24 hours after an outbreak, there's not enough staff to keep up with the number of schools that need the cleaning. Jeffco did reach decisions this afternoon, after many iterations. We will be able to keep primary intact in-person, will have details for families tomorrow. District is allowing for Child Care, we will have this available at FHM, trying to make as low cost as possible. Would be supporting students in access to remote learning. In the midst of a lot of different adjustments. Continuing after care/child care enables those staff to keep their full hours. Will have to have administrators in the building because children will be in the building. Same health protocols will remain in place. Jeffco says will re-assess over winter break if we can resume prior in-person models. Staff members can teach from the school if they would like.

5. Staff Update

- a. Jen and Kate – watched every other district go remote, patiently waiting to see what Jeffco would decide. Did communicate out to the staff about the potential for the board to observe classrooms, originally picked December 7, will re-evaluate. Several volunteers that were excited to share what they are doing with the BOD. Anticipate that next week may be very tough with students experiencing grief. Still uncertainty with what it looks like. Appreciate every bit of compassion parents can offer us at this time. The conversations and anxiety and stress is quite pervasive.

6. Finance Update

- a. Summary – been talking about the need to update original budget that we passed in the spring due to COVID-related issues, reductions in FTE. Did a first read of proposal two months ago, ready to share updated budget for second read. Want to finalize the 20/21 budget and then will start discussing next year's budget.
- b. Enrollment and Budget Update
 - i. Where we've been
 - 1. Original budget approved Jan 2020, original estimated FTE was 385, current count decreased to 349.56 (reduction of 35.44 FTE). Also a reduction in PPR from \$7,475.56 to \$6,944.32. Leads to a ~\$450k deficit. Preschool tuition reduction was \$269k.
 - 2. Decrease in Before and After Care, which is operated in a different bucket.
 - ii. Where we are now
 - 1. How do we reduce deficit?
 - a. Increase revenue

- i. Increase enrollment in preschool, but have to think of enrollment carefully, in terms of if we have space for them in MS
 - ii. Enrollment in before/after care,
 - b. Reduce expenses
- 2. Prior to Oct, reduced staff costs (via positions not filled and vacancies left unfilled), reduced materials budget. Reduced some admin contact days, ed assistant FTE.
- 3. With all cuts, still have a deficit of \$170k in General Fund.
 - a. Asked staff for input, outlined some options. Results: 36/56 completed the survey (64%), if they strongly agreed we scored 2 down to 0 if they strongly disagreed. Top three items: apply \$100k carryforward, exec team 2 contact day reduction, furlough days.
 - b. Other factors to consider
 - i. District budget and outlook (reduction in their budget, reductions in pupils, etc.)
 - ii. Election results were mixed (repealed Gallagher, but reduced income tax)
 - iii. Unique staff 'asks' – not a single person that hasn't gone beyond their job description. Everyone fatigued, take that into account.
 - iv. Planning challenges (For next year)
 - v. Social distancing constraints in classroom
 - vi. Student, family, and staff wellness
 - c. Recommended Actions – will balance the budget for 20/21
 - i. 2 Full-Staff Furlough Days (\$31.7k savings)
 - ii. 2 Additional Furlough Days for Exec Leadership Team (\$4.1k)
 - iii. Use SR030 carry forward for allowable expenses where appropriate (\$19.5k) (copying, postage, supplies, marketing, maintenance, etc.)
 - iv. Reduce PD Hours and/or FTE Administrative Positions (\$14.5k)
 - v. Request from BOD Carry Forward funds (\$100k)
 - 1. Current state of GF CF:
 - a. \$1,725,500 at end of 19/20
 - b. Board approved literacy program and cubbies (\$178k total)
 - i. \$1,547,500 current balance
 - ii. If CF use is approved, \$1,447,500

2. Allocations for capital improvements, operating reserves, and additional reserves for potential future COVID-related shortfalls.

iii. Next Steps

1. Requests of the BOD

a. Request approval for \$100,00 in Carry Forward Funds

i. Discussion

1. John - Have some bond funds coming up for capital improvements. Is it a concern that existing budgets will be pulled back? Rescind some of the funds earmarked for capital improvement? Cyndi - our CF is different because we're an Innovation Option School and have different rules around funds. In most schools, the budget group at JeffCo loads carry forward into their budget. May or may not take the whole CF. Will not be the case at FHM because we have board control over budget and CF. Have had a lot of turn-over in staff at Jeffco.
2. If state were to do a rescission, which they can do up through May 2021, if that impacted PPR amount, it would affect us. Not currently a projection that will occur this year.
3. CF amount could impact us in that we may not get funds they disperse to shore up budgets, but wouldn't be from our money.
4. Building funds that we will have access to, currently allocated ~\$1million. Won't get funds until 22/23 school year. Currently, costs of construction are low, so Jeffco has moved up some timelines to take advantage of those costs.
- 5.

ii. Vote: Motion to vote on the \$100k draw down: John motions, Clark seconds.

