

MSCS Town Hall December 2014

Mountain Sage Community School – Town Hall Agenda, 12-16-2014

Location - MSCS, 6:30-8:00PM

Call to Order, 6:35pm. Attendance: Jon Pointer, Hillary Mizia, Amy DeVries, Liv Helmericks, Nancy Sexton -Instructional Mentor, and Sarah Braun- Faculty Rep + around 30 parents and faculty.

- Welcome and introductions – Liv
- Read Mission and Sustainability Definition - Hillary and Amy
- Plan for the Evening – Jon

- State of the School – Jon gave a brief overview of how he would discuss the State of the School. The primary intent is to open up for discussion. We will discuss the basic status, as far as numbers, the evolution up to this point, and the results.
 - *Basic structure* - last year, this year, long term - K-5, K-6, K-8
 - ❖ Simple intro details - Financial performance and enrollmentHow did we get here: often year 2 is difficult in the Charter School world. We have strong enrollment and interest in our school tours is continually growing.
 - ❖ Include last year with grant and fundraising approach*The School is financially sound, although we can always use more funds. Festivals are a time for community and are not the primary fundraiser. The school also does not plan on doing any of the other standard school fundraisers. We will do the annual ask instead with a letter in the spring. The school is doing very well for year 2 and is being recognized by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education as an Initiative School.
 - *Evolution*
 - ❖ Transformation of our building - Initial, Kindergarten, UpstairsThe space was originally an office building, which was transformed into the beautiful school space prior to opening year 1. The Kindergarten was remodeled over the summer for a new space in year 2. Plans are in place for the remodeling of the upstairs to create space for the growing school.
 - ❖ Playground and gardenThe playground and amazing garden space have evolved pretty significantly since the muddy lot the space began as.
 - ❖ FestivalsFestival life is huge part of Waldorf inspired school and is very rich.
 - ❖ Public charter implementation of Waldorf methods*Waldorf norms vs the Poudre School District testing environment and State requirements have been a challenge. The Faculty has made great progress with more to come. Community is growing by the day and is so powerful. Rewarding work!
 - ❖ SustainabilityIn the first year the goal was to get the doors open and the school was lucky to keep up with recycling. However, sustainability is a part of our School and has come a long way from the first days already with more to come.

❖ Our community - Administration, Faculty and the Parents

Our community is growing by the day and is so powerful. Rewarding work!

○ *Results*

❖ Strong board/admin/faculty/parents/community

We have a strong community with an evolving and efficient group of faculty that is working well and hard.

❖ Financially sound

We are financially sound although we will still need to raise additional funds in order to offer more for our faculty and children.

❖ Strong enrollment

As far as meeting requirements for PSD, we have good enrollment and a balanced budget with a specific amount of surplus.

❖ Alliance for Public Waldorf Education has asked us to be the single Alliance Initiative School for their membership pilot program

This is such an amazing opportunity for our School to learn from

❖ Great support from community, teachers, parents and facilities to continue into our K-8 model

We have made amazing progress in our first year and half way through our second. We will continue deepening the community and growing our school.

*Items we may want to discuss

- Parent Council Update – Reneca: The Parent Council meets once a month and reps from each class get information to give updates. The meetings are mini-town halls for parents to ask questions and find out what is going on. Meetings are open to all. The focus is often on communication – Please open teacher and parent rep emails. A faculty rep and Liv attend the meetings to create a bit of overlap between all the factions. Meetings are a good place to meet new friends also. ***The Parent Council is looking for a secretary to take minutes. Meetings are always the first Tuesday of the month.
- Bike to School Program Update – Bevin: Bevin is a parent of two 4th graders. We have a remote park and walk site at Edora Park near EPIC. It takes 15-25 minutes to walk to school. Some kids walk or ride on their own. ***The walking school bus leaves from EPIC every Wednesday. Parents can drop off as early as 7:45am and the bus tries to leave by 8am. There is an International, National, and Winter Bike/Walk to school day, and we try to observe them all. Only 5% of kids walk to school. There was a discussion about the “Sidewalk issue”. Parents need to be sure they are leaving room for walking on the sidewalk instead of pulling cars too close to the curb and having bumpers hang over the walkway. A physical barrier, like the concrete blocks were mentioned as well as a possible trimming of the bushes. *Kids love the walk.
- SCRIP Promotion – Kristin: Kristin is a parent of a 1st grader and the lead for the SCRIP program. SCRIP has over 400 stores in the program. MSCS gets profits from the purchase card. King Soopers cards are reloadable forever and 5% goes to MSCS. Parents will not be spending anymore than they would already. Kristin usually places an order at the beginning of month... She is open to feedback about when to order and how often. Shop with scrip

