



**Public Board Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2024**

Meeting Start Time: 6:06 pm

Meeting Adjourned: 6:50 pm

In attendance in person: Courtney Fox, Lindsay Abrahams, Anabelle O'Malley

In attendance via Zoom: Meghan Newberry, Emily Burton, AliShah Watson, Matthew Bender, Becky Phillips, Kristen Gideon (joined via Zoom at 6:18)

Regrets: Rikki Petrucelli, Matthew Petrin

Guests: none

Public Comment

There was no public comment received at the email addresses or in person.

Approval Public Minutes

The minutes from the October 23, 2024, public board meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the October 23, 2024, public board meeting minutes was made by A. O'Malley. Second. A. Watson. Vote passed. No objections.

Website Monitoring Checklist from the Department of Education

- The website monitoring report was previously received for October and in compliance in all areas. November was not received yet.

Head of School Report

C. Fox reviewed the following topics:

- Two families met with C. Fox and others at school in September to discuss staff diversity and follow up meeting occurred in October. A. Watson participated in meetings, too.
 - o C. Fox provided Staff Recruitment and Retention Overview packet, beginning with mission, to provide staffing expectations and foundational knowledge as a baseline for this work to align with the organization
 - o Reviewed goals table, noting the goal of attracting and maintaining the highest quality staff
 - o In parallel with this work, noted it is important to consider the national shortage of teachers
 - FSMA had lowest number of applicants this year, surrounding local districts have large numbers of unfilled teaching positions (48 unfilled positions in one district, for example)
 - Research noted that teachers are choosing to work in the system they grew up in and FSMA is too young to have educators to come back to work where they were students
 - o Overall, FSMA is focused on increasing the pool of candidates



- o Next steps:
 - Working with local universities to have practicum/student teachers
 - Applying for teacher residency program
 - Advocating for legislation to broaden flexibility in requirements when appropriate
 - Retaining teachers, as this reduces number of positions to fill
- o Priority at this time of the year is enrollment
 - Choice enrollment is currently open
 - Hosting information sessions for K-6 and middle school
- o A. Watson confirmed C. Fox covered everything from the meetings, reiterated teacher shortage, and noted a desire to increasing diversity with the reality of needing to get the most qualified staff
- o B. Phillips noted diversity, equity, and inclusion work within FSMA, both with teachers as well as wholistic work and how change takes place incrementally
- o M. Newberry noted partnership with Howard, too.

Committee Reports

Governance Committee Report

M. Newberry reported for R. Petrucelli. Governance committee continues to work on handover and making information accessible and secure. M. Newberry noted that some members of the Board will be completing their positions in June and to be thinking about recruitment.

Executive Committee Report

M. Newberry noted supporting FSMA over the coming months and highlighted the following:

- Next information session 1/7/25 at 9:30am
- Next board meeting 1/22/25 at 6pm
- Montessori Math Night 1/30/25 at 6pm
- PJ Day 12/20/24
- Movie Night this Friday 12/6/24
- Specialists are Special 12/18/24

Development Committee Report

B. Phillips noted the Giving Tuesday raised about \$1000 and is still open, also keep in mind that some companies will match. An email went out to families about Giving Tuesday and Do More 24 coming in March 2025. She is working on introductions and hoping to schedule meetings with thought leaders and City of Wilmington staff regarding development opportunities. Holiday cards expressing gratitude for staff will also be written/sent by board members.

C. Fox also noted that school is working on connections with City of Wilmington. M. Newberry noted milestone events and brining awareness to our community. M. Newberry and C. Fox made the group aware of proposed legislation in the City of Wilmington regarding the limitations on locations of marijuana dispensaries related to schools and conversations within the charter school community and City Council. C. Fox also noted connections within FSMA/Montessori



community and Delaware leaders. E. Burton asked whether there are statistics for impact to schools and C. Fox noted this is a new area and look into whether data is available.

Finance Committee Report

C. Fox provided time for group to review the narrative. B. Phillips asked for an update on the insurance. C. Fox noted that it has been renewed and had conversations about shopping it out but a better option may not be available. Regarding the finance narrative, C. Fox noted that percentages are on target and finance committee has reviewed budget. C. Fox noted there are no surprises for December, put in for additional capital funding, audit has been submitted, and on track for bond commitments.

A motion to approve and post the finance narrative was made by E. Burton. Second by M. Bender and B. Phillips. Vote passed. No objections. No Abstentions.

M. Newberry closed the meeting with gratitude for FSMA staff and reminder for next meeting on January 22, 2025.

A Motion to adjourn was made by A. O'Malley. Second by M. Bender. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.