



Lowcountry Montessori School  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
May 26, 2016 6:30 P.M.  
749 Broad River Drive, Beaufort, SC 29907

Lowcountry Montessori School's mission is to increase access to an authentic Montessori-based education in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. Our staff and parents will collaborate to foster the development of independent, well-rounded, academically-prepared and responsible citizens. LMS is committed to creating an environment that inspires children to become lifelong learners and creative problem solvers for the 21st Century and beyond.

Board Members present: Patrick Chester, Eileen Bertagna, Eve Fleming, Christine Henderson, Michele Clarke, Jenn Dunn called in at 6:58 Scott Webb arrived at 7:37

Board members absent: Janice Johnson, Karl Schlobohm

### Opening

1. **Call to Order** -- 6:32 p.m.
2. **Reading of Mission Statement** – Patrick read the mission statement of LMS
3. **Approval of Agenda** – Eve moved to approve the agenda with the discussion of the kitchen #14 being moved to above #7 so that speaker's schedule can be accommodated. All other items will shift down in order. Eileen 2nded. All in favor: All
4. **Statement of Compliance with FOIA** – Patrick announced that the meeting was noticed by posting to the door of the school, the school website, and sent to the newspaper 24 hours prior to the meeting in compliance with FOIA.
5. **Approval of Minutes from April 28, 2016 board meeting** –Eve moved to approve the minutes from April 28, 2016 meeting. Michelle 2nded. All in favor: All
6. **Welcome to attendees who are interested in becoming board members** – Patrick and Eve welcomed Carolyn Leslie (parent) and Allison Romain (prospective parent) to the meeting.

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**Director's Report**

7. **Discussion/vote on funding for commercial kitchen** – April Beall, a grandparent of an LMS student, presented a proposal for a commercial kitchen. April used to have a large catering business in Atlanta. She is a Master Chef and her specialty is pastries. April stated that in order to prepare/cook school meals, a commercial kitchen is required by DHEC. April has spoken to Amy Horn, Head of School, to discuss adding a commercial kitchen. The requirements must meet fire suppression guidelines. Allison Casazza, Culinary Teacher, recently completed the required Serva-pro training. Having a commercial kitchen would allow for home economics kitchens and culinary arts. April reported the school has lost a significant amount of money on our food program. April can get us the proper vendors and would



have oversight over costs if her proposal is implemented. April presented projections for next school year. Last three months' lunch program has increased a great deal by offering kid-friendly, healthy meals. Preparing any food at home is a no-no. Allison has had help in the kitchen the last few months and it has made a difference. Eve asked about projections. April said she inflated the numbers some from last year's amounts but believes the actuals will be higher than her estimate.

Amy said they were going to take a kitchen from one of the cores but that is not an option because they cannot have children walking through. Looked at multipurpose space but that will not work. Behind the office space in new building was considered but it is not large enough. Taking the current teachers' lounge makes most sense. Will move the existing refrigerator to new building and put in oven and cooktop. The kitchen needs to be a contained area that can be shut off from the rest of the building April looked for used equipment- not much can go wrong and life span is great for certain appliances. Freezer, fridge and dishwasher should not be purchased used according to April because of warranties on compressors, etc. Hiring the right person to run the program is essential as well. April predicts we will be able to pay back the cost of the kitchen in 4 years. She stated we would need to provide information to accountant in a way that makes sense.

Christine asked whether the state permitted the kitchen when the facility was built. Amy said when Office of School Facilities was here, they were told they were planning to use it for meals. DHEC has not been to the school.

A question was posed as to how it would work with the Montessori curriculums? April replied that all the kitchens will still be used as home-economics kitchens. April said we could get the other kitchens inspected for culinary arts approval. April stated that she has been worried about how we have been functioning every day. Being home economics approved will actually make it nicer to bring in the children to the kitchen. For insurance purchases alone it should make a difference.