1. All in favor: Bekky, Alison, Leslie, Diane, Doug, Clark, John. None opposed.

b. Request that BOD approves revised 20/21 budget

i. Vote: Motion to approve 2020/2021 amended budget as presented: John motions, Leslie seconds

1. Comment: Doug, thoughtfulness of admin, seeing this close detail for the last 6 months and know where we have to go, not easy, not

pretty. Thought it could be worse. Appreciate creativity to get us here.

2. Kresta – planning to schedule furlough days for later in the year so that we may not have to do one or both of them (if expenses decrease or revenue increase)
3. All in favor: Bekky, Alison, Leslie, Diane, Doug, Clark, John. None opposed. 2020/2021 passed.

7. Facilities Update

- a. Adriana Moreno and Adele Willson from HCM presented the initial findings from the staff master plan survey. They will be working over the next couple of weeks to develop a visual summary of the data. HCM will be reaching out to the community and students to solicit their input. Utilizing a Town Hall format prior to asking for community input was discussed.
- b. Skateboard stops are still being reviewed.
- c. Cubbies are expected to be delivered prior to Thanksgiving. May be some delays due to COVID.
- d. Gym mats were installed – orange and blue. Looking great!
- e. Possibility of touring another school’s community gardens was discussed. (Fletcher Miller has invited our committee to tour, but need to be mindful of COVID restrictions) Cyndi will do more research with Risk Management and the District.

8. BOD Committee Member Policies

- a. Leslie – needs some help, the Governance Committee is the only committee in the policies and procedures that has specific designation for composition, one staff liaison, one BOD liaison, plus 3 current parents. Currently out of compliance with policy as written. Governance needs to be in place to update policy. Would like to address absence of inclusion of community members in that makeup. Ask: have any suggestions how we reconcile the absence of committee?
 - i. Alison - tonight, we’re approving 3 members for Governance. Leslie – convene committee, and present some potential language revisions for the composition.
 - ii. Kresta – updates to policy, would have to be a first and second read. Generally worded such that an outside entity couldn’t take over.
 - iii. Alison – may be other updates, for example updates to principal evaluation. Have to submit to Jeffco BOD by the end of the school year.

9. Review/Approval of Parent Volunteers for BOD Committees

- a. Have 4 parent volunteers that want to join committees.
 - i. SAC already full.
 - ii. Miera Nagy requesting to join finance committee (approved)
 - iii. Three parents joining Governance (approved)
 1. Tony Schiess
 2. April Couvillion
 3. Julie Predki-Weber

10. Review Community Superintendent FHM Listening Tour Results

- a. 31/56 staff members participated. Asked pretty broad questions. Shared some feedback, looked across answers to pull out themes.
 - i. What's going well
 1. Transition from Charter to Innovation, smooth and positive.
 2. COVID-19, feel like it was handled well within FHM.
 3. Appreciative of management of budget, flow of organization, high level management
 4. Support from administration in conflicts
 - ii. Areas that need to improve (Matt commented that none of these are particularly unique)
 1. Improve communication throughout organization, individually, or organizationally
 2. Increase of trust in relationships
 3. Strengthen relationships
 4. Increase in collaborative problem solving and decision making
 5. Instructional Leadership Team has been greatly missed.
 - iii. Next Steps
 1. Short term actions
 - a. Giving an issue that admin may have worked and giving it to staff to help solve, determine how to implement solution. Start building relationships and trust and have a say in the outcomes.
 - b. Transition planning team – transition into remote learning, makes it a team. Several people volunteered, they will hopefully be meeting tomorrow and into next week to determine what needs to happen to make transition as smooth as possible, coming up with roadmaps.
 - c. Giving staff ownership over decisions, voice in the implementation of the Montessori philosophy.
 - d. Matt working to get us a stipend so that we can reinstate the Instructional Leadership Team this year. How do we make it better?
 2. Conversations on how to build trust in an organization, takes time. With these groups that Kresta will work with, if at any point in these collaborative sessions, we need to draw on resources from District, they are there.
 3. BOD has some work to do on clarifying the work that we do. Need to do better in communicating our roles. Some confusion coming *from* the BOD on what our role is. Need to firm up training and expectations. Need to complete the re-vamp the on-boarding process for new Directors via Governance Committee.
- b. Discussion
 - i. Doug – how will we communicate back out to staff? Kresta – a lot happening now, Matt will help support, how to move forward, next steps. Lots of resources

