



First State Montessori Academy

Public Session Meeting **Thursday, September 25, 2015**

Present: Zeke Allinson, Angela Angeny, Beth Carter, Gina Castelli, Erin Carrol, Jed Donohue, Courtney Fox, Chanda Gilmore, Yvonne Nass, Kyara Panula

Absent: Jessie Keith, Chris Graham, Heather Townsend, Kristen Chastain

Yvonne Nass called meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approved with following modifications 1). Under Governance Committee reports, the committee asked board members to sign up for the board and parent additions of Delaware Charter School Network's newsletter, The Ripple; 2) Angela's Angeny name was misspelled on second reference, and 3) Finance Committee CBOC member DaWayne Sims name was misspelled.

Committee Reports

Finance: Zeke Allinson met with Innovative Schools and auditors about draft audit. We are 16.7% thru fiscal year and at 14.5% at expenses and encumbrances. Things are proceeding as planned. Zeke Allinson motioned to put web report on web site and Chanda Gilmore seconded. Motion approved.

Development: Jed Donohue stated that the committee is focusing on starting the annual fund and reaching out to the community and identified the five action items of the committee. Discussion ensued about the annual fund.

Academic Excellence: Courtney Fox presented SMARTER Balanced math and reading results. Families have not received their individual scores yet. Noted that it's hard to make generalizations about the scores since this is the first year, had fewer students and only had students for a few months. Discussion ensued around meaning of the results. Scores are available online.

Governance: Reviewed Division of Roles Between Board and CEO document. Yvonne Nass stated that this is a great opportunity to create the framework/standard for future BOD and its relationship with the head of school. It can be revised since it is a living document

and because circumstances and times change. Courtney Fox asked what government agencies under the legal section and who is supposed to be submitting those documents meant. Discussion ensued about this.

The Governance Committee recommended that the Board of Directors accept Division of Roles Between Board and CEO with the addition of “submits proper paperwork to government agencies” under the CEO role of legal responsibility and delete “the ensuring of proper paperwork” from under BOD legal responsibility and replace with “review organizational framework, identify any gaps, and makes plans for addressing.” Kyara Panula seconded. Recommendation accepted.

Head of School: Courtney Fox said that they have filled the last student spot and hired a new part-time nurse.

Auditors Report

Representatives from auditor firm provided key highlights from financial audit conducted, a requirement as a charter and by the Delaware Department of Education. The audit is due September 30, 2015 and covers the past fiscal year, ending June 30, 2015.

Highlights of audit:

- FSMA is in good financial shape and started off well.
- A new accounting rule this year regarding pension plans affects Noncurrent Liabilities line item, thus Total Liabilities. Discussion ensued around this topic.
- Encouraged to think about a policy where we budget to stay at a certain benchmark or within 5-7 percent of total budget.
- The school was in better shape since \$3.6 million is what was budgeted for revenue and the actual was \$3.8 million due to higher contributions; a favorable variance of \$200,000.

Unfinished Business

Head of School Evaluation: Yvonne Nass stated that the evaluation must be done every year and they decided not to do a Montessori evaluation this year. Yvonne Nass and Chris Graham will do a mid-year conference in January/February with Courtney Fox. What Yvonne Nass liked about the process was that she felt they were working as a team. Yvonne Nass, Erin Carol and Chris Graham, who conducted the evaluation, went over it with Courtney Fox.

The Evaluation Committee recommended the Board of Directors approve an increase of 15% for the Head of School’s salary for the school year 2015 -2016. Discussion ensued around affordability of 15% increase. Gina Castelli seconded. 9 approve. 0 nays. Motioned approved.

New Business

Vision 2025 Report: Kyara Panula highlighted keys aspects of event including the discussion around looking at the child in a more holistic way.

Building Sign: Yvonne Nass stated that the building sign is almost done and encouraged the Development Committee to include this significance in any upcoming event.

Retention Ad Hoc Committee: Angela Angeny reached out to a research company who will due a pulse study, pro bono, to get under where we are, ratings around how people rank education for their children, and successful areas for growth. Beth Carter recommend reaching out to students about what they feel/think.

October Board Meeting: Courtney Fox stated that we will be trying a new format for the October 22, 2015 meeting with the PTO meeting from 6 – 6:45 p.m. followed by a Montessori Moment and then the public board meeting.

Yvonne Nass adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Chanda Gilmore, Secretary