



**Sussex Montessori School
Board of Directors
December 16, 2025, 6:30 p.m.**

Board of Directors Present: Trish Hermance, Taquil Foster-Lewis, Sean Steward, Mason Falligant, Bob Wheatley, Kyle Morgan, & Linda Zankowsky
Absent: Jessica Bradley

Others Present: Debra Smullin (HR/Benefits), Michael Mast (Auditor)

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

Approval of Agenda-

A Motion to approve the agenda was made by Bob Wheatley and seconded by Sean Steward. The Motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Public Comment – No public comment

Minutes-

A Motion to approve the October 2025 meeting minutes was made by Mason Falligant and seconded by Bob Wheatley. The Motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

A Motion to approve the November 2025 minutes was made by Bob Wheatley and seconded by Mason Falligant. The Motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

A Motion to move the presenting of the 24/25 audit before the Montessori Moment on the Agenda was made by Sean Steward and Taquil Foster. The Motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Audit Review- Michael Mast

Michael presented the 2025 Sussex Montessori School Audit to the Board and provided clarification in response to Board inquiries.

Montessori Moment-

Ms. Heather Harris, one of our Lead Teachers, submitted a video highlighting the various projects, progress, and achievements of her class.

- Linda explained that the lesson was a foundational literacy lesson, focusing on phonemic awareness and phonics.
- It was a three-period lesson where Heather reminded the student of something he already learned, moved into the work with him, and then had him do it himself.
- Heather would then monitor the work period to assess the student's understanding.
- The board discussed the importance of remembering the specific mission of Montessori education and staying committed to it
- Trish suggested using short clips of podcasts or other resources to highlight the ethos of a Montessori classroom

Committee Reports-

Community Engagement/Enrollment- Jessica Bradley

- Current Enrollment-386
Anticipated changes- lose 7 after winter break 5 for relocation, 2 for social adjustment issues
- Additions-several families are meeting and touring, anticipated enrollments
- Open Enrollment Ends 1/14/26
Received total of 48 to date, 35 KN (greater apps than last two years)
Lottery 1/23/26-will need board certification before notifications can go out
Implemented strategic registration stations
- Marketing and Outreach
Boys and Girls Club
Book Fair
WBOC info spot
Hispanic radio
Continued digital ads, PTO partnership, highlighting student success
Partnered with Horizon's Sam F. for additional marketing support
- Budget
2025-2026 \$19631
Spent to date \$9k
Expected expenses \$6k (radio and tv)
Bunny Hop TBD

Finance Committee- Sean Steward

Sean presented the financials to date through November 30, 2025

- November 30, 2025, represents (5/12) months actual or 41.67 % of the current fiscal year.
- We have received 72.6 % of our State and Local revenues.
- We have received 5.4% of our federal revenues.
- We have spent 45.9 % of our Total operating budget.

A Motion to move the November 30, 2025, financial report approval motion to the January 20, 2026 Board meeting was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Mason Falligant. The Motion passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Development- Linda Zankowsky

- The school received \$150,000 from the Welfare Foundation to complete the elevator.
- This leaves a balance of about \$350,000 to get the barn wrapped up.
- A deal was struck with the elevator company to give them 10% now to hold the price into next year, which gives them enough money to do their shop drawings or submittals

Facility Committee- Bob Wheatley

- A facilities committee meeting was held a couple of weeks ago to discuss punch list items and issues, including doors and electrical work that weren't done.
- A walk-through was conducted to identify any other issues.
- GGA is buttoning up all the pricing for the final phase.
- The elevator will make the building accessible to many people over the years and will have a long-lasting effect.

Executive Committee- Trish Hermance

- There is a head of school appraisal process, and an informal mid-year discussion with Siza is scheduled for January 13th.
- Feedback for Siza should be shared with Sean or Trish before the second week of January.
- Siza is working on goals in the categories outlined in the appraisal process, which will be seen at the January meeting for approval.
- The board will give feedback in the spring based on the rubric.
- Trish encouraged everyone to look at the appraisal form and documents in boardable.
- The state has given permission to use a unique appraisal process specific to the needs of a Montessori school leader

Head of School Report- Dr. Siza Mtimbiri

The Head of School report included the following:

- Enrollment and Transport Update
- Special Education Update
- Upcoming Events

- Meeting with Linda to go over the Literacy Vision *plus* the Summary of Literacy Vision
- Staffing Proposals - drafts in progress
- Works in Progress

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Linda Zankowsky and seconded by Taquil Foster. The Motion passed unanimously at 7:43 p.m.