

Approved 01.20.21

MINUTES
VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021
VIA [Zoom](#)

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gregory Schneider (GS) – President

John Tanner (JT)

April Sauer (AS) – Secretary

Danielle Martinez (DM)

Dan Franks (DF) – Treasurer

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

The President, Treasurer, and Secretary were present and a quorum was reached.

GUESTS

Invitees of the Board:

Teresa Marzolph (TM)

Frank Mirizio (FM)

Members of the public present via Zoom/Registration through Google Forms:

- Michelle Kratzer
- Colleen Pope
- Susan Kerr
- Juli Curtin
- Nick Casura

Approved 01.20.21

- Adeline Carrera
- Harper Rose
- tammy
- Heather Sullivan
- Helena Moriarty
- Sami Rank
- Kim Baker
- Tyler Limesand
- jamie
- Jean Falconburg
- Laura Slayton-Garcia
- WS
- Helena Moriarty
- tamara hendrix
- Jill Thomas
- Sarah Williamson
- Laura Heaney
- deb
- Larry G
- Becky King
- Barb
- Kristen Ziegenbein
- JJ
- Robert Joffe

OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm GS welcomed the public to the meeting and reviewed meeting procedures.

DM read the opening verse.

The Board members introduced themselves along with the Executive Director and Interim Executive Director.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Fundraising

Approved 01.20.21

GS We are having success with the educational investment campaign. We've raised roughly 48k in voluntary contributions thus far. We need to think more broadly about fundraising outside of for materials. DM reached out to someone about fundraising.

DM She spoke with Melissa Sutton with Kids Active Global. She does things like negotiating with vendors, online events, etc. She can lead or coach us on these events. She wanted us to be on the same page for our needs whether it's a capital campaign on tax refund program. Willing to guide us with free consultation or for an hourly fee depending on the length of time needed.

GS Helped with Keystone Montessori School. They have an annual goal of 400k from their community. We should be shooting for the same.

DM And we're similar in size.

GS Bridge the Gap Campaign was a good fundraiser previously. We don't get the same amount per student from the state, and we need to set a more realistic goal based on the gap we have. I think next steps on that are having that meeting. DM please continue to help with that. Who else is willing to help with that?

FM Me.

DF Me.

AS I'm happy to help behind the scenes.

FM Do we have a tax ID number? I need that for some connections I already have who are willing to make donations.

GS Deb should have that or I can get it to you.

AS Asking about educational campaign investment listing of those who haven't contributed yet.

GS He'll check and see if he has that info and forward to AS.

DM Can we change the wording?

AS I'm happy to work with you on softening the language, but it's very specific about what it's for and that it's a donation.

FM The teachers would like the students to open their store again—sell t-shirts, cards, etc. We'd like to do that again.

GS That would be fantastic. The students' artwork is outstanding.

GS It's time for tax credits. Dueling campaigns could be problematic. Perhaps we need to focus on tax credits and add the appropriate wording.

Approved 01.20.21

AS I'm happy to use your words and then spruce it up and send it out.

GS Perhaps we can work it into the educational campaign so it doesn't look like a double ask. It would be great to make that one message.

FM Now it's tax season. Do a month, take a month off, etc. Teachers are already asking for W2's, so now's the time to ask for those tax credits.

GS Okay, AS, I'll get that info to you, and you can make it look pretty and send it out.

Budget Planning for FY2021–2022

GS Our fiscal year starts July 1. FM, I'll meet with you to discuss the process. DF, I'll chat with you about that too to get you caught up. Priscilla helps a lot with that too. Not anything to do tonight, but I wanted to flag that as something we will need to be starting on soon. Our enrollment is 10% lower than this time last year, but we need to account for that. I'm hoping enrollment goes back up once Covid calms a bit.

FM Will the state collect enough money from Prop 208 to distribute money to us?

GS I don't know. If anyone else does, please chime in.

FM I'm meeting with Priscilla tomorrow, and I'll speak with her about that and the budget. She probably has some insight into Prop 208 monies. That's different from 301. There are other things you can do with 208 money. Smaller class size, curriculum director, etc.

GS That would be great to think about that and figure out how that works. The stimulus bill that was just passed has 54 billion for schools, but I don't understand it yet. The general thought was 1000k per student.

FM Priscilla may not know that one, but I can call someone at the AEA. I have a couple contacts who could point me in the right direction.

JT Is that an official assignment to FM or is that going to DF since he's the treasurer? Will DF oversee this?