Eve asked if there is an estimate for labor. Amy reported that one was requested from Kent's Electric but it has not been received yet. Tyson said there is a \$5,000 fund for equipment in new building and they plan to use only \$1,000. Can use \$4,000 for the new kitchen. We still need labor and plumbing estimate. We can finance some of the appliances. Eileen offered to ask her father for a plumbing quote.

Eve asked for benefits of having this new kitchen. Amy replied taking out the finance piece, children can participate in culinary arts, there would be potential for working with a CSA, farm to table, and having practical life skills.

Jenn Dunn called in at 6:58pm.

Amy continued that from a parent perspective- children will have a healthy meal every day- it is a bonus for families. April said more wages were used than needed to be this year through no fault of the current staff. April based her estimate on 7 hours a day, \$15 per hour. Cabell Heyward, Practical Life Teacher, said that Clemson stated we can not use the fruit of our garden without permitting.



Eve asked if we are under a time restraint. We need to get approval from Delisa Clarke (SCDOE Office of School Facilities) and Ginny (architect)

Patrick moved to table the vote until we have more information and an estimation of all costs. Christine 2nded. All in favor: All

8. **Recent visit from school district personnel**– Rich Richards (SCPCSD Director of Strategic Initiatives) and Audrey Lane from SCPCSD came last week. District undergoing lots of changes with staffing. New people coming on board. Rich is working on strategic planning for SCPCSD. He said we were in top 3 of schools he visited. He asked from where we got our staff pool.
9. **Vote to approve 2016-2017 school calendar** – Christine asked if the Barrier Island dates are locked in. Amy said they are and only Lower EI would be going. Upper EI would take a different trip next year. Eve moved to approve the 2016-2017 school calendar. Michelle 2nded. All in favor: All
10. **Facilities update**– Amy reported that the new building is in process of having sheet rock installed. Cabell has a key lock update that Matt Zappia, Technology Teacher, provided him. Matt submitted a quote for rekeying the existing buildings. \$2500 to rekey the building however in actuality it may be less because they may have doubled the doors. In a previous meeting, Karl suggested the Tile key finder because he thought it would not be a significant help. Matt researched it and it is good for finding a key in close proximity but not tracking lost keys.

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## Finance & Business

11. **P & I Grant Report** – Mark Vanderpool – no update from Mark. Sarah and Amy are going to sit down and look at what needs to be coded differently to be sure we are getting refunded properly.
12. **Budget Report and vote to approve, and formally vote to approve budget reports for the months of July through April 2016** – Patrick reported that there were some adjustments made to end of year. The supplies line item was far exceeded. Utilities were over budgeted and so it made up some of the overage in supplies there. The over spending ate into the fund balance. Patrick reported that we need to approve all budget adjustments made from July.  
  
Eve moved to approve all budget reports, including budget amendments, from July 2015-April 2016. Eve stated that these reports and adjustments were all previously discussed. Patrick 2nded. All in favor: Patrick, Eve, Michelle, Jenn. Abstain: Eileen. Opposed: Christine.
13. **Second Reading of 2016-2017 annual budget /vote to approve** – Patrick



reported that he has gotten the budget from deficient to slight surplus but that does not incorporate meeting the required two-month budget fund. Changes Patrick reported making: cut fundraising by \$25,000 as previously discussed and modified expenses. Still not perfect but will be final at third and final reading. No vote required until third reading.

