



Board of Directors  
Board Meeting Minutes  
August 12, 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: 6:07pm
  - a. Board Members Present: Alison Fuhr, Doug Klof, Bekky Robbins, Dan Hofmann, Ben Dodson, Diane Fox, John Frost
  - b. Board Members Absent (excused): None
  - c. Staff Members Present: Kresta Vuolo, Cyndi Vosburgh
  - d. Guests: Judy Leuhring, SAC President, Meggin Rutherford, CSN President
  
2. Approval of Agenda for current meeting:
  - a. Amendments
    - i. Add a standing line item to follow-up on assignments from the previous meetings, after principal update to be first board business item.
    - ii. CSN Update – Meggin Rutherford
    - iii. 5 minutes at the end of the meeting, right before assignments, district superintendent to talk about training
    - iv. Alternate date also for
  - b. Motion to approve as amended: Doug, Ben second, unanimous approval of agenda as amended.
  
3. Approval of consent agenda
  
4. Public Comment and Celebrations
  - a. Judy Leuhring, SAC President – meet first Wednesday of the month, starting in October. Looking forward to reporting to the board. Worked at FHM for 9 years, Jeffco for 21. 2 grandchildren at FHM.
  - b. Doug – thought that the high level summary of what’s coming next voicemail/email was really well done, well written, lots of good information
  - c. Dan – thanks to Donetta and Kresta for putting together the leadership meeting across the school
  - d. Alison – know that Donetta and Jane are working hard to get all the students and teachers lined up, whole staff working very hard this week
  - e. Cyndi – shout out to Brandon, who has been without assistant for quite some time, Karen Clough, Financial Secretary, Jen Levy instrumental in getting BAC in order. Seth, Rachel Duncan, Miranda, really working wonders with the Wonders curriculum. Shout out to Kresta, spending long hours at school, working so hard to get the school ready.
  - f. Kresta – are still hiring, have 10 open positions right now, but none of the classroom leads are open, everyone coming together and doing everything they can. Huge shout out to Miranda Anderson for setting agenda for set up week. Feeling much more comfortable with the Wonders curriculum and literacy time. Cannot express enough

gratitude to staff getting everything ready to welcome our students back. Feeling the fact that we didn't do some of this last year. Whole class of furniture that wasn't here, Cyndi and her husband found furniture and brought it over. Jeffco HR working very hard to process new offers and hires as quickly as they can.

- g. Cyndi – thanks to Meggin, excited for the Carnival
5. Assignments from last meeting
- a. From June:
    - i. Alison created a doodle poll for 2<sup>nd</sup> strategy session
    - ii. Bekky to look at the calendar – planned for BOD review for tonight
6. Principal Update
- a. Everyone is working overtime, so hard trying to get everything all settled. Brandon has been a superhero helping out in every way.
  - b. COVID protocols finalized yesterday, subject to change as virus change. Tricky to train staff right before back to school. Just like at all schools, majority of folks' support protocols, a handful that don't. Having conversations as best we can while remaining with what the District has put out
  - c. Library Media Center transition will take some time for the books to get re-shelved, props to Seth for all of his work in getting everything set up, Brandon moving furniture to try multiple layouts. Books are not easy to move! Students will have check out privileges after Labor Day.
  - d. New superintendent Dorland, focused on consistency across all Jeffco schools.
  - e. Tom McMillen, new Community Superintendent, brings great deal of expertise, will join staff meeting next afternoon. Has reached out to BOD for some Board training.
  - f. Enrollment: still projecting, very slightly above budget, lots of primary turn over because we did not collect the non-refundable deposits. We are at 2.58 FTE above what we had budgeted. Usually collect the deposit at June, generally where we see the attrition and we have more time to fill spaces. Still a wait list for Primary.
  - g. Alison – what can the Board do in this week to support the staff? An email of gratitude? Dinners in the past? Something that we can show them how much we appreciate them.
    - i. Kresta – words of gratitude are always great, could sponsor a hot dog Friday, or something like that.
    - ii. Alison – could we signed up and do first Friday for first week of school ? Alison will email BOD about it, some kind of sign up.
  - h. Continue to work through hiring, doing round 5 of assistant interviews tomorrow
7. Finalize BOD Calendar for 2021-2022
- a. School is not closed on November 11 – we'll keep it
  - b. October 14 – Child Assault Prevention, parent meeting that team will come and present so that they know what will be discussed, 5:30 – 7, could do a shorter meeting that starts at 7:15-7:30, pick a different day.

