



**Sussex Montessori School  
Board of Directors  
July 20, 2021**

**Board of Directors Present:** Linda Zankowsky, Sean Steward, Lauren Connelly, Christine Gorowara, Rebecca Thomas, Jessica Crampton-Bradley, Patricia Hermance, Chantel Janiszewski

**Others Present:** Lisa Coldiron (Head of School), Michelle Hastie (Finance Director), Elaine Mulford (Administrative Assistant), Tammie Carlisle (Lead Teacher), Nazaneen Khalilnaji-Otto (Lead Teacher), Apryl Small (Lead Teacher), Autumn Camlin (Lead Teacher)

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Jessica Bradley and seconded by Christine Gorowara. The agenda was amended to add the Family Handbook, discussion of the salary line budget and the enrollment report. The motion passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

**Montessori Moment**

Lisa Coldiron welcomed and introduced our new (and returning) staff members – Tammie Carlisle and Nazaneen Khalilnaji-Otto – previously Associate Teachers who will be returning as Lead Teachers (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> grades); Apryl Small, Lead Teacher; and Autumn Camlin, Lead Teacher (starting our program of 4<sup>th</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup> grades). Each of them discussed their backgrounds and any Montessori experience they have had. They are very excited to start the school year!

**Opening Remarks**

Linda Zankowsky indicated that although we did not have anyone sign up for public comment (at least 24 hours in advance of the board meeting), since there are concerns about mask wearing and how school will open, she would allow three minutes for thoughtful discussion. An opening plan was approved in June (to access federal dollars), and we will revisit the opening plan in August, for the safety of our students and staff.

**Public Comment** – Dustin Yoder (parent) discussed meeting with Lisa Coldiron and Lauren Connelly on July 20, 2021, to discuss mask wearing of the children. His family thinks it is in the best interest of the children not to wear masks. The board appreciated him attending the meeting and his comments.

**Minutes**

- Motion to approve the 6/15/21 Minutes was made by Trish Hermance and seconded by Lauren Connelly. The motion was approved unanimously with the adjustments, with no objections and no abstentions.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Committee – Sean Steward & Michelle Hastie**

- Sean Steward reported on the 7/13/21 meeting of the Finance Committee.
- Michelle Hastie presented the financials to date through 6/30/21 including operating

income/expenses and federal grants.

- We received 101.32% of our state and local budgeted revenues.
- We received 81% of our state and local expense budget.
- We received 65.61% of our federal budgeted revenues; this amount does not include the ESSER III grant.
- Michelle noted that at the end of the fiscal year we had approximately \$775,000 left, and of this amount, \$317,000 – unused funds - was not rolled over to all Delaware charter schools. The budget office is working on this problem.
- We are presenting zero-based budgets so we can continue to build the surplus funds required by the state law for charter schools.

Motion to accept the June 2021 Financial Report was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Jessica Bradley. The motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

- Michelle Hastie presented the ESSER III funding plan (\$978,257) for Years 1, 2 and 3.
  - The use of these dollars will be for social, emotional and literacy needs for the students.
  - Proposed Expenses - Guidance Counselor (LCSW), Montessori Coach, Reading Specialist, Custodian, Reading Assist (2 full-time fellows), Summer Tutoring, Responsive Classroom Training and Play Works Outdoor Learning.

Motion to accept the ESSER III funding plan was made by Lauren Connelly and seconded by Chantel Janiszewski. The motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

- Linda Zankowsky discussed the salary piece of existing employees – at last month’s board meeting, a preliminary budget was approved with a 2% increase; we were waiting for this month for the state to finalize the state budget and the state plan so that we could go forward with letters to employees stating their new salary with the increase. There will be no changes to our banding system this year.
- Michelle Hastie discussed the potential upcoming legislation on how changes may be forthcoming with how charter schools are funded, mainly our flexibility with spending and salaries. This could negatively impact the school. Linda asked the board to consider their role as advocates with local legislators.

#### ***Facility Committee – Jessica Crampton-Bradley***

- Jessica Crampton-Bradley presented the Phase II Financial Package – statement of sources and uses of funds as of June 30, 2021.
  - Continuing to maintain small projects, i.e., barn stabilization, outdoor environment, porch, gate/fencing around the perimeter, carriage house doors and landscaping, etc.
- Classrooms scheduled for completion on 8/17/21.

#### ***Development Committee – Linda Zankowsky***

- Linda Zankowsky indicated that we have raised \$3.8 million and are in the process of raising the next \$2.4 million, estimated for the next four classrooms.
- We are scheduled for September 9 for an event in Lewes to raise funds.
- Linda discussed grants in process.

#### ***Executive Committee – Linda Zankowsky***

- Board meeting format – SB94 recognizes that some board meetings are having more success simultaneously being in person and Zoom during board meetings, so we will be able to have an

anchor site at the school (in person) as well as participation via Zoom. It was determined that we will have the anchor site at the school, which will include Lisa Coldiron as well as at least one board member in attendance at the school.

- Board development –Lauren Connelly is working with the Executive Committee on a format for our website (will be shared at the August board meeting) to allow the public to be aware of the opportunity of being a board member, what board members do and what skill sets are needed. Linda asked that board members, especially in Sussex County, make a list of people to talk to about becoming a board member – particularly those people with valued skill sets needed, i.e., finance, grant funding/writing, legal/HR, outdoor (parks & rec, cooperative extension), DOE/school knowledge, community leadership and facilities.

### ***Head of School Report – Lisa Coldiron***

- Head of School Goals - Motion to accept the HOS Goals was made by Jessica Bradley and seconded by Christine Gorowara. The motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.
- Hiring Report – all Lead and Associate Teacher positions have been filled; PE & Custodian position has been filled; Social Worker/Counselor has accepted our offer; Art & Music will continue as contracted positions; a Reading Specialist and Student Support position is being considered; an MOU is being developed with 4H for monthly studies for each.
- Enrollment Update – We have 339 enrolled students; we have room for 341. Enrollment is fluid and we have a strong waiting list.
- Three Reading Assist Institute trained associates have begun one-on-one tutoring with students. Van service has been provided for 11 of the 33 students.
- Professional Development starts August 25.
- DEMA visited the campus on July 14 to assess school safety.
- All teachers were evaluated through the Montessori “coaching” model.
- A running club, a book club and a soccer club are being discussed among many of the teachers – each a 6-week program.

A motion was made by Jessica Bradley and seconded by Christine Gorowara to move to Executive Session at 8:20 p.m. A personnel issue was discussed.

A motion to approve the personnel decision was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Jessica Bradley. The motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

All board members came out of Executive Session at 8:49 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Jessica Bradley, seconded by Trish Hermance, and passed unanimously at 8:50 p.m.