

Mountain Sage Community School - Board Agenda, 4-8-2015
Location - MSCS, 6:30-9:30PM

Intro Session

A1. Call to Order: 6:34pm, Attendance: Jon Pointer, Hillary Mizia, Amy DeVries, Tim Weinmann, Ariel Witt, Liv Helmericks, Sarah Braun, Consultant: Nancy Sexton, Guests: Bevin Campbell

A2. Approve Minutes: Approved

A3. New Business

A4. Approve Agenda: Approved with additional CSSI Visit and AWSNA & Alliance Letters under Director Update and the Town Hall Agenda under the Governance Section.

A5. Reading Our Mission: Cultivating the Creative Mind

Mountain Sage Community School offers Waldorf-inspired, arts-integrated education, fully incorporating sustainable living practices into student learning. Each child will be empowered to cultivate meaningful connections to their intellectual, physical, emotional, social and creative capacities in healthy, safe and beautiful learning environments. Through a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers, each child will become a confident, self-directed and engaged learner, invested in their own education.

A6. Public Comment - 3 minutes per person - limit 20 minutes total

1. Bevin - Sustainable Transportation Planning - 15 minutes: Bevin Campbell currently holds the Parent Champion role for the Bike/Walk to School Program at MSCS. She discussed a bit about the National and International Safe Routes to School programs, as well as how the MSCS program is working within our community. She asked the Board to put some thought and energy into making this program a key part of our school. The Board does support the program and several ideas were: to have Bevin contact individual teachers and set up a time for her to do some in class promotion, to add the National and International Walk and Bike to School days to the school calendar, to have a broader transportation discussion/survey asking parents where they park and why, if they are using the remote parking lots and walking school bus or not and why, and also to incorporate the Bike/Walk to School Program into the Sustainability portion of the Strategic Plan for the school, making it a part of our school culture which is introduced at school tours and in the parent handbook. Bevin should also approach the Parent Council for a more volunteers and a new Parent Champion.

Business Session

B1. Financial Updates

1. Review and approve 2015-2016 budget - Sarah-Gennie.
Jon and Liv shared some information from Sarah-Gennie on possible Legislative and Capital Construction increases. Liv discussed some of the changes she and Sarah-Gennie made to the 2015/16 budget proposal such as additional monies for salaries and hiring more support staff, Special Education training and the facilities remodel which may go down once more information is obtained. The per child consumables fee will go up a bit for all students and there was a discussion

about additional fees needed for specific classes for field trips and programs. It was decided to leave the base school fee the same for all students and have a later discussion about the best way to ask for or raise the additional fees. There were some concerns about needing additional administration support for the School website. A complete website redesign and a limited website maintenance position is included in the budget proposal. The school is still projecting a surplus for the 2015/16 year.

Jon Pointer moved to approve the 2015/16 Budget with the clarity of the land lease question.

Tim Weinmann seconded the motion

The motion was unanimously approved.

B2. Director Update - Liv

1. Review written admin report - questions and/or important points:

CSSI visit: The Charter School Support Initiative Team will visit the School in early May. MSCS will need to get a proposed schedule together for the CSSI Coordinator which will include time for the Team to meet with the Board. The Board gave Liv some available dates to meet.

Successful fundraising is needed to fund the non-essentials of our school and will become increasingly necessary for the coming years. Tim will be starting a Fundraising Committee. This will be an official subcommittee of the Board. Tim will be asking a few parents to join him and the main focus of the Committee will be to identify people for targeted asks. The Committee will also serve as a touchpoint for all fundraising ideas. The Board will approve specific School Fundraising Guidelines and then the Fundraising Committee could approve or not approve any ideas brought and be a liaison to the Board. The Committee will need to be sure fundraising is minimal and well coordinated.

Fill in the Gap is another way to raise money that was discussed. This idea is similar to the annual ask letter that we sent out. We could change the tone of the letter to include the Fill in the Gap language and could include the dollar amount needed per student that is not covered by the State funding. The Annual Letter will go out in October next year after the budget is finalized.