- i. Community Super might want to come that night, will be right after October count and will likely have a final budget, likely not ready to do the amendment until November meeting.
- ii. Should we try to move it to a Tuesday? October 21?
- iii. 7:30-9:30 on October 14? Tom would take about an hour, routine business for an hour. Check in at September meeting
  - 1. Any objections to this later start date on the 14<sup>th</sup>? No objections
  - 2. Kresta will update the calendar
- c. Motion to approve proposed agenda, only change October 14 will start at 7:30, John moves as state in the chat for the 2021-2022 school year, Doug seconds. Unanimous approval of calendar.

#### 8. CSN Update and BOD Carnival

##### a. Meggin Rutherford

- i. CSN has a super involved and excited board going into this year, 10-11 members, has been wonderful at meetings, everyone is enthusiastic, thoughtful, and dedicated, eager to volunteer and take on tasks. Several people sharing board positions so the duties get split.
- ii. At June retreat, tried to identify what our purpose is, and what are we going to focus on, how we are going to get there: this year is building community, between families, students, families and teachers, everyone. Conclusion was that we have to start at the bottom up because community can't be dictated. One of the ways to help feel connected is if we started off with a big bang: Back to School Carnival. FYI toilets, are really expensive, #1 largest expense is the toilet trailer. Everything is together, got bounce houses and insurance, DJ Seth is really excited, will have some lawn games out on the lawn. Will have 2 bounce houses, a big kids and little kids. Shaved ice from a parent that used to have a shaved ice business, everyone will get either a free snow cone or free ice cream treat. No charge for anything. Will have a sign-up table for parents to volunteer. One obstacle in previous years was getting parents to return paperwork, getting a system so that parents can scan Driver's ID, passport, etc. which will automatically run a background check. Also working to recruit classroom parents, who can really help develop community among parents, kids, teacher, etc.
- iii. Invite for the BOD, sign up to volunteer, currently have 360 people RSVP for the Carnival, will have a page handout, CSN on front, back, what to know about how to find things, the calendar, FB group, here are the ways you can get plugged in to the school. If BOD also wants to have a page, could hand those out together. Everyone will also get a little gold coin for the icy treat, raffle ticket (not technically a raffle), will have FHM swag with boxes, can put your tickets in front of the swag you want to win. Signing up to volunteer will get you extra tickets. Would love for the BOD to have a table next to CSN, so we can talk about what we do, answer questions, etc. Want to do this every year, creating checklists for getting everything organized so that we can do it again next year.

- iv. Daniel – how do we market it? Example like a hashtag when you go to a wedding, livestream on Facebook, creates more excitement going forward.
- v. ILT members have volunteered to do tours of the school during the evening.
- vi. August 29, 4-7pm
- vii. Next CSN meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> in person at 6pm
- b. BOD Contributions for the Carnival
  - i. Come up with 1 pager talking about the board, blurbs about the committees, opportunities to get involved in the governance of the school
    - 1. Doug will create a first draft
  - ii. BOD table to answer questions, more time likely needed at the beginning, 30-minute increments? Please wear name tags!
    - 1. Alison: 4-4:30
    - 2. Ben: 4:30-5
    - 3. Doug: 5-5:30
    - 4. Bekky: 5:30-6
    - 5. Dan: 6-6:30

