

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2015 – 6:00 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Melissa Santrach, Kristen Campbell, Liz Coenen, Andrea Galdames, Eve Lo, Juliann McDermott, Marjorie Nitz, Jane Reilly, Julie Richards (arrived-6:30), and Liesl Taylor (left-6:25)

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Other Attendees:** None

**AGENDA**

**Meeting called to order by Board Chair, Melissa Santrach, at 6:06 pm**

**Public Comment Period:** No public comments were offered.

**Approval of Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

Melissa asked if there were any changes to the agenda. None were suggested.

**MARJE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE EVENING’S AGENDA; JULIANN SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Based on the approved agenda, Melissa asked if anyone had any conflicts of interest with the evening’s agenda. None were disclosed.

**Acceptance of Minutes**

- Melissa asked if anyone had changes to the January minutes. None were suggested.

**LIZ MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 20, 2015, MEETING; MARJE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Head of School Report – Liesl Taylor**

*See report from Head of School. Additional comments follow:*

Liesl presented her Vital Signs report as a PowerPoint and highlighted the following areas:

- The students from Garden and Marsh held their project fair so were engaged in big work for the past several weeks!
  - The Fair was well attended both by members of the CMES community and by students of Oak Hill Montessori, which is in Shoreview.
    - The students from Oak Hill then invited CMES students to an upcoming play at Oak Hill.
- Forest and Pond will have their project fair in the coming months.
- Liesl noted that a study on learning to read suggested that a child should have 5000 books read to them before learning to read. To support this, the Upper Elementary students have become reading buddies to the younger children.
- Liesl shared a poem from a student that well-illustrated the deep desire of CMES students to grow personally and academically.

Liesl made the following comments regarding her HOS report:

- Liesl and Chris have been working on the budget for the next year and it has given Liesl a very clear sense of where “every penny” is. The gaps in funding have also become very clear.
- CMES is in a great place and moving forward but will need additional dollars beyond what the state per pupil unit formula provides. Liesl requested that the Board support the mission of the school by providing funding for the following:
  - Additional staff – Licensed person to serve as a float (fulltime); Literacy Specialist; Non-special education paraprofessional
    - Currently there are often days when there is no one to give breaks to staff so Liesl is doing this. If she isn’t able to do it, staff don’t get breaks during the day.

- HOS and administrative staff are still very involved in supporting students who need to come out of the classroom due to disruptive behaviors, which takes staff away from their own job duties. Liesl commented that not all students who need additional support receive special education services.
- The current literacy specialist is receiving a modest stipend but she will be leaving at the end of the year. Securing a literacy specialist will likely require more funding beyond the current stipend amount.
- Liesl also asked if the Board could help with material purchases and space organization.
  - The multipurpose room needs to serve several functions and the students need a place/way to organize all their outer wear. Money is available and a parent is willing to help. Liesl knows what is needed but needs someone to purchase the materials and organize the space.
- Liesl asked that the Board continue supporting sponsorships.

**Director of Business Operations – Chris Bewell**

*See report from Director of Business Operations; Chris was not in attendance.*

Melissa asked if anyone had questions about Chris’s report; none were asked.

- Melissa noted that enrollment is steady.

**Board Chair Report – Presented by Melissa**

*See Board Chair Report; additional comments follow:*

- Melissa noted that the Board retreat is tentatively scheduled for the morning of April 11 (8 am – noon), pending confirmation of the speaker.
- Melissa asked all Board members to contact her to set up a time to do an annual evaluation. In advance of the meeting, each Board member should complete the self-evaluation form, which will guide the discussion.
- Melissa invited Board members to discuss the requests presented by Liesl and noted that ensuring the financial stability of the school is a fundamental responsibility of the Board.
  - Juliann and Andrea agreed to work on the request to address the multipurpose room “makeover”; they will meet with Liesl to receive direction.
  - Melissa noted that the staffing positions would require ~\$100,000 - \$150,000/year and suggested that the Board retreat focus on how to accomplish this with fundraising efforts.
    - Board members discussed several fundraising models including community dinners, galas, major gifts, foundation grants, sales of goods.
    - Melissa clarified the relationship between MCM and CMES with regard to fundraising activities and noted that our efforts must be executed separately but should be coordinated so that we know who the other is approaching and we don’t work against each other.
    - Board members agreed that to move forward, the Development Committee should start meeting regularly to explore the ideas raised and develop a strategy to accomplish the fundraising goals.
      - Julie, Jane, and Marje volunteered to join Melissa and Liz on the Development Committee; Julie agreed to chair the committee and take minutes.
      - The Development Committee will begin meeting at 7 am on the Wednesday following the Board meeting; the February meeting will be Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> at the Dancing Goat on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul.
  - Melissa introduced the idea of establishing an advisory board, which would allow us to connect with people who we may want to consult with or who have connections to different resources.

- An advisory board would not be a formal committee and would not make any decisions; instead they would offer recommendations.
- Melissa asked everyone to think of people who could serve on an advisory board.

**Governance Committee Report – Presented by Melissa**

*See Governance Committee meeting minutes; additional comments follow:*

- Melissa reported that the group working on the brochure hopes to have something soon.
- Melissa noted that our annual board election will be held at the Annual Meeting May 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - There are 3 open seats: 2 Community members (both 3-year terms); 1 Parent (3-year term)
  - Nomination forms will be mailed to all families the last week of February and will be due March 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - Upon receipt of the nomination form, Melissa will meet with each person to answer any questions they have about Board service or the election process then invite them to complete a candidate profile, which will be shared with CMES community.
  - The slate of candidates will be presented to the Board for approval in April and election information will be mailed to all families immediately after the April meeting.

**Treasurer’s Report – Liz Coenen**

*See minutes from Finance Committee meeting; additional comments/actions follow:*

- Our cash flow continues to be healthy. Liz commented that Chris’s stewardship of expenditures keeps us steady even with enrollment fluctuations.
- Liz asked if anyone had questions about the January financial statements or the Finance Committee minutes. None were asked.

**LIZ MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 2015 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS; MARJE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**HOS Evaluation Committee – Jane**

*See minutes from HOS Eval Committee; additional comments follow:*

- Jane asked if anyone had questions or comments about the minutes. None were asked.

**Other Business**

- None

**Suggested Agenda Items for Next Month**

- Juliann will present a 10 minute primer on AMI and how it differs from AMS as part of our embedded board training

**Adjourn**

**KRISTEN MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:33 PM; JULIE SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.**

***Respectfully Submitted by Jane Reilly, CMES Board Secretary***