



First State Montessori Academy

Board of Directors Public Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: June 28, 2018

Call to order: 6:03 p.m.

Adjournment: 9:06 p.m.

Location: First State Montessori Academy Lower School

Present: Zeke Allinson, Angela Angeny*, Jed Donahue, Courtney Fox, Sara Grant, Chanda Gilmore, Courtney Loughney, Meghan Newberry, Aubria Nance Phillips, Michael Reilly, DaWayne Sims

**Angela Angeny present via telephone from 6pm to 7pm*

Regrets: Kyara Panula, Natalie Marchani, Sarah Nagle, Janine Salomone

D. Sims opened meeting welcoming guests and reviewed public comment procedures.

Public Comments

1. Mary Marceluk commented upon the process to speak at board meetings, the ability for the board to mediate parent and staff concerns and for the board to be a part of staff exit interviews.
2. Anna Steppich discussed safety concerns in the oversight and administration of the school's food service program and asked for immediate action to remedy it.
3. Melisa Dulin expressed her concern regarding teacher support, particularly special education teachers.
4. Alfred Steppich expressed his concern regarding safety and security, use of nurses for the food service program and ability for parents to communicate with the board.
5. Tara Whetstone provided a written comment read by Stephanie Orr regarding her experience as the school's nurse dealing with the food service program, stating that it needed to be looked at and revised.
6. Erin Barthel shared her concerns regarding staff turnover. Asked board to consider doing an anonymous third-party survey sent twice within the school year to staff asking for their input.
7. Mary Falkenberg shared her experience as a 2/3 teacher, noting that every decision made is made from question: what is best for our students?
8. Jilly Pyle shared her predominately positive experience as a 2/3 FSMA teacher. Stated that data and information should be collected before making any changes to the food service program.
9. Cheryl Jones is a 2/3 teacher and stated that staff and administration guide and support the school in a positive direction.
10. Sarah Batemen provided a written statement read by Mary Falkenberg about FSMA being a hidden gem.

11. Gina Castelli's written public comment could not be read due to her proxy not being present.
12. Shamba Donovan requested a mechanism to make the board more directly accessible to parents and to communicate upcoming board meetings via social media.
13. Stephanie Orr relayed her difficulties in dealing with administration on the topic of special education.

May Board Meeting Minutes

J. Donahue motioned to approve the May 23, 2018 public session minutes with corrections to Mariano Rivera 5K name and J. Salomone's name. C. Gilmore seconded. No objections. Minutes approved.

M. Reilly motioned to approve the May 23, 2018 executive session minutes. M. Newberry seconded. No objections. Minutes approved.

Reports

Finance Committee. Z. Allinson reviewed monthly narrative web report noting that as of the end of May, the school was 92% through the year. Expenses are at 85% and 99% of revenue is in. C. Fox added that they are in the process of creating the 5-year budget and will continue to deficit spend over the next few years. A. Phillips motioned to approve. M. Reilly seconded. No objections. Motion passed.

Executive Committee. D. Sims stated that the executive committee will be reviewing the procedures for public comment in order to have efficient, transparent board meetings. The current procedures have been taken down from the website for review. The public is still encouraged to attend public board meetings the fourth Thursday of every month and can sign-up at the meeting to give a public comment. Parents and staff can also contact the board directly at fsma.governance@gmail.com. C. Gilmore added that the governance committee should be included in the review and that M. Newberry will serve as interim secretary for the remainder of the year.

Head of School Report

- School Safety Update: Staff and board members will be attending workshops sponsored by the Delaware Emergency Management Agency. The scheduled meeting with the Department of Homeland Security has been postponed until August. Education Director Liz Madden is in the process of setting up RAVE/Panic Button. C. Fox thanked the City of Wilmington for ensuring safety of the students by repainting the crosswalk lines and designating where to stop. Two staff members attended the Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide and will develop information packets for both staff and parents.
- Student Enrollment and Retention: Active waiting list is 488. Expecting number to go down during summer as student plans change. All seventh graders are returning.
- Staff Update: Staff retention rate is 89%, up from 85% school year. All open positions have been filled or in process of being filled except for the technology position. Biggest staff growth is in special education team. Psychologist position is now full-time. A. Phillips commented about the lack of race and gender diversity of staff. C. Fox acknowledged that is both a school and global issue. A. Phillips volunteered to assist with increasing staff diversity.

- Food Service Program: C. Fox acknowledged the unique process of the program and discussed the oversight, management and responsibility of the food service program. Corey Lamborn, who oversees the volunteers for the program, shared her experience and. D. Sims thanked her and all the volunteers for their time and effort in assisting with the program. Discussion ensued around the implementation of the food service program.

Old Business. C. Gilmore reminded new board members to submit background checks. D. Sims is wrapping up talking to board members about committees they want to serve on. C. Fox noted that renovation of the third floor in the upper school is on schedule.

Z. Allinson motioned to adjourn into executive session. C. Fox seconded. No objections. Entered executive session at 8:05 p.m.

Z. Allinson motioned to adjourn executive session. J. Donahue seconded. No objections. Re-entered public session at 9:04 p.m.

M. Reilly motioned to adjourn. C. Fox seconded. No objections. Meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.