#### 9. Review BOD Self-Evaluation

- a. Evaluation is in the Agenda folder on Sharepoint, want to look at what we talked about, what were the things we wanted to approve.
- b. Highlights:
  - i. Areas to improve
    - 1. Questions about community, maybe set up additional Town Halls to get more feedback from the community that we serve
      - a. Doug – the word ‘community’ is such a big word, many times we talked about what the CSN has taken on. Always difficult for the BOD to drive that kind of community building. Don’t think we have a direct part anymore besides supporting CSN. If people come live, make sure everyone knows who everyone is, clear that there is time for public comment at the very beginning. Feel good about our effort now and what CSN is doing in driving most of that.
    - 2. Meeting – 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.
      - a. Ben – time and place to go around the room, and time and place to get through the agenda, right settings and right time.
      - b. Bekky – maybe for big decisions, tuition increases, budget, principal eval discussion, etc. BOD members can decide if we should formalize.
      - c. Doug – not every time we vote, any one of us should be able to step in, and say ‘I want to hear from everyone on this’
      - d. Alison – will do it at BOD’s discretion

3. Training – after this meeting, Governance put together a formalized training document – comprehensive of what BOD members need to know.
  - a. Section in Sharepoint that says “Training Materials” – required for especially new BOD members, but good for existing BOD members to refresh or read trainings they have not yet done.
  - b. Will talk within meetings about parts, in June talked about the UIP
  - c. Tom McMillen reached out to come to the October BOD meeting, spending an hour discussing the Sunshine Law. If we have questions about training or want to ask him advice on how we do training. Encourage any BOD member to ask questions or ask for agenda items about processes.
  - d. Cyndi – discussed training around school finance, for new members. Ben, Cyndi, Doug will connect for finance training, Dan will get training via membership in the Finance Committee.
4. General Themes/Responsibilities
  - a. Better about follow-through, come up with clear expectations, this is why we have added following up on assignments. Any other suggestions?
    - i. Ex secretary getting minutes out as soon as we have approved them (i.e. by next day)
    - ii. Really bad about getting pre-reads into the folder, should we change expectations or hold ourselves more accountable?
    - iii. Doug – would be up for adding at the beginning, round robin about who added updates, who didn’t, would we want to do a small update from each committee? Hard to keep on time. Will just add a round robin on which updates got added along with revisiting assignments

#### 10. Principal Evaluation Committee

- a. Committee of 2, one is the President of the board, would encourage the second to be a member that is returning, Policy Manual has outline of timeline. Committee gathers data, works with the community superintendent, output is the evaluation of the principal at the December meeting in an Executive Session – delivery of the results of the Principal Evaluation. Tonight, need to decide who else will be on the committee. This is an evaluation of a professional employee. Think we should pull together a skill set with people who have had to evaluate and deliver the evaluation. This is quite a large time commitment.
  - i. Alison as President
  - ii. Second member -
    1. John volunteers as second member
    2. Ben also volunteers

3. Discussion
  - a. Alison - who will give us the best evaluation and set us up for the long term, likely that Kresta would appreciate someone with the skillset to professionally evaluate her role as an employee.
  - b. John – both Ben and I have expressed that we have qualifications, maybe put to vote so we can decide
4. Vote:
  - a. Ben – Alison, Ben
  - b. John – Diane, Doug, John, Bekky, Dan
5. John is elected as second member of the evaluation committee

#### 11. 2021-2022 FHM BOD Strategy Discussion

- a. In the past, we have two strategy discussions in the summer. After the first, multiple BOD members came to Alison, would like to have more conversation on what we really work on for Strategy this year.
- b. Goals discussed in June – define what we mean, what we will do to meet these two goals
  - i. Family Engagement
    1. First step – cultivating culture.
      - a. What does the end of this step look like at FHM?
        - i. Alison – one idea, in the classroom, if we have high percentage of families doing p/t conferences, or parents that are involved in their children’s learning?
        - ii. Kresta – research has stated more than 95% of families have a desire to be engaged in their child’s learning. When families feel more connected, more likely to engage. Next step, is taking all of the ideas from the joint leadership meeting to the community, what do we need right now, are you willing to participate and be a part of this, making a pathway, opportunity for all families to feel like they can engage.
        - iii. John – when we say engagement, first thing that comes to mind is volunteering, etc., parents know what’s going on, can quickly engage/know who to reach out to if they have concerns with their child’s learning, if I want to engage, path/process is known and is easy.
        - iv. Doug – from a Board perspective, our strategic approach, shouldn’t spend too much time dealing with what is happening – as BOD, how do we measure and evaluate our family engagement? What are our expectations as a BOD, how do we measure progress towards those expectations? What are we measuring? Over this year, figure out what we want, we’re not the experts, and then understand how do you measure it?

