



**Sussex Montessori School
Board of Directors
February 17, 2026, 6:30 p.m.**

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

Others Present: Dr. Siza Mtimbiri (Head of School), Michelle Hastie (Business Manager), Debra Smullin (HR, Benefits, Payroll)

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of Agenda-

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

Public Comment – No public comment

Minutes-

A Motion to approve the January 20, 2026 meeting minutes was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Jessica Bradley. The Motion was approved unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Committee Reports-

Finance Committee- Michelle Hastie

Michelle presented the financials to date through January 31, 2026

- January 31, 2026, represents (7/12) months actual or % of the current fiscal year.
- We have received 107.7% of our State and Local revenues.
- We have received 23.3% of our federal revenues.
- We have spent 62.4% of our Total operating budget.

A Motion to approve the January 31, 2026, financial report was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Linda Zankowsky. The Motion passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Budget Discussion-

A Motion to approve the final budget as presented, with the Board revisiting the existing surplus was made by Sean Steward and seconded by Linda Zankowsky. The Motion passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions.

Lottery Discussion-

Lottery Results- 95 total accepted (83- eligible)

A motion to approve the 2026–2027 lottery results as of February 17, 2026, as presented by the Head of School, with the understanding that new applicants will continue to be accepted and placed by order of submission to fill available spots, was made by Linda Zankowsky and seconded by Jessica Bradley. The motion passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions.

Head of School Report- Dr. Siza Mtimbiri

- DDOE Visit-
 - Department of Education (DOE) conducted two visits, will return Friday and in April, and provided a grant; three DOE officials (Michael, Adam, Leroy) will review data.
 - AIMS provides reading-instruction professional learning and common instructional language; all teachers will complete AIMS training by June to support HQIM adoption.
 - Playbook-aligned literacy metrics were developed, were praised by the DOE, and will form a literacy steering committee to guide next steps.
 - UDMTR is leading state curriculum development; first unit submitted with positive feedback; foundational skills curricula (Montessori for All and UFLY) were submitted; target to have first-year materials ready by June and an approved curriculum by 2027.
 - Curriculum implementation requires fidelity to prescribed sequence and texts; teacher supports and coach integration (Emily) are being evaluated, with DOE feedback interviews scheduled next week.

- Traffic Safety-
 - Traffic accident occurred in front of the school; everyone OK, significant property damage.
 - Accident occurred during dismissal with cars lined up; exiting drivers had limited visibility to the left.
 - Traffic moves fast in front of the school; one-way in, one-way out layout creates a bottleneck and safety risk; deploying adults to control traffic is unsafe.
 - Plan to consult Arlen and the facilities committee about immediate mitigation to reduce the bottleneck.
 - Long-term solutions: install a traffic light and create an alternate egress.

Community Engagement/Enrollment- Jessica Bradley

- Mason coordinated event planning; administrative side proceeded well; immediate needs: funding and runners.

- Obtain previous-registrant and prior-sponsor lists from the website or database; ask Sophia and GGA for collected contacts for email outreach.

- Registration site lacked selectable sponsorship levels and online payment for sponsorships; implement online sponsorship options and ACH transfers for next year (examples: \$500, \$1,000).

- Conduct in-person outreach to local businesses to raise awareness; one organizer visited ~15 businesses in Seaford.

- Contact Bob offline about contractors; Jessica/Jessa to follow up on registration links and sponsorship processing.

Executive Session-

A Motion to move to Executive Sessions was made by Jessica Bradley and seconded by Bob Wheatley. The Motion passed unanimously with no objections and no abstentions at 8:15 p.m. Executive Session ended at 8:24 p.m.

A Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Bob Wheatley and seconded by Jessica Bradley. The Motion passed unanimously at 8:25 p.m.