

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 288
November 16, 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: 89494737131 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

In attendance:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewett
Erin Bradley Irose
Nina Keery
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton (arrived 7:24)
Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director
Dan Bouchard, Assistant Director
Colin Vandenburg, Teacher
Deb McCrevan
Lydia Pollard, Public
Tanya Murdy, Public

Montessori Minute:

Colin Vandenburg - Middle School Immersion Days - 8-9 years Take students and immerse them in an alternative quality educational experience. In October 2021, the entire middle school went out into Newburyport beginning the day with a community breakfast and then splitting into two groups for walking field trips. One focused on art and the ecology of the salt marsh. The other trip was a historical scavenger hunt of Newburyport. There were five locations each with a team challenge. Middle School Immersion Days generally happen two times per year (Fall/Late Winter), but are hoping to increase frequency. Colin presented a photo slideshow of the students participating in the day.

Public Comment: None.

Vote: To approve minutes from the October meeting.

Edits: None.

Motion: Matt Renninger

2nd: Pam Armstrong

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Nina Keery

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Matt Renninger

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

Nancy Durkee

Alfred Link

Director's Report: Jonnie Lyn Evans presented report

School updates

Introduction of a new screener: Dibels 8. It is a diagnostic inventory of basic literacy skills for K-8. It will offer a full progression as the years progress and features a system to store and present data.

The ESSER 3 grant information will go up on the website.

Pick-Up Patrol is up and running. Going very smoothly.

Hired a new staff member; RVCS is fully staffed. This is a notable achievement as most schools are struggling to staff.

Covid: Have been experiencing a small reprieve.

Montessori Audit will be the week before April vacation after a review of materials submitted. Two days will be spent in classrooms to see how RVCS is implementing Montessori. Audit includes use of materials, interactions, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Last audit was before JLE was director. We do an external audit every other year with an internal audit on the off years.

MCAS report out:

There is always a prickly relationship with MCAS. It is something RVCS needs to deal with and hopefully succeed at, but something that doesn't align with its pedagogy. As we review data, we remember the push and pull. It is only a part of the assessment process (screeners, surveys, tests/quizzes, progress reports, portfolios, COLs, etc.), but something we must have in mind.

Karen: Teachers thoroughly examined the individual questions. Valleys were at intermixing fractions, geometry and timelines. Tended to be multipart or multistep. Working on this, but might not be in the abstract yet. But looking at later results, those things come together. There were also peaks where the students were really showing deep understanding.

Future question: Will our screening data correlate with the MCAS data?

Starting Title 1 in math, focusing on 5th and 6th graders.

Matt celebrates the end outcome.

Alfred: we need to be careful not to give this more importance than it deserves as it is just a part of our assessment.

Erin S points out that MCAS data is highly correlated with racial and socioeconomic factors.

Karen: after 18 years at the school, the MCAS scores have always indicated success with the public Montessori program.

Finance Committee

Note: Please take time to look at the finished audit report. It is completely closed and done.

Tuition from the state is coming in on time and as expected. Cash in reserve have a typical \$40,000 vote to move into that account for repairs to the building, grounds, etc. Now at \$88,000.

Retaining wall: Photos were provided in the board packet. The incredibly rainy season has been eroding the wall at an accelerated rate. There is now an immediacy to address it. Dan, as project manager, is overseeing the work. It will be repaired rather than rebuilt; this makes it easier in regards to channels such as the conservation committee and city. Michael Day, original builder of the wall and building, gave details as to the repair of the wall. It will be reinforced rather than replaced. London stones will be used and have been sourced. There could be some pick up

and drop off logistics (3-5 days) to work out while the work is being done. There is no infringement on the wetlands. No concerns about flooding from the retaining pond. The work is guaranteed and expected to last the lifetime of the school.

Vote: Approval to use up to \$49,999 from restricted cash capital reserve account to repair retaining wall.

Motion: Mark Bishop
2nd: Matt Renninger

Yes:

Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewett
Erin Bradley Irose
Nina Keery
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Karen Popken
Matt Renninger
Erin Seaton
Anna Wetmore

No:

Albert Ting

Abstain:

None

Accountability Committee

Reviewed MCAS results as above.

Catching up on work started last June as to the needs, scope and context of the Parent/Caregiver Survey. It may be too much to change for this year, work continues.

Development Committee

Working on determining the asks. The committee is developing a second half of the year ask plan. Has plenty of energy. A consistent six members. Erin BI has some leads for members. Gratitude goes to organizers of the parent gathering. Tanya and Lydia.

Committee on Trustees

Director Evaluation: Proposing a working meeting in Dec or Jan centering on the Director Evaluation. Invites input from members of other committees to gather different perspectives.

According to bylaws, we should have a Complaints Committee prepared at the ready. The COT is looking for members to join the committee. Please read the description of the committee and email Amber if you're interested in the committee. The committee will need two officers and three non-officer members.

Amber will be sending a survey to gauge interest and comfort in beginning to meet in person.

Sector Update:

Pam and JLE attended NCPSA presentations:

NCPSA Strategic Plan (for themselves and how they'll support public sector). There was much gratitude for board members in addition to teachers and staff. They plan to continue to support us and build resources. They also plan to focus on supporting charter schools in the political arena.

Equity and governance. Highly encourage all to read through the powerpoint presentation from the meeting and consider the questions posed by the presentation.

JLE presented a land acknowledgement and is working on a large bronze plaque for the campus.

Public Comment:

Deb McCrevan: Philadelphia insurance checks have come in for the full amount of the water damage. The bank has merged; she's had to make sure accounts are current and working. She is in the process of checking vendors for the capital leads and will present to the finance committee next month.

Vote: Motion 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: Mark Bishop

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Nina Keery

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Matt Renninger

Erin Seaton
Anna Wetmore

No:
None

Abstain:
None

Vote: to adjourn meeting.

Motion: Erin Bradley Irose
2nd: Nina Keery

Yes:
Pam Armstrong
Mark Bishop
Nancy Durkee
Amber Hewett
Erin Bradley Irose
Nina Keery
Alfred Link
Catherine Martin
Matt Renninger
Anna Wetmore

No:
None

Abstain:
None

Karen Popken and Erin Seaton had already left the meeting.

9:35 pm Board adjourns