- v. Cyndi – when I hear professionals talking about this, goal is every family, every student, every piece of the community, not just parents volunteering, but everyone is engaged in their child’s learning, no matter what piece that is. Accepting and bringing in people that you maybe don’t agree with – really hard to get to, takes a lot of work.
- vi. Ben – getting out in the community, showing our faces, good opportunity for us to meet with so many of the families, start that family engagement dialogue, expect to see results by putting ourselves out there. All the list of posters of activities that we had at the joint leadership meeting, are there opportunities for us to engage and represent the board in those venues?
- vii. Doug – when I think of BOD goals, not thinking about how we are perceived at the school, thinking about how this actually happens at the school, looks to Kresta to implement this at the school, CSN to support – not looking to be a do-er, but how as a Board, we make sure that we’re getting the family engagement that we want.
- viii. Kresta – the family partnership survey is quite detailed, may help guide areas for improvement, administered every year. Have longitudinal data that we can analyze.
- ix. Alison – also measure how many/who is participating in the survey.
- x. John – at the BOD level, look at how we measure family engagement, set some goals, maybe using Family Partnership Survey, and targets for specific questions, define a target for participation and then handing that off to CSN, administration, etc. to encourage participation, creative ways to engage
- xi. Dan – really hard to get families engaged, easy to let them disengage, want to have measurement, but without having clear expectations set that is almost impossible
- xii. Alison – What does that culture mean? What is family engagement? Every family engaged in their education and engaged in the school
- xiii. Meggin – not a one-year thing, not a super quick thing, looking at 7-10 years. Come up with short, medium, long-term goals. Realistic short, medium, goals, recognizing that it’s a process, how are we going to get there. What is most important in the survey, what is

lowest in the scores? Don't want to set unattainable goals

- xiv. Alison – Partnership Survey is a great tool, but is only one perspective, from families that participate. Would need to get more pieces of data .
- xv. Ben – if we are going to use it, how do we get more families to take the survey?
- xvi. John – pretty straight forward to think about critically, x% participated this year, want to get to y%, one of the tangible goals. Other goals can be on specific questions, set some milestones.
- xvii. Alison – summary of conversation this far
  1. Family engagement, to this board, families are engaged in their children's education in a holistic way. Cyndi – engaging the whole community in the education of the children. We need to understand what 'every child' means – what is the weight of that? What percentage of the community, what does it mean to us? Then go into how we'll measure, what tools, existing tools, specifics of what numbers on those tools.
  2. John – sounds like we might be tackling something that a committee should do?
  3. Alison – do have a SAC, that should be using existing data, maybe we look to the SAC to come back with list of surveys list, give us results of x, other places to do the work, BOD should be having the conversations.
  4. John – we as a BOD come up with the big picture, determine goals, hand it to the SAC to help.
  5. Alison – if we agree on what family engagement means, the community engaged in every child's education at FHM. Who can help us?
  6. Kresta – every child is different from every family. ILT has had some ideas on how to increase participation in surveys in carline, etc. Starting from the data we do have is important.

b. What's our path and timeline? Saved for later BOD meeting

ii. AMS Accreditation

1. Conversations about having accreditation as the goal, what's the goal around this? Lead to more conversations on Montessori at FHM. Last June we had conversations about what Montessori means. A good place to start is AMS has 5 core components of Montessori Education, what



does this mean for Free Horizon? When we bring in non-Montessori programs (i.e. Wonders) how does that fit in with Montessori curriculum? Make sure parents and students understand that.