GS DF will be heavily involved in that process to help develop that budget. In March/April timeline we'll see early drafts of that budget and then May/June we'll see more of a final budget.

FM Spoke of Prop 208 and stimulus money. He'll go on a fact-finding mission and then report back to the board.

JT Okay, thank you. That sounds like commitment. Thank you.

Approved 01.20.21

Enrollment Update

GS We are stable from the last time. Sitting at 278.4 students. The PreK gives us the .4, so that's one more than we were at last month. There's no drop. We budgeted on 258, so we're 6 below on average daily membership. Priscilla explained the payments we get are a combination of how many are enrolled and how often they attend. Our attendance has been spotty—perhaps due to Covid, but over the last couple of months our payments from the state have dropped. In December we had a bonus payment from the ESG. We need to start stressing high attendance. I don't know how that works administratively if someone chooses to stay home but does virtual for the day.

FM The kids who stay home and log on should be counted by teachers taking attendance. The attendance is poorer with the virtual kids who are not logging on. We need to be accurate taking attendance.

GS There's a lot of communication we need to do with parents who are supervising remote kids.

FM TM, do you think that's a good idea to send that out as an email to parents, explaining about attendance?

TM I think it's worth communicating. One of the things we've started doing is warning letters when it gets more severe. Making more engaging conversations with parents about attendance. We talked with the LDC as well about this issue to understand what's going on. I know time and energy on teachers, Tami, and Crystal have been making sure that attendance has been accurate. It is definitely more attributed to the remote learners.

JT TM, would you remind me when the first letter goes out?

TM Let me see if I can find it and get back to you.

FM I have a question about recruiting. Do we have a flyer or banner we use for enrollment? Something to drop off at preschools, etc. Do we set up tours? Get info in their hands? Do you want me to spearhead that? Check in with LDC?

DM I'd love to do a video. I've done an info drop before for events. I miss the tours.

GS That would be wonderful to see.

FM I'm hearing virtual tour. Like a home tour?

DM Whatever we can do.

FM I know in the Spring our campus blooms, which would be great to show off the campus. So maybe a month or two to get things looking pretty.

AS Contact high school regarding flyers they used for open houses.

Approved 01.20.21

FM Would Crystal Lee have those or Millie?

AS Probably Crystal or maybe Christie Martin.

JT Warned against the reality vs specially beautified campus. Concerned about content conveyed on what is being offered to families. Doesn't want to disappoint parents.

FM What do you all want? 30 more students?

JT All the grades need to be capped. All of the kinder need to be capped. Double the size of the high school. I think they could be 90.

FM What are the caps?

JT Explained the current caps.

FM Have you ever had a double track?

JT Not yet. We don't have the buildings. We need larger rooms.

GS For perspective now—Kinder 35, 1st 25, 2nd 32, 3rd 20, 4th 28, 5th 22, 6th 28, 7th 25, 8th 12, and HS 43 students.

FM Are you reading that or are have you committed that to memory?

GS I'm reading from our enrollment graph.

FM So both kinders become 1st grade?

JT Explained golden knights and how the kinder splits.

GS If we could add to our kinder, and then 15-20 to the HS that would be even better.

FM Does the same amount of 8th grade students move into HS and graduate from HS?

JT, DF, AS, DM Collective no.

DM Asked a question regarding virtual and number of in-person students.

FM 43 for in person on site services.

TM When we were remote before it was 25-30, so that's a huge jump.

FM There are parents who believe that being in the on site program, students are going to be in the class with their teachers. An assistant will offer support while the students are on computers. They will not be with their teachers.

Approved 01.20.21

AS Mentioned ADE roadmap info regarding on site services, specifying the rules for students who can be on campus for this service. We also have our own documents on our website regarding these services. We don't get to make up these rules; they are specified by the state.

FM There seems to be some confusion regarding younger students in grades 1 and 2 regarding their reading levels. But I haven't seen this in writing anywhere. I'll need to look it up.

GS Governor Ducey signed an executive order regarding on site services, but it wasn't very clear. Because we did it it made us eligible for the ESG. Then ADE lead out the detailed roadmap.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

GS What else is going on at the school and the transition between the two of you? Where do things stand?

FM I so appreciate TM. She is well informed and knowledgeable. She is making me learn things very quickly and in a positive fashion. The staff is voicing their sadness that she'll be leaving, so thank you to TM and thank you board for keeping her on.

GS We echo your thoughts. We've been lucky to have her.

TM I've enjoyed getting to know everyone and working here. I don't have any other updates. FM brings a lot of energy, and he's excited.

