

Coulee Montessori SET Minutes

November 28, 2023 5:30pm @ Coulee Montessori/Northside Library

IN ATTENDANCE (Board Roster):

Kim Shively	Katie/Willie Bittner	Alexis Brandow	Cami Fuller
Alex Hiller	Deanna Maynard	Amy Merkey	Kathryn Wiegrefe
Mariah Bigelow	Sarah Bradle		

All present at meeting except: Sara Horstman

Other attendees: Jenna Anfang (community coordinator) Genevieve (student teacher)
McKenna (field student) Ms Alison (Children's House teacher)

CALL TO ORDER

Public Comment - None scheduled

GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Vote for additional board member

-Willie and Katie Bittner would like to share a spot on the board. We will amend bylaws to make this acceptable. Kim made a motion to allow them to share a spot, Mariah seconded and the motion carried.

School performance/sharing student work -- Staff

-Things are going well with Children's House. They are able to have 2 adults in each classroom since there are students, which is very helpful. After the students leave, the two classes will share Mr Brady, which makes things trickier.
-Pre-K students are showing more interest in academic activities than past years, as opposed to just practical life. Teachers are able to focus more on teaching.
-Greenhouse is being dug, rectangle for the footings is in place. The kids enjoying watching. Hoping to get heaters donated – otherwise pay \$6K for two of them.

Principal report – Sarah Bradle

-Enrollment adds/drops so far this year – so far +3 for the year, with some additions and one loss.
-School report card interpretation: The report card compared CM to PK-8th grade schools in order to include CMAP, and many of these comparison schools are are small, rural schools.

Future comparisons will be different since CMAP was dropped. Overall a relatively positive report.

District Wide Parents update – Amy

-There was discussion about the facility advisory board and its authority to make decisions. Dr Engle stressed that no decision has been made and it will come down to the school board's vote, as they are the actual decision makers. It will affect everyone whether or not their building is closed.

O-G curriculum – Ms Alison

-The O-G curriculum is government mandated and is a multi-sensory language curriculum that works on language, spelling, etc for K-3 students.

-Each grade level is a different structure and it becomes more writing intensive with age. It is somewhat of a struggle for where some of the 3rd graders are academically due to Covid lags.

-Lessons are with all students from one grade, so 20 kids per lesson rather than 6 like they're used to. Writing posture is difficult on the floor since there's not a desk per child. Students aren't used to sitting for a 45 minute lesson, so this has been somewhat challenging.

-This curriculum requires a significant time commitment and is cutting into afternoon work time. Many students are bored with it because they are stronger academically than what is being taught. However, it has been shown to be effective and it did improve test scores. Review and drill is actually very beneficial. Aspects of it could be kept and still get similar results without implementing it fully. Ms. Bradle said that they can work toward doing mini 15-min lessons so it doesn't take up so much of the afternoon.

Grants for TA's – Mariah and Alison

-Could we write a grant to get two full time TA's? May need to fund them with grants until we can prove the effectiveness. CM is the only Montessori school in the area that does not have TAs in every classroom. Would we be able to hire a grant writer to help facilitate this?

-Alex's father does grant writing and he could ask him if he'd like to take on the project to help out his grandkids.

-For the district to pay for TA's, CM would have to give up Specials teachers. Montessori teachers are trained in art, music and PE, but prefer to use the dedicated teachers that are available. The agreement with the district has been that these Specials teachers are provided instead of TA's in the classroom, and TA's in the classroom won't be paid for by the district at this time.

-Ms. Bradle also has experience in grant writing but said it is very difficult to find grants for person-power. Grants are usually for 3-5 years and they want to know how you will fund it after that. But worth a try!

School consolidations – Kim

-We could begin to formulate questions about transportation and interest in continuing with CM for a survey. It might be worth asking if there's another location the community knows of. The district doesn't want to purchase a building. Do we have a list of all of the available buildings that the district owns?

-Data is available online for what capacity is at each school and how full they are. Kim will send it out.

Directory update

-Deanna and Sara will get back on this.

Secretary's report-- Kathryn

Wait to send the minutes to Krista until approved--so they will be a month behind. This will avoid the need to re-post online if there are changes or corrections.

-Amy motions to approve the October minutes, Kim seconds, motion carries.

Treasurer's report – Alex

-Funding requests: -UWL conference fees for Josh, Madeline, Mariah(if needed), Nikki, Jenny, maybe Maddie, approve up to \$510. Genevieve could go to conference on a scholarship--cost is \$60, she would get reimbursed \$50.

-Alex makes motion to approve \$510 to go to conference, Kim seconds, motion carries.

-Haven't spent money for field trips, still need to figure out how to do outdoor options. Deep Roots can't accommodate the whole group so it would need to be a morning group and an afternoon group.

-Looking for ideas for local places to walk to, such as The Neighborhood Family Clinic, Coulee Auto, etc.

-Amy makes a motion to approve the budget, Mariah seconds, motion carries

All-School Fundraiser – Amy

-Amy consolidated notes on a document for members to read. There was no discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15

