



## **Board Meeting Minutes**

Desert Sky Montessori

Virtual Meeting

February 16, 2022

Jessica Loukonen called the meeting to order at 6:18pm.

**Present:** Jessica Loukonen, Cara Nowak, David Trexler, Daisy Sexton, John Eskew, Kevin McKennon

**Also present:** Jodie Borgia, Julia Sutter, Pascaline Myers, Heather Phillips, Deli Thordarson, Ute-Anja McDonald

### **BUSINESS**

2022.02.16.01 Cara Nowak moves to approve the January minutes. David Trexler seconds. The January minutes are approved by unanimous vote.

2022.02.16.02 Jessica Loukonen moves to approve the HOS [Head of School] Search Calendar and adopt the Desired Qualities and Qualifications for the HOS Position. John Eskew seconds. The HOS Search Calendar and adopting the Desired Qualifications for the HOS Position are approved by unanimous vote.

#### **A. Jodie Borgia: Head of School Report**

- a. Enrollments are stable at 165 children
  - i. Enrollment intentions for next year have been received from all families: all current 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be moving on, 4 other children will not be returning, 2 children are undecided
- b. Recommendations for construction on the new site
  - i. Would prefer the board not to approve too much construction at this time
  - ii. Would like the spaces to be opened up, but no new walls to be built so that there is more flexibility when planning where classes will go next year
    1. 40 square feet per child would be ideal; need to balance the quality of the program with the number of children we will need enrolled to make the budget work
    2. Thinks DSM will lose some of the older children to Realms Middle School, but should know by the end of April or early May what the numbers will be in the upper classes
    3. Would like to have at least 24 kindergarteners for the program to continue to thrive

c. Covid

- i. Rules around Covid are in flux, with the state enforced universal masking rule to be lifted on March 31
  1. BLP [Bend-La Pine] plans to lift the universal masking mandate for their schools on March 31, but has stated that they highly recommend that masks continue to be worn; as a charter school, DSM may decide to stay with universal masking or move to optional masking along with BLP; would like to discuss with the board
    - a. The Test to Stay program will only be available to schools that opt to keep universal masking
    - b. Contact tracing will be done in the case of optional masking, with those students not up-to-date with their vaccinations—currently 55% of the children at DSM--being quarantined for at least 5 days whether they were choosing to wear a mask or not; vaccinated children will most likely be able to stay in school
      - i. Quarantined children will need work from the teachers, most likely in the form of packets to be sent home and Google Classroom; online Zooms and check-ins will not be required
    - c. Diagnostic testing at school will be offered whether universally or optionally masked
    - d. Jessica Loukonen: wonders how parents generally feel about masking
      - i. Jodie Borgia: does not have a feel for how many parents would pull their kids over masking or not
    - e. John Eskew: wonders what would happen if we decide to keep a universally masked policy but some students decide not to wear a mask
      - i. Jodie Borgia: as soon as one person in a cohort does not wear a mask, the new quarantining rules go into effect
    - f. Deli Thordarson: has spent time in every classroom and noticed that the effectiveness of mask usage increases with age, but the older children are more consciously resistant to wearing masks
    - g. David Trexler: suggests communicating the nuances of the situations to help parents to understand the mandate and the lack thereof
    - h. Jodie Borgia: has considered sending a survey to parents, but thinks there would be vocal parents on both sides; does need to send out some information concerning the impending rule changes soon so that parents have time to get their children vaccinated if that is what they choose to do
      - i. Daisy Sexton: thinks a survey should go out; make it easy to understand the pros and cons of each decision
    - i. Kevin McKennon: wonders if there would be any benefit to asking the children if they would like to be masked or not
      - i. Jodie Borgia: thinks there could be some mental health work to do around mask removal for the lower elementary since masking is all they have known

- j. Ute-Anja McDonald: wonders if there can be a universally masked cohort
  - i. Jodie Borgia: will ask ODE [Oregon Department of Education] about this and get back to us
- k. Julia Sutter: wonders if we can add to a survey a reminder to the parents to send in their child's completed vaccination card
- l. Jessica Loukonen: we will plan to send out a survey to the parents about masking requirements; Jodie Borgia is to get this together and sent out over the weekend, asking for a response within 2 days; Jessica Loukonen will send the survey to the board to preview before it goes out; results will be communicated to the board

