

Minutes

January 30, 2024

The MSC Board met this date in person in Building B of the school campus. Participating members included Leslie (HoS), Brittney (CFO), Ginny, Dawn, Charles, Kim, Conetta, Chanda, Mary, and Bryan, all in person.

Welcome was extended to new members from Leslie with new board member packets provided. Onboarding plans were introduced from Bryan to provide familiarity with the school and finances etc. Bryan offered to send a Doodle poll following the meeting to schedule it.

Bryan called the meeting to order.

Charles mentions his last name is misspelled in the previous minutes. Mary will correct those errors as secretary. Mary moved to accept minutes as corrected, second by Conetta and Chanda, unanimous vote to approve minutes followed by full board.

Next was the Head of School report where the HoS reported enrollment for next year returning students contracts have been sent and new student contracts will also be going out soon. The Annual Fund is at 88% of \$40,000 for 40 years of MSC. Mary asked about financial aid. Leslie informed there were 12 applicants and that pool is now closed for returning students, but will have new students that may enter the pool. We have been able to give aid at some level to all families that asked for assistance. Charles asked how many families we have; Leslie responded she believed it was approximately 110. Leslie also provided that she is attending Montessori admissions training as approved and supported by the Board likely in Houston in the near future. Leslie concluded there are currently 141 students attending and 142 paying.

Next, Brittney spoke about the DEW audit and its scope. She explained the internal audit is going well and that she is working closely with Sarah with contracts coming and registration money coming in. Brittney met with Steve on Sunday of last week to set up the Treasury Direct account which will allow for a greater ROI for money the school has in savings. Brittney has also been giving teachers budget updates on how much they've spent on billables, field trips, etc. There was a big increase in employees wanting benefits based on having more information about MSC's benefits and Brittney is assisting staff with that. She has also been working with Michael D on the auction. There have been summer camp compensation discussions, materials, etc. Summer camp invoices will be monthly. The sunshade was ordered as part of DSS grant for \$22K.

Leslie then provided a salary study update, and they are looking at a general 3% for most staff next year but are planning to use the MISBO model for longer term planning. Leslie mentioned there has been discussion around making assistant teachers salaried - they are currently making hourly and not paid for hours not worked. Leslie also mentioned this is hard because assistant teachers are not doing the same scope of work as lead teachers but the Board and Leslie agreed we do not want these positions to be designed or intended as transient. We

decide to revisit this topic once we have enrollment numbers, likely the March 26 Board meeting agenda is most proper.

Leslie discussed the parent surveys and general responses, which were very positive. The Board also had a chance to review those survey responses prior to the meeting. Some of the questions come from our accreditation process. We will be using the 5% rule to evaluate complaints: anything with a 5% or higher dissatisfaction rate will be evaluated further. Admin's communication was around 6%, and we discussed how the office can work internally on strengthening communication. Knowing how to get in touch with the Board was around 8% - we agreed to add Board information to the new parent portal coming soon including past board minutes. There was strong support for a toddler program, Leslie thinks toddler would be a priority in the future if the school expands as both teachers and past teachers have been interested in a toddler program. There is also a teacher interested in middle school training if that program was reestablished. Themes for things parents would like to see changed include communication from admin and teachers; school security (Brittney is working on that); counseling services (Leslie wants to explore what that looks like); and enrichment opportunities. Some Board in-person meetings with parents asked for more transparency from the Board, which the Board discussed is also a primary objective of this term and agreed was able to be improved in-party by way of the upcoming parent portal.

Dawn suggested it would be a good idea to have a "town hall" annually. Charles stated this is a great idea but questioned when it would be and discussion by the Board ensued. Leslie stated it would be a good intro to the school year, maybe mid-October. Dawn stated we need to think through what parents want to hear: finances, strategic plan, etc. Kim asked Leslie if she will take parent surveys back to staff, Leslie responded that last year, trends and general responses were shared at a staff meeting and she plans to share graphs and trends and ask for thoughts from staff.

Mary proposed the teacher-parent communication expectation setting should be improved and/or we need to change things. Leslie stated she thought both could be improved. Mary mentioned each Primary class used to be represented in the newsletter and now they are consolidated. Leslie explains this was to lessen the burden of teachers and Brittney added that teachers need breaks and are burned out. Dawn asked why they are burned out. Leslie responded that this is because they are teaching and teaching is renown for burnout in the profession. Mary asked about changes to the 3-4 year old work cycle. Leslie explained that before, the non-K Primary students were going outside from 11 - 2:30 - now they play outside 1 hr and go inside and work with kindergartners. Mary asked if this was impacting kindergartners readiness. Leslie confirmed kindergartners are still getting their time and still getting enrichment time and that when she checks in with the Primary teachers, she is getting positive feedback about the change.

The discussion turned to revised handbook provisions. Leslie stated we do not have them yet. Michael is the associate who was working on this at the law firm engaged for this service; he

sent the employee agreements and Leslie is redlining them. Michael wants to set up a meeting to go over re-priorities for the handbook.

Dawn is assisting Michael D. with the annual fund and asked if there is a conflict of interest working with the Board and annual fund. The Board agreed there was not a conflict of interest for Dawn to continue to volunteer with the school and serve on the Board.

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn the meeting, a second followed as well as a unanimous vote to conclude the meeting.