available, need to hear more about what staff desires. Has to start with the staff and move from there.

- ii. Alison – this will be an ongoing process, long term that we will continually check in on and evolve.
- iii. Kresta – Matt indicated that everyone had something positive to share, which means there is a good foundation on which to build.
- iv. Clark – are there plans to do another one at some point to see how things are going? Doug – what will Matt’s role be in the process going forward, will he be doing check-ins. On-going communication with Kresta.
- v. BOD will keep updating and watch how it evolves and jump in when we can.

11. BOD Goal: Communication

- a. Putting blurbs in Fox Flash, Virtual Coffees, Town Halls.
 - i. Evening virtual coffee, likely be questions about the most recent communication from Jeffco about shift to remote learning.
 - ii. Maybe look at 3rd week in December, families have until Nov 20 to make selections. Donetta and Kresta will put together the numbers and spaces on Nov 30. Once that’s done, have to have conversations with staff, classroom placement, etc. Would have to do morning or early afternoon, restrictions due to Chanukah.
 - iii. Doug will find a good time on the school calendar week of the 14th.
 - 1. Concerted effort to do an evening event in January.
- b. Confusion throughout the community about what the BOD does.
 - i. How do we communicate board roles, what we do, etc. One good way is when we prepare for new elections.
 - ii. Could be introduced when we do the virtual coffees.
 - iii. Leslie will take to Governance committee about new member on-boarding

12. BOD Goals: AMS/Innovation Plan

- a. Innovation Plan
 - i. Kresta – hoping to finish addressing this in Jan/Feb and will bring to BOD for feedback. Not a re-write, just an update and adjustments that we see we need. We are the first ones, so there are pros and cons.
 - ii. Alison – is there a process in case this isn’t renewed this year? Could it get moved to next year? Kresta – no, because it’s related to state statute. Districts can’t change the timelines. Knowing that it needs to be approved before May, would love to have it on the BOD agenda in April. Generally included in the consent agenda, would need representation at that meeting in case it was pulled off of consent agenda and have questions. Would need final approval from Board by Feb. If we aren’t requesting changes, don’t think we need first/second read. If there are adjustments or additional waiver/replacement plans, then we would need first/second read – if there’s a first read with questions, discussions, that should be a special meeting completely dedicated to the Innovation Plan renewal.

- b. AMS Accreditation
 - i. Process moving along, one of the next steps. Standard for Finance and Standard for Facilities, send them to respective committees. Will email liaisons to committees, and have committees write that up over the next couple months.
 - ii. AMS committee – Alison, Kresta, plus 3 teachers. AMS would like the answers to be representative of the community.

13. BOD: Board Strategic Knowledge

- a. Reviewed MAP scores, 1st-3rd grade growth was very high. Into Middle School years, growth had declined vs. how we normally go. Hard to interpret since over 50% were completed at home. Will go out to parents tomorrow. Caveat for remote kids, can't know what environment they are taking it in. Can't pull out in-person vs. remote. Kresta – District Parent Guide for supporting MAP testing was very long – possibly counter-productive. Mr. Jesse looking at ways to simplify guidance for supporting MAP testing at home. When we do it in the school, encounter glitches all the time, easy for us to take care of it. Not that easy for parents.
- b. Unified Improvement Plan – Donetta coming up with goals for school, request that she present to the BOD.

14. Assignments

- a. Doug – virtual coffee scheduling
- b. Leslie + Governance Board
 - i. Reviewing/updating policy committee language
 - ii. Reviewing BOD member on-boarding documents.

4. Adjournment at 8:24pm

- a. John moves to adjourn, Leslie seconds

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