B. Julia Sutter: Business Director Report

- a. Met with Kevin McKennon this afternoon to talk about the new site; they plan to begin meeting weekly because of all that will happen in the next 5-6 months
- b. Planning to move out of OWC [One World Center] and Bend River by the end of June
  - i. Each classroom will have its own pod to pack; pods from OWC can be stored at OWC; Bend River pods can be stored at the new site
  - ii. Each property will need some work done and to be cleaned up before we fully move out
- c. BLP will be sending a list of the things they will take care of on the new site before they move (rodent care, outlets, tree trimming, etc.); maintenance DSM will be left with includes the roof on the Casa building, the foundation on the shed in the back, and the siding being caulked and painted
  - i. The new landlord has offered to finance the work we are planning to do this summer (fencing, construction, etc) and roll it into our upcoming loan for the sewer line
    - 1. John Eskew: does not think that the roof is a good thing for us to fix because it is the landlord's responsibility
    - 2. Julia Sutter: plans to get a quote on fixing the shed's foundation and for the caulking and painting; would like us to fence the entire property, instead of a smaller piece of it, as it will secure all the buildings
      - a. Daisy Sexton: wonders what will happen with the fencing if we move, ie can we take it with us
        - i. Julia Sutter: any improvements we make to the property will stay with the property
      - b. Jodie Borgia: thinks it would be worth taking the staff to the new property so they can have some input on the fencing
  - ii. Also working on quotes for plumbing, electrical, a general contractor, signage (possibly lit and with exchangeable letters), painters, and movers
  - iii. Jessica Loukonen: would like a list of all the upcoming costs we are considering
    - 1. Julia Sutter: plans to gather the bids this month and create a separate budget for moving costs; the first draft of the budget will be out on 2/24/2022; will have a draft for the moving costs by the next board meeting
    - 2. Ute-Anja McDonald: would like to know what we need to do now and what can wait (prioritize)

- d. Planning to officially cancel DSM's Rock, Paper, Scissors event again this year
- C. John Eskew: Treasurer Report
- a. Feels we are in a good place financially; need to figure out an ongoing budget that we can sustain going forward
  - b. Kevin McKennon: wonders if DSM has any other outstanding loans after we are in the new building
    - i. Julia Sutter: no, we have no other loans
- D. HOS Transition Process
- a. Jessica Loukonen: has reached out to 8 applicants and spoken with 4 of them: very nice, experienced individuals; all seem eager to interview; 2 have Montessori experience
    - i. Week of March 7: planning to have the first interviews; would like to have the entire board for that process and record the interview for Jodie Borgia and Heather Phillips to listen to and vet the answers to the Montessori-specific questions
      - 1. Daisy Sexton: wonders if it would be overwhelming to an applicant to have the entire board at the first interview
        - a. Jessica Loukonen: Rose Archer suggested having 5 present for the initial interview and there are 6 currently on the board
        - b. Kevin McKennon: thinks the likelihood of all 6 of us being available to interview at the same time would be low
    - ii. The next step would be to give the applicants some homework to complete: a sample email to a disgruntled parent, etc
    - iii. The final interview would be a town hall setting for the 2 finalists; this would include some parents and their vetted questions
  - b. Ute-Anja McDonald: wonders if the staff will be able to ask the candidates questions and wonders how much weight Montessori experience has when it comes to the candidates interviewed
    - i. Jodie Borgia: we have talked about having AMI [Association Montessori Internationale] or AMS [American Montessori Society] administration training for a candidate that does not have Montessori experience; thinks this should be written into their contract and paid for by the school, but realizes that Montessori training on top of learning how to run a charter would be a huge ask; will get back to Jessica Loukonen with information on cost and time commitment concerning these options
  - c. Jessica Loukonen: wonders if Jodie Borgia and Heather Phillips would like to be on the initial interview panel
    - i. Jodie Borgia: we are happy to be there, but it is up to the board
    - ii. Jessica Loukonen: thinks their inclusion makes sense and that the town hall meeting should include the leadership team also
- E. Jessica Loukonen: Board President Update
- a. Reminded the board to get their board evaluation surveys back to Kristen Miles at OSBA [Oregon School Boards Association] by February 23, 2022

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned to an executive session at 7:46pm.

**Recorded by: Cara Nowak**

***Minutes approved at 3/16/2022 Board Meeting***