**14. Vote to formally approve security system funds** – Patrick moved to ratify the unanimous email vote to approve the security system. Eileen 2nded. All in favor: All

**15. Vote to approve audit contract with Elliott Davis and authorize Acting Board Chair to sign**– Patrick reported that the estimate came in at \$20,500 which he feels is reasonable. Christine moved to approve audit contract with Elliot Davis and authorize Patrick to sign. Eve 2nded. All in favor: All

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### Board Organization

**16. Discussion/vote on re-organization of Board Committees, members, and appointment of committee chairs** – Eve has been reviewing and revising bylaws. Committees we have are not all needed right now. Bill Mosser suggested 4 standing committees: Finance, Education, Governance, and Facilities. Eve read the book Amy recommended and in terms of coming up with committees we need, she could use feedback from board members. Eve thinks we need finance, governance, and an academic excellence or education committee (although she cautioned we have to be very careful not to cross the line into operations). Development was a another committee she read about. Eve requested feedback from board members via email. Eve would welcome someone to work with her to develop committees. Michelle said she was willing to help Eve. We are not really at a point to vote. Eve said we should have the committees doing the leg work. Christine said she agreed with the need for the committees. Eve said Governance committee will basically be board development. Patrick said Herman Gaither suggested facilities was an important aspect of board functioning. Building and finance might have cross over. Amy asked if fundraising would be part of finance. Christine thought goal was to get PTSO to take over fundraising. Eve said PTSO would likely not handle Artscape. Capital campaign and Annual fund would be more school affiliated than PTSO or board. No vote required.

**17. Discuss division of work on new policy manuals** – Eve reported that the policy manual was sent to the board with Carol Aust's suggestions for use. Eve suggested we divide it up to groups to rework it. Eve stated finance should be Patrick and Jenn. Eve doesn't mind taking governance. Amy should do personnel and student handbook and has been looking through it. Eve said shoot out an email if there is a specific section you want to tackle. Eve said we might want fewer committees. Need to have descriptions written for committees and be cognizant of the wording we use. Patrick suggested everyone take a look at them before the next meeting.

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**18. Public Comment** – Cabell submitted a letter addressed to the board chair. Reported that from his perspective of a staff member he knows very little about what goes on here. Very little overlap with what board does. He extended invitation for us to come to the school and observe what goes on. It would be so appreciated. Involvement can only be a benefit exposure to what happens and issues that go on. All the challenges the staff faces.

Scott arrived at 7:37 during public comments.

Christine commented that she has been extremely pleased with the education that Bethany received this year under Mrs. Debbie Yates. Her daughter worked with other children in the neighborhood on her peace project and Bethany was so much further ahead academically than children in higher grades. Eileen echoed that sentiment because her son worked on fabulous independent work projects this year in the same class.

Dan Mackin, High School Teacher, asked how do we show the community the cool stuff that our kids are doing? He has ideas for next year but asked how we get them out there. Amy suggested the newspaper.

Michelle noted that Susan DeLoach, parent, came to the meeting as a potential board member as well.

**19. Old Business** – Eileen asked that all board members who do not have a bio on the website to submit one to Sarah or Eileen.

Christine reminded us that we need to continue to focus on the self-assessment and not let it get lost.

Amy offered her mother's house for a retreat. There are enough rooms for all board members to spend the night.

Christine asked how the school is doing on their self-assessment. Amy said it is going slowly but are putting all the pieces in place.

Patrick reminded we still need to revisit the discipline appeals.

**20. New Business** – no new business

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**21. Executive Session** (closed to public) – Discussion of Confidential Personnel Issues

Patrick moved to go into executive session to discuss a confidential personnel issue at 7:47. Eve 2nded. All in favor: All

Patrick moved to exit executive session at 8:27. Scott 2nded All in favor: All

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**22. Vote on issues from Executive Session – No vote required**

**23. Adjourn-** Christine moved to adjourn at 8:27. Scott 2nded. All in favor: All

\* The Board welcomes public comments but gently reminds that this is not a question-and-answer period. Comments should be limited to no more than three minutes per person.

LMS will not limit, deny admission or show preference to any individual or group of individuals. LMS will recruit, register, and admit students without regard to race, creed, gender, national origin, ancestry, disability or need for Special Education services. In accordance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 59, Chapter 40, LMS will admit all students eligible to attend first through twelfth grades residing in South Carolina, subject to space limitations.