

**River Valley Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
Meeting # 289
February 8, 2022 7:00 pm**

In accordance with the Executive Order applying to MA Open Meeting Law, this meeting will be held virtually on Zoom ID: 86351243324 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.

In attendance:

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

Absent:

Matt Renninger

Also Present:

Jonnie Lyn Evans, Director
Dan Bouchard, Assistant Director
Deb McCrevan
Nell Franchek
Tanya Murdy, Public
Ann Marks, Public
Karina Moltz, Public

RVCS Revelation

Nell Franchek presented a slide show “Why Play?,” which highlights the importance of play in childhood and its place in Montessori education. It specifically covered free play rather than guided play. Play prepares children for focused work in the classroom, reduces stress, contributes to well-being, and is important for brain development, group work and is a right of every child. It also fits nicely with our 8 c’s.

Teachers are seeing the effects of children not getting enough time for free play due to the

pandemic. Children aren't able to practice resolving conflicts on their own and are challenged in their ability to self-regulate and self-advocate.

Gratitude to Nell for such a wonderful presentation.

Public Comment:

None

Vote: Accept January BOT Minutes and February committee minutes.

Motion: Erin Bradley-Irose

2nd: Pam Armstrong

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Nina Keery

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Erin Seaton

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Director's Report: Jonnie Lyn Evans presented report

School updates:

Discussed the vacancies this spring. We will not be fully-enrolled at the end of the year. This is due to the line up of the February 15th deadline. Lottery entries are down a little from years past, however there will be plenty of students to enroll. JLE will check to see if this is an overall trend within the Charter school community.

Deb - Charter School Office states there is a statewide enrollment decline of 0.4%.

Winter screeners are being finished; please see Director's Report for details. Teachers are now able to see the results of their students live.

Arrival and dismissal routines have changed. Cars are now allowed into the parking lot five minutes earlier. Drop off is now all near the gym. Dismissal takes about 25 minutes. From the two days this week, it looks like it will now take about 20 minutes. Considering releasing walkers later.

Mount Washington trip is on and coming up in March. Students recently hiked. Kearsarge.

DESE requires a field trip policy. JL will likely have a draft to bring to the board next month.

Q- Are there provisions for transgender or non-binary students in the new field trip policy?

JLE - I believe that is required by the state. Yes.

Calendar has been drafted. First day will be August 29th, June 14 will be the last day. June 22nd would be the last day with snow days. June 21, 2022 is now the projected last day of school for this year.

Covid updates:

Positives have slowed down. There was one positive pool this week.

The state offered a new program that sends home two tests for every child every two weeks in addition to the weekly pooled testing. Other local school districts adopted that program, but RVCS has chosen not to participate. Factors considered were: access for families, tests possibly being administered incorrectly, tests not being used for the intended purposes, the overwhelming amount of work required for implementation and rapid tests resulting in lots of false negatives.

RVCS is waiting to hear if the commissioner will repeal the mask mandate. There are lots of conversations happening around how to respond to possible mask mandate changes. Right now, if it is repealed, we plan to abide. It is thought that this will be around March 15th. RVCS is also likely to go to a five-day quarantine.

JL is not inclined to necessarily follow what the other school districts are doing. JL assumes that the local districts will make this move as a block.

EBI - Being conservative is ok and has played well for our school. Don't feel pressured to make changes others are ready to make.

Pam - JLE is making these decisions in consultation with the medical advisory team.

Catherine - The change will be extreme for young children. Communication will need to be very clear to young children. It could be hard for them to understand some social situations because they haven't been seeing faces.

Vote: To accept August 29, 2022 as the first day of school for the 2022-2023 school year.

Motion: Pam Armstrong

2nd: Nina Keery

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Nina Keery

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Erin Seaton

Albert Ting

Anna Wetmore

No:

None

Abstain:

None

Committee Updates

Accountability Committee

MCAS will run as normal this year.

The committee discussed how to encourage participation in the Parent/caregiver survey.

The meeting schedule has been reworked a bit.

Committee on Trustees

The committee's top priority is new member recruitment. Please continue to encourage people to connect with Amber if you have anyone in mind as a potential new Trustee. Also encourage folks to join committees as that is where a lot of new Trustees begin!

The board may need to have a quorum as of April in person. A quick, informal survey was held. Distancing should be possible and masks required. Committees are welcome to start meeting in person.

Development Committee

Secured an unrestricted \$125K donation from an anonymous donor. Total donations are approximately \$130K.

Committee will focus on engaging the new generation of parents. There will be a lot of hard work to do to re-engage development muscles.

Finance Committee

Reviewed Q2 financials. Cash balances as of 1/3 are at a little over 1.9 million in cash. This is an almost 6% increase from December.

The state budget process has started. Around June 30th, we should see the budget passed. As the committee follows this, it gives an idea of how we should strategize for next year. Initial takeaways, an optimistic picture. Will keep an eye on it and track the process.

Operating revenue and expenses are right on target. There was a significant decrease in utilities thanks to an enormous amount of hard work to get net metering in place. Things are moving in the right direction.

Assets have a slight increase, liabilities slight decrease.

Major takeaway: we are in a really good place thanks to battening down the hatches before the pandemic storm.

Highly recommend joining for the Q3 discussion.

Public Comment:

None.

Vote: To adjourn meeting.

Motion: Alfred Link

2nd: Nancy Durkee

Yes:

Pam Armstrong

Mark Bishop

Nancy Durkee

Amber Hewett

Erin Bradley Irose

Alfred Link

Catherine Martin

Karen Popken

Erin Seaton

Albert Ting
Anna Wetmore

No:
None

Abstain:
None

(Nina Keery left the meeting at 8:00.)

8:41 pm Board adjourns