- a. Trained Montessori Teachers
  - b. The Multi-Age Classroom
  - c. Using Montessori Materials
  - d. Child-Directed Work
  - e. Uninterrupted Work Periods
2. Doug – grasping at, what do I need to know, what do I need to understand as a BOD member, that I should have knowledge about and influence on as a member of the BOD.
  3. Alison – what does Montessori mean to Free Horizon? What are our measurables to ensure we’re delivering that. How do we ensure that we’re doing that? Our lead teachers are core to our children’s education, having the best practice across the board, we as a BOD need to know that. This is what Montessori is and here is how we are applying it at Free Horizon.
  4. John – are there AMS accredited public schools in the state of CO?  
Kresta – no, we would be the first. John – to come back to the golden thread, maybe we could tie AMS accreditation together with Innovation Status, tie in nicely to be the first public school to be AMS accredited.  
Public school – Montessori for everyone.
  5. Alison – come from the public-school lens. As a board member, experienced Montessori teachers are high value. How do we retain our teachers? How do we keep them? What’s the measurable, what’s the goal there? How do we establish a program with continuity, establish a culture and so strong in their Montessori that teachers clamor to get into the school – how do we put FHM on a path to that goal?
  6. Cyndi – there is value in new people coming in, there is value in children going through change and a little bit of diversity, as a parent whose gone through all of my kids going through school, I really do see a value in that. Continuity is wonderful and it’s great, but there’s a lot of value too in that turnover that isn’t always immediately seen.
  7. Doug – using the term, ‘how do we..’ bring it back to the BOD role, we should be making sure the school has properly trained teachers, give that to Kresta and her staff to deliver on this, whatever the goal is, leave implementation to administration.
  8. Kresta – first step would be to raise the floor/salary scales by at least \$10k
  9. Alison – how do we implement Montessori in the school, so everyone in the community knows what our core is. Example, if we’re not using Montessori materials, here is why, here is the process

10. Dan – AMS is our foundation, a layer above it is FHM for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Role of the board – perceived disagreement between AMS vs. FHM.
11. Alison – created a community that provides a Montessori education, what does that look like? Ex. If we don't pay enough, lets understand why people are leaving and how can we fix it. How do we grow?
12. Kresta – really feel like these goals should be added back into the UIP. District always has feedback that we need to focus, feel like anytime the BOD is talking about – what is Montessori and how it looks in our school, staff voice is very important to include there. When it came to Wonders, had 16 people on the committee to select it, is about communication about why it was selected, how it fits into Montessori core. Need to look to policy manual, comes a point where it does say the principal has to adhere to federal and state laws.
13. Alison – as a community, and BOD is part of community, important to understand where we're going as a Montessori school and how we can improve. BOD just needs to be a part of that strategy
14. Doug – as a BOD member, want a better way to measure and evaluate this thing that we're responsible for. Want to make sure that I know I've done my job and I feel FHM is on the right track, best way to do that is monitoring and evaluation. Good goal – how are we going to do that?
15. Alison – as we're wrapping up where we can start next BOD meeting, is what that Montessori picture looks like or how to move forward from here. Understand the growth path FHM is on. We are a strong, established Montessori school, where is growth possibility and how do we determine how we got there. Need to look to the experts, short and sweet, goal is to understand growth areas in Montessori and what measurement would look like
16. Ben – also communication with staff, defining what that Montessori is, staff can really help with that piece. As a BOD, could do a better job of hearing from, communicating with the staff, but hard to quantify.

## 12. Assignments

- a. Alison will email BOD about it, some kind of sign up
- b. Kresta will update the school calendar to reflect the adjusted meeting time on October 14
- c. Ben, Cyndi, Doug will connect for a school finances training
- d. Bekky will send approved minutes to Lisa tomorrow morning.
- e. Everyone think about goals

## 13. Motion to adjourn: John, Second by Bekky, end at 9:01pm

*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.*

*Bakky Robbins*