

Approved Aug. 22, 2024

Minutes BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 6, 2024, 6 PM

at Fiddlehead School and via Zoom

1. Call to order at 6:05 by the chair
2. Quorum of Roger, Jamie, Ben, and Bill
3. Mission was read by Ben Kramer . (Marie arrived at this time)
4. Public Comment: None was offered
5. Approval of minutes from May 6 and May 16, 2024
 - a. **Moved by Marie seconded by Roger**
 - b. **Approved by vote of 5 to 0**
6. Financial Update
 - a. Ben: In the absence of a Business Manager, we are attending to priorities like payroll and account payable.
 - b. Jacinda noted we could not make things work with our first business manager candidate. Continuing to look for someone great.
 - c. Plans are in place to cover the school functions while Jacinda travels.
7. Election of New Board member
 - a. New terms begin on Jul 1, 2024 .
 - b. Bylaws allow two parents and Ben is leaving
 - c. **Nomination by Ben and second by Roger to elect Becky Scott to the Board**
 - d. **We are fortunate to have such a good candidate**
 - e. **Motion to elect carried unanimously.**
8. Authorization to hire
 - a. This allows Jason or Jacinda or Dr. June Sellers (new special ed. director) to offer positions with Board approval at the next meeting.
 - b. **Motion by Jamie and second by Ben to approve authorization to offer positions with Board approval to follow in August**
 - c. **Motion carried 5 to 0.**
9. Principal's Report
 - a. Assessment update by Jenn Merrill
 - i. Jenn summarized the results from the NWEA spring assessment in both growth (expected learning in one school year) in both reading and math. She also answered questions from the Board
 - ii. Overall, 33% of the students met growth in reading and 40% in

math.

- iii. MCSC wants schools at 60% as the goal on the growth measure.
- iv. Proficiency scores show the comparison to Maine state expectations.
- v. Overall, 65% of our students met the proficiency goal in reading and 43% in math
- vi. Page 2 of the presentation shows the historic data of grades back to 2015. The Board asked questions and Jenn responded.
 1. It was noted that our student population varies from year to year.
 2. Bill pointed out that the NWEA assessment was normed **before** COVID and that likely makes comparisons to today's students invalid.
- vii. Jenn suggested improvements including Friday PD to dig into the data and reading and math instruction at least 4 days a week. Well-trained teacher assistants are also critical. She suggested that teachers document their observations of student learning.
- viii. There was discussion on the value of teaching the love of learning and balancing that with test scores and integrated curriculum.
- ix. The Board thanked Jenn for her continued excellent work with this data and the clarity of her presentation.
- b. Continued principal's report:
 - i. Graduation at 4 PM on Friday
 - ii. Field trips have been exceptionally successful. Trip to the Telling Room had a strong impact on the students.
 - iii. Capstone projects are being completed with presentations on June 12th.

10. Executive Director's Report

- a. Second grant for outdoor education has been received and will support climate studies with our staff. Well aligned with our school mission.
- b. "We Built This" is in the grant and adults construct an outdoor shelter.
- c. Hiring is proceeding with progress for middle school positions, success with special education TAs and no bus driver, the biggest worry right now.
- d. Upper grades enrollment will be about 45 students next year. Seeking to mix the groups a bit more.
- e. 190 students enrolled currently with 27% special education students.

11. Recognition of Leaving School Board Members

- a. The Board recognized and thanked Ben Kramer and Kim Allen for their service to the school.
- b. We noted nice things about Ben:
 - i. Voice of reason, humor greatly appreciated, an outstanding Board member, very committed, has the best haircut, considers decisions thoughtfully, stable, always stepped forward when needed most—both work and wisdom.
- c. Ben said it was an honor to do this good work with such good people.

12. Election of Officers for the 24-25 School Year

- a. Jamie was nominated for secretary and Bill for chair for the coming year.
 - b. Moved by Marie and seconded by Roger to approve the nominations.
Motion carried 5-0.
13. Consider the Safe Return to School Policy
- a. An updated policy is required of schools that received funding under COVID relief.
 - b. Jacinda reviewed the different sections of the policy
 - c. Jacinda asked for questions from the Board
 - i. Bill noted that Susan, our health expert, also reviewed the policy and sent notes to Jacinda.
 - d. **Marie moved and Jamie seconded to approve the policy as reviewed.
Motion carried 5 to 0.**
14. Draft policy on field trips
- a. Jacinda suggested that the school should identify the field trips it supports including a trip to Chewonki for grade 8 and camping in Maine for grade 6.
 - b. The 125 miles in the policy is meant to include Boston.
 - c. The policy should state how far in advance field trip requests must be submitted.
 - d. It was suggested that plans for any trip should be fully completed two months prior to the actual trip.
 - e. We should clarify if chaperones for day trips need background checks. In the past, day trip chaperones only needed background checks if they were to be alone with students.
 - f. Can we offer financial support for the background checks?
 - g. We will need the field trip form referred to in the draft policy.
 - h. We will need to include exceptions for our weekly trips to Norumbega, Thompson's Orchard, and Libby Hill.
 - i. Does our insurance policy cover the activities on field trips?
15. Board self-evaluation
- a. Board members were asked to list things that we did well and things that needed to be improved.
 - b. What went well:
 - i. Honest and thoughtful discussion
 - ii. Everyone gets a chance to comment and express their opinion.
 - iii. We used a deliberate process on the dress code policy.
 - iv. Discussions did not become contentious
 - v. Engagement in re-visioning was valuable; we listened to staff.
 - vi. Transparency of Board actions improved.
 - vii. Members attend, do the homework, and are respectful
 - viii. The Board showed the ability to make adjustments as needed.
 - ix. The Board was able to make difficult decisions when needed. It showed moral courage.
 - c. What we could do better:
 - i. Even more transparency
 - ii. We should do more goal setting and monitoring.
 - iii. Need a still better orientation for new board members.

- iv. We could spend more time on the bigger picture, long range items.
- v. The technology of recording and hybrid Zooming is much better.
(Thank you Jamie)
- vi. The process of considering the grade 8 trip could have been better
 - 1. Communication clarity could have been better both ways.
 - 2. Felt like we did not have the information needed to make a decision.
 - 3. We are still a young middle school without experience or policy for a big trip proposal.
 - 4. The Board's role in approval was not clear.
 - 5. The trip appeared to hinge on fundraising and the result of that was in doubt.
 - 6. There was confidential information that the Board had which could not be shared with others.
- vii. Re-visioning results were valuable yet did not provide ideas for the future.
 - 1. Next step will come in the fall of next school year.

16. Executive Session to discuss personnel

- a. **Jamie moved and Roger seconded to enter executive session.**

Motion passed 5-0

17. Actions following executive session

- a. Slate for nomination is:

- i. Karen Taylor, Instructional Support Person (formerly Teacher Assistant)
- ii. Rene Dumont, Instructional Support Person
- iii. Chris Hazelton, middle school math teacher.

- b. **Ben moved to hire the slate of candidates. Roger seconded.**

- i. **Motion carried 5-0**

18. Ben moved and Jamie seconded to adjourn. Motion carried by acclaim.