

## Coulee Montessori SET Minutes

March 19, 2024 5:30pm @ Coulee Montessori/Northside Library

### IN ATTENDANCE (Board Roster):

Kim Shively	Alex Hiller	Sara Horstman	Katie Bittner
Amy Merkey	Kathryn Wiegrefe	Cami Fuller	Mariah Bigelow

All present at meeting except: Sarah Bradle, Alexis Brandow, Deanna Maynard

Other attendees: Maddie Cakir, Trina

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Public Comment - None scheduled

### **GOVERNANCE TOPICS**

School performance/sharing student work – Staff

-Community group students painted rocks. 5th grade is doing big botany unit. Students are making plant portraits and care tags for plant sale.

-Greenhouse build day is on Saturday, all volunteers are welcome.

-Discussion of technology usage. The district pushes for a lot of use since they purchased iPads for each student.

-Kids eventually have to learn to use technology, and it is used more as they progress through the grades. Children's House almost never uses iPads. E1 uses iPads for typing in some classes. Ms Maddie only uses them for research or photos of works. iPads can be used audiobooks with the app Epic They are also used for testing. E2 increases the level of use. The older students received a digital footprint lesson to explain how things on the internet never go away. Assignments for E2 are on Google Classroom, shows to-do list, resources, etc. Necessary for research.

-Maybe half of E2 students have cell phones. They have a strict rule about keeping them in lockers. Most of Ms Maddie's 3rd graders have cell phones.

-Rochester Sisters made a \$350 donation for the greenhouse. Some came to see what was going on and were so impressed that they wrote a check to contribute.

District Wide Parents update – Amy

-Focus on absenteeism. La Crosse is higher than national average. There is less parental encouragement/enforcement of attendance since the pandemic. Early start times are hard for middle and high schoolers.

-School district budget deficit has not been dealt with, only pushed off for a year with the school board's decision to go to referendum for a new building. They have hired a re-branding marketing consultant to try to encourage enrollments. There is funding to get through next year, but layoffs are likely to come in two years if nothing else is done.

#### Field Trips – Kim, Mariah, Amy

-Teachers are short on planning time, which makes it difficult to make field trips happen.

-It is hard to have students pulled out, specials and title attendance is mandatory to a certain degree. Teachers should have a conversation with Title to see if there's a way to still meet requirements and get kids the services they need without the whole class staying at the school rather than going on a field trip.

-Meeting with Beth of Franciscan Sisters to create a memorandum of understanding so that they can be a home base and allow the outdoor school. Sisters have a mission to connect to the community and connect kids with nature and are happy to help facilitate. They have some programming and adults ready to help and will pay for students to ride busses up to the Villa and hiking trails. E2 summer school could be up there 3 days per week. Could have Hike-a-thon up there next year. They would permit bonfires, which couldn't be done at Granddad. Could potentially do stargazing with Chad, who runs the planetarium at Central.

#### School Board Candidates – Kim

-Kim provided a list of each candidate and a link to their profile.

-We could introduce ourselves to the school board when new members join. Make sure we are visible and they know we are here!

#### Old business

Plant sale – Put the word out that more plants are needed for the plant sale! Donations are welcome. There will mostly be houseplants, since vegetables are more labor-intensive to get started.

Directory – There did not turn out to be good representation for the directory, since many of the entries were from the same families and turned out to be duplicates. It now sounds possible to get a complete list from the office for next year, so a Google form may not be necessary.

OG -- It is effective in helping the students improve reading and spelling. Teachers initially wanted to lay it out based on need in the beginning, but all students were required to learn at

the pace of their grade and now it's hard to backtrack on that. They might be able to make some changes after spring break, though.

## **PTO TOPICS**

Secretary's report – Kathryn

-Kim makes motion to approve, Amy seconds it, motion carries

Treasurer's report – Alex

-\$9909.09 ending balance

-Soup supper, conferences, checks to teachers and one field trip were the major expenses the past month.

-Kim makes motion to approve up to \$260 for Cami to take online Montessori TA training. Amy seconds, motion carries.

-Mariah recommends SET pay for albums, sheet protectors and binders. \$500-\$1,000 Kim makes motion to approve up to \$1,000 per new teacher for Montessori training materials for Montessori certification for up to two teachers. Amy seconds it. Motion carries.

-Discussion regarding whether Coulee Montessori is or should be an official Montessori Certified school! The cost of accreditation likely outweighs the benefits, though could open up some grant possibilities. It could force us to be held to two standards – Montessori and the district. Not likely something we need to pursue at this time.

-Kim makes motion to approve Treasurer's report, Amy seconds, motion carries

Soup Supper Recap – Amy

-Ran out of food at the end—there was enough soup, but not enough cookies and bread.

-Not everyone came in time for food. Need to make it extremely clear next year that supper will end at 5:45pm.

-Idea to have people bring their own bowls and spoons. Or maybe muffin tins to try multiple soups!

-Sessions afterward were fun. Mariah loved it and was very proud of her students! Maybe do two sessions next time, so people can go to more than one.

-Childcare classroom was well attended and helpful to parents so they could better focus.

Read-a-thon

-Starts Monday and goes until Monday after Spring Break. Theme is "Branching out with reading".

Merchandise Order – Amy

-Amy is organizing this and waiting for orders to come in. She could use help with sorting and getting orders to families at the end. Sara Horstman volunteered to help with that.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32pm