is online, and parents can sign up with Presto Pay for a direct debit from a checking account. Parents can reload online for this. Currently, not very many families are participating and we have already made some money. Kristin is happy to help with getting people thru the process. Mighty nest is another shop that benefits MSCS. They carry lunch boxes, supplies, kitchen, etc. MSCS gets 15% from all purchases. ***Kristin would like some help if anyone is looking for a way to do something for the school. She could also use some input on how to make more user friendly. Some questions were:

- Can we bring cards with a minimum amount to events: YES
- Can we see how much we have raised (Looking for verification of this happening): UNKNOWN

Please contact Kristin with any questions or comments. She will be glad to help anyone get set up. A comment was that MSCS should send out info to buy SCRIP cards as Christmas gifts in November.

***The Board mentioned an annual capital campaign and SCRIP is a great way for parents to raise funds. A letter will be coming out in the spring, since we missed our window before the holidays and don't want to overly burden our families at this time. We don't want to fundraise all the time and we want our festivals to be community building. Therefore, we will be asking families to fundraise a certain amount each year.

- Faculty Update? - Teacher introductions
- Open Forum – All – The floor was opened for questions:
 - There was a question about holding Silent Auctions: Could happen, but not in the plans this year. Maybe parent council could take up?
 - There was a question about year 3 and not having the Grant money anymore: We still have a long-term model and we are still financially sound. The decision to have only 1 kindergarten was made at the end of the 1st year to be sure we were not outgrowing our space and had a sustainable model. The challenge for Charter Schools and the reason for fundraising is Charter Schools only get 80% of the funds regular schools in the District receive. To be financially sound with extra burdens we carry is pretty amazing. But we would really like to pay our teachers more.
 - There was a question about earmarked/sponsor/adopt a teacher type of fundraising: There will eventually be a foundation created to raise money for this organization (MSCS). The foundation would maybe use targeted fundraising. Interesting idea.
 - There was a question about the physical locations of the 7 & 8 grades and what is the model: The Faculty is in the midst of this discussion and exploring our resources. Our school uses a collaborative leadership model. Nancy will be attending the Waldorf Alliance Conference with Liv and will focus on learning some best practices for growing our middle school.
 - There was a question about what the foundation needs to get rolling: It needs the people who want to own it. The Board's plan is to make

the school healthy and let the foundation come. But certainly send people our way if there is anyone you know of.

- There was a question about offering Eurhythmy: The Board wants to enable the richest program we can. Liv would come to the Board with any asks for new programs. Liv would like to offer in Blocks, hopefully in January. But the School has a lot of special subjects and we need to carefully talk about the timing and person.
- There was a question about what Eurhythmy is: Eurhythmy is movement set to speech and music. Each sound and tone has a specific movement. The children do the movement to a song, or fairytale. Eurhythmy is the language of movement. It can be therapeutic and powerful and it can also be performance art.
- There was a comment about offering a vision of programs like Eurhythmy as a reason for the fundraising to promote excitement: It would be nice to have some outlines for what the school wants to offer and what would be needed to get the higher image into the school.
- There was a question about Technology, what grade level and avenue: MSCS will likely have a keyboarding class in 3rd grade. The plan was going to begin in 6th with the transition to middle school. But it has been moved up just a bit and will allow for a gradual change.
- There was some discussion on using computers and technology as a tool to learn from. Children could learn programing and not how to use or play games. They would also learn how computers came about, how to build a computer and then begin using it themselves.
- There was a question about how the school is doing Academically: The current rank is pretty low, but Liv and the Faculty have been working on a strategic plan for the Unified Improvement Plan. They looked for areas of growth and the faculty came up with the UIP. The assessments from 2013/14 created a baseline for the school and now we are moving forward from there. The school is setting a culture that assessments are needed and we will find a positive outcome.

End: 8:09pm