Parent Council is becoming more active and coalescing well.

Tests are going well and kids are working hard and really thoughtful. Everyone loved the snacks.

Staff transitions are coming up before the end of the year and a long term substitute will be needed. Several positions have been hired for 2015/16, but several more are still needed. The Board asked how to best support the need for more/better applicants?

The Board supports the after school care program. Anna Harris would be an employee of the school and the program would be Environmental Education based.

The SAC will convene in late May to analyze results and prepare a report for the Board.

The letter from Warren about the parking situation will be handed to parents at the parent/teacher conference.

The school Asbestos Management Plan is complete and accepted for the main floor and tests confirm we are free to proceed with construction on the upper floor without further mitigation.

B3. Misc

1. Utilizing the Parent Council - Ariel : The role and availability of the Parent Council was unclear and the Board was hoping to find help in spreading out the school administrative duties. But it was discussed that Parent Council should support classrooms and build the parent community and connections as well as support festivals. It was suggested that we might use the class parents to reach out to the parent body for more volunteers and also the Volunteer Coordinator may be able to become a paid position which would hold the threads to volunteering and be a parent liaison. It was suggested that volunteer opportunities be outlined and described on the website so as to be less intimidating. It was also suggested that there should be more of a connection between Parent Council and the Board.
2. Roles discussion - All: Moved to May meeting

Bevin leaves 8:56pm

B4. Governance

1. Review Board Calendar items for April - Jon
 - a. Director review process: Jon has received the feedback from the Director Evaluation Survey and Liv's Self Evaluation. The voting Board members will meet to discuss the feedback. The Board will resolve into the Executive Session for the discussion which will be recorded and Liv is invited to attend if she would like. Jon and Hillary will then have a one-on-one meeting with Liv to give her the Board's feedback. There was a suggestion to send out a Survey reminder next year.
 - b. Set June retreat date: Wednesday June 10th, 3pm to 8pm Details in May
2. Strategic Plan review and work session - All: Moved to May meeting.
Also discuss sharing with faculty and our sustainable living goal
3. Parent Feedback - Jon: Two parents contacted Jon about some concerns with the process they went thru with their children. Jon sat down with Liv and with the teacher in each case and discussed what went right, what could have gone better and what to change for future interactions. The school now has a better Student Success Team process and plan on how to bring in the parent. The Teacher in each case is getting direct training for improvement. Jon shared this summary with the two parents involved and the situations are closed.
4. Town Hall Agenda - Jon: Nancy has people who are coming to take care of the childcare for the Town Hall. Jon reminded the Board what we did at the first town hall meeting. It was decided that we will begin with the basic structure, state of the school, and reading of the school and sustainability mission statements like we did at the first Town Hall.

Jon will begin the meeting with the basic structure and state of the school

Ariel will read the school mission statement

Amy will read the sustainability mission statement

There will be a few topic statements about Testing, Fundraising Committee, Middle School parent evening and Scrip. Questions can be asked at anytime and hopefully the topic statements will spark some discussions.

Hillary will hold the Testing statement- We are proud of how testing has been handled by faculty and kids. Just a short statement acknowledging the disparity of testing and Waldorf.

Tim will hold the new Fundraising Committee statement- We've started this committee and here is my contact info if you would like to help out.

Liv will hold the Middle school parent evening statement - We had a meeting and this is what was discussed and how it went.

Nancy will hold the Scrip statement - Lets all remember scrip, this is what has been happening with it and we have the cards for sale tonight.

The Parent Council will have about 5 minutes for a presentation about what they have going on and then direct parents to a table for more information.

B5. Time Permitting

1. Testing discussion - All: Moved to May meeting

Closing Session

C1. Review New Action Items - Also review of old action items and action item registry

C2. Move to Adjourn 9:37pm

C3. Closing Verse:

Steadfast I'll stand in existence. With certainty I tread life's path.

Love I cherish in the depths of my being. Hope I place in every deed.

Confidence I place in every thought. These five guide me through existence,

These five guide me to the goal.