

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 287
October 19, 2021 7:00 pm**

In accordance with the Executive Order applying to MA Open Meeting Law, this meeting will be held virtually on Zoom ID: 87637530183 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Erin Bradley-Irose
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Amber Hewitt
Karen Popkin
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore
Catherine Martin
Nancy Durkee
Nina Keery
Erin Seaton

Absent:

Alfred Link

Also present:

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director
Dan Bouchard, Assistant Director
Deb McCrevan
Brooke Guilbault, Teacher
Tanya Murdy
Karina Moltz

Public Comment: None

RVCS Revelation:

Brooke Guilbault, Kinderhaus teacher, presented about the Montessori prepared environment. Maria Montessori found that all children meet the same development milestones at relatively the same time. Teachers serve to support the child. Teachers design a space and environment to entice the children to the work and to allow movement throughout the room. The prepared environment is the foundation of learning developmentally appropriate social and academic skills. Teachers constantly observe the children and collect data. Montessori believed that the prepared environment was the child's first teacher. Brooke shared a video and photographs of her Kinderhaus classroom and described each work area, practical life, art, etc.

Vote: To approve minutes from the September meeting.

Edits: None

Motion: Erin Bradley-Irose

2nd: Matt Renninger

Yes: Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Amber Hewitt
Erin Bradley-Irose
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No: None

Abstain:

Nancy Durkee
Nina Keery

Discussion:

1. Director's Report

The specials schedule is likely to be shuffled around. With so many offerings, teachers are being squeezed and there may be some tweaks to allow for balance. Three enrollment changes, all spaces have been filled by student siblings.

The calendar has been updated to show Juneteenth.

RVCS is launching a new program called Pick-up Patrol. Parents will receive information later

this week.

Gratitude goes to Rebecca Hamel and Lynne Taylor and students for their involvement in Indigenous People's Day. Mayor Holladay mentioned that RVCS was the real impetus for this change.

We have had 14 Covid cases. Last week, pooled testing caught 3 cases.

EBI asks how many teachers are Montessori trained. JLE - The third adult position is not. The assistant is not necessarily a Montessorian. K-E2 all lead teachers are Montessori trained. Middle school is a little different.

EBI - Have we considered mandating the vaccines for adults? JLE - Thought about it, yes. Not inclined to have a mandate. Would rather use education to encourage vaccination.

Nina - Has the Mass Charter School Association issued a statement on mandates? JLE - No.

Mark - What is the reasoning behind the sending district schools not participating in pooled testing? JLE - At the Covid forum last Monday, their response to that question is that they did not have enough participation to make it worthwhile.

There will be hired help to relieve some of the pressure on pooled testing days and perhaps other days as needed.

Vote: To approve the amended 2021-2022 school calendar as presented.

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Erin Bradley-Irose

Yes: Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Erin Bradley-Irose
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No: None

Committee Reports:

1. Finance

There was great turnout to the review of the Financial Audit last week. AAF CPAs have been auditing us for 7-8 years and the Business Office spends months of detailed work preparing for this.

Highlights of the audit -

The school continues to maintain a sound fiscal position with great management of resources.

There was a slight increase in assets over last year, which speaks to how well the school weathered a very difficult time.

We have completed recommended cybersecurity training.

When compared to other schools, we are where we should be in terms of our allowable carryover surplus funds.

All ratios are in the “green,” indicating positive position.

No adjustments or issues were found in the audit.

Vote: To Accept Audited Financial Report for Year ending June 30, 2021: We the Board of Trustees of River Valley Charter School vote to accept the representations of management and the expression of the opinions by Alexander, Aronson, Finning & Co., P.C. as embodied in the combined general purpose financial statements, supplementary schedules, and independent auditor’s reports for the year ended June 30, 2021. We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the combined general purpose financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Charter School Audit Guide for the year ending June 30, 2021.

Motion: Mark Bishop

2nd: Matt Renninger

Yes: Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Erin Bradley-Irose
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No: None

After the audit, the committee discussed the retaining wall repairs.

Deb - The retaining wall is caving in near the shed and the carpool lane and needs to be addressed before winter. There are three different repair scenarios with ranging costs. They will be discussed in the next Finance Committee meeting.

2. Accountability Committee

The main topic was the MCAS. RVCS performed above the state average in both Math and ELA. For a long time, there have been discussions about the “hockey stick” where the students perform better as they progress through the grades. There has been speculation that students leaving or coming into the school account for that phenomenon. Graphs were provided that showed the performance of cohorts over time. The graphs do not support the above hypothesis. According to a graph that shows performance by question, RVCS follows right along with the state.

E1 met to examine these results and found materials to support the teaching of the lower performance on specific subjects.

3. Committee on Trustees

Will be meeting on the 21st and will report out at the next meeting.

4. Development Committee

In lieu of the meeting, there was a well-attended parent mixer. Families of younger students were particularly well-represented. Tanya Murdy reports that there were about 40 parents. Parents were excited to connect with Jonnie Lyn, Dan and Pam. Gratitude goes to Tanya and Lydia Pollard of the PA for organizing an event that helped the community of the school.

Public Comment: None

Vote: To enter Executive Session under the MA Open Meeting Law Purpose for Executive Session #2: To conduct strategy sessions with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.” The purpose of this session is to discuss Director contract renewal..

Motion: Pam Armstrong
2nd: Erin Bradley-Irose

Yes: Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Erin Bradley-Irose
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No: None

Vote: To adjourn meeting.

Motion: Anna Wetmore
2nd: Mark Bishop

Yes: Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewitt
Erin Bradley-Irose
Nina Keery
Catherine Martin
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No: None

9:04 Board adjourns