



Board Meeting Minutes
Desert Sky Montessori

62968 O.B. Riley Rd

Bend, OR 97703

January 18, 2023

Jessica Loukonen called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.

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

Also Present: Heather Phillips, Deli Thordarson, Hannah Gregg (until 7:11pm), Luke Racine (until 6:27pm), Tom Efthimiades (until 6:27pm), Jennifer Baires (until 7:12pm)

Absent: Jenna Wazny

BUSINESS

A. Financial/Treasurer Report

- a. Luke Racine: financials are consistent overall; PERS [Public Employees Retirement System] contributions and contract services are both off by a bit; program expenses are up due to classroom and office supplies; Budget to Actual Year-to-Date: negative \$70,000 difference—mainly due to program supplies, classroom supplies, and a few repairs that were not in the initial budget for the year
- b. John Eskew: cash balance is down, but using the surplus that was built up during the years before the move; money from the Student Investment Act will be made available in the coming weeks; will be working with the accountants on an estimated budget for the remaining portion of the year to be presented at February's board meeting; would like for an effort to be made to collect the resource fees owed for this school year and the aftercare fees still owed from last school year
 - i. Deli Thordarson: sent an email to the accounting team to see what has been paid and what is still owed—plans to contact families about what is owed as soon as possible
- c. Dave Trexler: wonders about how the audit process is going
 - i. Tom Efthimiades: audit nearing completion

B. Heather Phillips: Head of School Report

- a. Shared DSM's annual report at the BLP board meeting last week—felt supported by all there

- b. DSM is up for charter renewal next month's BLP board meeting; requires a slideshow, a presentation, and up to 3 DSM board members and/or parents to speak about how their students have been impacted by DSM
- c. Testing scores: math scores are worrying, as they are well below the district's average math scores; believes these scores have been affected by past staffing issues and the long period of remote learning, ie being away from the physical Montessori materials during such critical learning periods for some students
 - i. 3rd graders are showing the greatest need: all 3rd graders nearing the red will begin working with the special education team; have been working with the special education team to develop a way to merge Montessori lessons with more traditional lessons and interventions
 - ii. Incoming kindergarten and 1st graders have also been impacted
 - iii. Hoping to provide parents and staff with the support they need to work through this with their students
 - iv. Hoping that the next round of test scores will show improvement, but realizes this might be asking too much; would like to share all of the scoring with DSM's community
- d. Staffing: Kendra Hodgson is meshing beautifully in the Otter classroom; goal setting for staff is in process—planning to work with all assistants individually
- e. Enrollment: the lottery for the next school year is open, with grades 1–8 closing on January 20, 2023, and kindergarten closing in March; everyone who came to DSM's in-person open house submitted an application
 - i. Deli Thordarson: there have been 96 applications received as of today
- f. Middle School Expansion: Susan Andre is on board to help with this process—has experience putting together 3 different middle school programs, set-up times have varied with each; hoping to get some board members and parents involved also
- g. Will be meeting soon with Bruce Abernethy, BLP's grant writer
 - i. Deli Thordarson: the Central Oregon Gives campaign went well—final total exceeded our goal
- h. Friends of Desert Sky will be meeting tomorrow; the Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament has been scheduled for May 20, 2023, at Alpenglow Park in Bend
- i. Dave Trexler: wonders if things being worded differently on the state testing is also causing students some issues
 - i. Heather Phillips: that most likely is another contributing factor; could spend energy teaching to the test, but not sure that is a good use of classroom time
- j. Jessica Loukonen: wonders if funding from the district could be talked about during the renewal process
 - i. Heather Phillips: possibly; thinks the district is very supportive of DSM adding a middle school program; Lora Nordquist is hoping for a 5-year renewal term for DSM's charter
 - 1. Daisy Sexton: wonders if that term could be amended if DSM was to decide to become a magnet school instead
 - a. Heather Phillips: not sure, but it is a good question
- k. Cara Nowak: wonders if there are any updates on DSM receiving district help for a free/reduced lunch program
 - i. Heather Phillips: Lora Nordquist thinks there is a way for this to happen; will work together to see why DSM hit a roadblock with this issue earlier—may be possible to go to ODE [Oregon Department of Education] for help with this

- C. Deli Thordarson: Facilities
 - a. Bathroom issues have been constant since moving into the new location: insides have been changed in the toilets to help reduce clogging; it has been recommended by DSM's plumber to have the line in the Steelhead classroom scoped for possible roots, etc, causing a blockage; today toilets were spraying water in both main bathrooms; janitors have also reported walking in to flooded bathrooms
 - i. John Eskew: will reach out to Toby Wiltse about this; would like for Heather Phillips to reach out to Realms to see if they were having similar problems last year
 - b. Heather Phillips: planning to have some solar lights placed around the front walkways and near the DSM sign on the main road; would like to get stronger permanent lighting for the front of the school at some point
 - c. Kevin McKennon: will talk to the city to see if flashing lights can be placed on the crosswalk sign in front of the school
 - i. Dave Trexler: thinks DSM can request a police presence to help encourage people to follow the rules
- D. Jessica Loukonen: Board President Updates
 - a. Will reach out to a contact (shared by Jenna Wazny) of someone who may be willing to help with finding donors for the Rock, Paper, Scissors tournament
- E. OSBA [Oregon School Boards Association] Policies
 - a. Jessica Loukonen: we have paid for OSBA's help with these policies through April, after which they will need to be paid hourly; Section AB is important as it pertains to the Board, but thinks the rest of the policies we've received should be looked over by the administration team
 - b. Heather Phillips: thinks we should look over the policies pertaining to the Board; thinks the rest of the policies could be looked at on an effectiveness basis, ie only change the policies that are not currently working
 - c. John Eskew: thinks we should be careful what is adopted as a policy since it will be binding
 - d. Discussion concerning language to be used throughout the policies
 - e. Jessica Loukonen: will contact Rick Stucky at OSBA for clarity around what must be adopted and what may be omitted; will try to figure out what DSM already has adopted and go from there
 - f. Dave Trexler: worried about the writing in some policies that outlines specific things the Head of School is responsible for
 - g. The Board will continue to look over the policies with the goal of discussing and voting on them during next month's meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:48pm.

Recorded by: Cara Nowak

Minutes approved at 2/15/2023 Board Meeting