

Minutes Fiddlehead School Board Nov. 16, 2023

Approved Dec. 14, 2023

1. Meeting was called to order 6:05
2. Board Present: Ben Kramer, Marie Reimensnyder, Kim Allen, Susan Doughty, Bill Doughty
3. Staff present: Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Jason Manjourides, Jen Damon, grade 4.
4. A quorum of Board members was present.
5. Kim Allen read the mission of Fiddlehead School
6. No members of the public had comments.
7. Consider New Board Member Roger Preston
  - a. **Ben moved and Susan seconded to elect Roger Preston to the Fiddlehead Board of Directors.**
    - i. **Motion carried 5 to 0.**
8. Consider approval of Oct. 19, and Oct 25, 2023 minutes
  - a. **Susan moved and Ben seconded to approve**
    - i. **Motion carried 4 to 0 with 1 abstention.**
9. Director's Report
  - a. Jacinda thanked the staff for their excellent and professional response to the situation in Lewiston. She suggested a pause to remember the importance of life and each moment. In particular, Carrie, Kelly, and Jason contributed significantly.
  - b. Meet today at Norumbega Cidery with a resultant check for \$1000.
  - c. She is happy with after school enrichment and notes some students out and some in, but steady overall and on track to make budget.
  - d. Working with St. Joseph's College about using student special education interns next year.
  - e. Hiring staff is difficult at this time due to the tight market. She has some recommendations to come out of executive session.
  - f. Bill and Jacinda have started initial planning for re-visioning.
  - g. Stepping back from daily activity brings clarity about where we need to go.

- h. She gave several examples of enrichment and adult activities that can generate income.
  - i. Did not get a Maine Arts grant because we are not a community based organization any more. Applied for another one with the Quimby foundation. Will submit for the Maine Outdoor Learning Initiative. Only for upper grades but starts at \$25000.
  - j. Open Houses coming up to recruit with clarity about who we are.
    - i. Questions:
      1. Marie excited about interns
      2. Ben requests that Jacinda keep her key connections to our school culture.
      3. Summer/after school programs under the old Center brought in up to \$150,000.
10. Principal's Extended Report
- a. Has asked Jenn Merritll to help with an overview of assessment data.
  - b. Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
    - i. Keeping our positive school culture is paramount. Always come back to who we are as Fiddlehead.
      1. Different ways to achieve learning results
    - ii. Developing a PK-8 overall curriculum guide. To help others enter the school and know where we are.
    - iii. Jenn Merrill then presented a summary of results for the Northwestern Education Association (NWEA) assessments taken by our students.
      1. State added a state only criterion referenced test
      2. Fall: Nationwide reference
      3. Spring: Nationwide and state criterion referenced test (not for grade 2)
      4. State-scored on: well below, below, at or above.
      5. In reading on the state test Spring 2023, 71% of our students were at or above grade level expectation. Based on the Maine Common Core

6. Over grade levels from 3 to 8, more students meet expectations for each year in school.
7. Reading fall scores on NWEA (norm referenced to other students, so not all can exceed).
  - a. Results seem consistent with the state test
  - b. Test was normed in July 2020, which was before COVID. Bill submitted this makes the test invalid due to invalid grade level norms.
8. Jenn pointed out that we focus on student growth: Did the student make progress?
9. In math on the state test, 42% of 3-8 students are at or above.
10. A major concern is that the percentage of students at or above decreases as students move up through the grades. 67% are at or above in grade 3; 16% are at or above in grade 8.
11. On fall NWEA (nationwide) in math, our average student was at the 47th percentile.
  - a. Grade 6 data reflects the loss of a teacher.
12. Recently received science scores indicate 40% of grade 5 at or above state expectations and 60% of grade 8 at that level.
13. Plans to improve reading: continued positive practices.
14. Plans to improve math:
  - a. All classes have math 4 days per week
  - b. WIN (What I Need) time focuses on individual math time if needed.
  - c. More Eureka math training (K-6)
  - d. Connected Math training for grade 7 and 8.
  - e. Support teachers with implementation
  - f. Admin visits the classroom to ensure fidelity.
15. Our Outdoor Ed. coordinator is working with teachers to integrate math into outdoor ed.

16. Bill asked for a correlation between scores and students in RTI.
  17. Bill asked if the test results make sense to Jenn, Jason, and Jen D. based on what they see in the school.
  18. Jenn responded that the test results are consistent with their experience.
- iv. Principal's report continues
    1. Safety: worked on shelter in place.
    2. Continuing to train volunteers. Getting background checks completed is an issue, so volunteers work with direct supervision
    3. Attendance: contacting parents as needed. Send letters when needed; direct contact if needed. As of today, chronic absence is at 29%. Working to make the system error free, especially for late arrivals.
    4. Staffing remains a top concern.
    5. Interviewed for a grade 1 teacher.
11. Finance Report from Ben
    - a. High level we are  $\frac{1}{3}$  into the year and  $\frac{1}{3}$  into our budget. Monitoring a few specific line items. Enrichment seems in line to meet the overall revenue expectations.
    - b. Ben moved and Marie seconded to approve the October Treasurer's report.**
      - i. Any particular worries? We have adjusted procedures to avoid mistakes from last year. Not particularly big issues.
      - ii. The Auditor's report was positive. No changes recommended.
      - iii. MCSC Finance team liked our 3 year plan and were not overly concerned about our financial status.
      - iv. Jacinda and Bill agreed to look again after the first of the year to see if we can put anything back.
      - v. Motion carried 5 to 0.**
12. Proposed Dress Code Policy

- a. Jen Damon and Jason presented a draft dress code policy that grew from concerns among staff and leadership that we need some boundaries on student dress to keep Fiddlehead focused on learning.
  - b. Extensive discussion, questions, and feedback from the Board ensued. In the end the following steps were set up:
    - i. Jen and Jason and the PBIS team will revise the draft based on the feedback.
    - ii. Jacinda will circulate the next draft to our lawyers.
    - iii. The draft policy will come back to the Board and go to the community at that point.
  - c. The Board thanked Jen, Jason, and Jacinda for their well done work on the policy and for responding to their colleagues' concerns.
13. Consider the Remote Voting Policy
- a. **Ben moved and Susan seconded approval of the Remote Voting Policy.**
    - i. **We clarified about a physical location for public attendance.**
    - ii. **Motion carried 5 to 0.**
14. **Kim moved and Susan seconded to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters.**
- a. **Motion carried 5 to 0.**
15. The Board came out of executive session at 8:15.
- a. **Motion by Ben, second by Susan to employ Kay Lewis as a special education TA to support grades 5 and 6. Motion passed 5 to 0.**
  - b. **Motion by Ben, second by Kim to contract with Michelle Schroud as part-time BC/BA for up to 8 hours a week. Motion passed 5 to 0.**
16. **Motion by Susan, second by Kim, to adjourn at 8:21 PM. Motion carried 5 to 0.**

Next meeting: December 14, 2023 at 6 PM at Fiddlehead School and via Zoom.