FM I provided everyone a written update as well. I received a format to follow that I will use next time. The first few days have been getting to know staff and students. The kids have been so nice and so sweet. I had two 7th graders interview me today on Is Homework Really Important. It was delightful. Staff is wonderful, bright, and kind. They're reaching out. I got a basket from a welcome committee. Got a loaf of bread and butter and books on Waldorf.

GS Excellent. I am glad to hear that. Let's talk about the transition from you to TM.

FM Meeting with Michelle and Laura from parent organization. Meeting with Fruth to get some answers regarding our bandwidth and Wifi. I do want to ask you all, what's happening for health insurance and benefits for next year? This is the time to bring people in to make bids and make a recommendation to the board to possibly try something else or stick with what we have. My background tells me that's a ball that's in the air right now.

GS I don't think the board has ever been involved in that before. Have you, JT?

JT I haven't, but FM is correct in saying this is the time when we should be looking at that. His intuition is correct.

FM Did we get an increase last year?

Approved 01.20.21

JT There was some upset last year. It was quite upsetting to some staff members, so I think they would appreciate any improvements in healthcare at a lower rate.

FM An increase could hurt us budget wise, so I like the idea of looking at some plans. I'll talk with Priscilla about that. We have a kinder teacher who's husband is ill. We have a program to donate days to her, but we don't know if sick days carry over. Do they?

GS I don't know.

DF It's common to carry over, but you can't cash them out.

FM I'm sure Priscilla will know that.

TM With the sick time AZ law you have to carry over. I think it's a certain amount of hours. I want to say they can accrue 40 hours for a year's time. The questions would be regarding donated sick time and exceeding that threshold.

JT I seem to remember that you could carry two years worth of sick pay. There's no cash out.

FM I'm concerned ,and I'll check in with Priscilla.

JT Thank you for helping with that situation.

FM Of course.

GS It sounds like it may be an individual decision, especially regarding donating time. If going forward there's a policy that you need the board to approve based on this experience we can look at that.

FM LDC is working on school calendar. When is fall/spring break, winter break, etc. I think we're working on two calendars.

JT I think we want to have it organized before we send it to the board.

FM A few more meetings and hopefully we'll have it ready to look at in February.

GS That would be great to get that up on the website so families can look at it. Do we have one for this year?

TM Yes, it's been updated, and should be on the website as a PDF.

FM What about contracts? Should we be looking at those right now? Posting job openings, evaluations, etc? I don't know if TM has seen those. I haven't seen any evaluations.

GS I can say the last couple of years that hasn't happened until very late in the year—maybe May until it came to the board. That always struck me as being extremely late. I don't know the

Approved 01.20.21

status of reviews, but if we can push that up then it would be helpful for budget and family decisions and whatnot.

FM Some teachers leave to schools due to increases elsewhere, so schools have been trying to move up their timelines to get contracts completed. So that's something you'll need to discuss. Maybe February is too early, but May is too late.

GS Our school has a unique reason because we want our grades teachers to stay through 8th grade, so this will help us. If we can solve that by getting continuity in place earlier that would be better.

FM I think it's state law that you must tell a teacher they will not be rehired by April 15th.

GS I wasn't aware of that.

FM I don't think that it's different for charters. I think the contracts should be settled by April 15th. That's over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year of teaching.

Gs I think the sooner in the semester the better.

FM I'm trying to remember who's been doing our evaluations.

JT Dru Smith-Crain.

FM I'm not sure if she did them for the 1st semester, but I know it's complicated due to virtual and she's coming in from out of town. I know she's great because she knows Waldorf. JT, did you get an eval for 1st semester?

JT Yes, I did. The evaluations are not consistent.

FM How do the evaluations work?

JT It's different for everyone. We've done self evaluations, peer, and outside evaluators.

FM Would Millie know about the high school?

JT Yes.

FM Everyone should be evaluated to help with contract decisions.

GS Discussion regarding open meeting law—if we will discuss employees, we need to give them 24 hours notice and let them choose whether they're in executive session or in a regular board meeting.

FM The topic was transition. I'm not quite ready for TM to go away, but I want to respect her time. She has a bit of tribal knowledge of situations that are ongoing. I don't how long we can maintain this, but I'd like her input on the situation if that's okay.

Approved 01.20.21

GS Yeah, I think the three of us can have this discussion outside of the meeting to figure out timing.

FM How many people are attending this meeting?

GS 26. You'll find that we have a high level of community engagement at our school.

FM It takes a village to raise a child.

COVID-19

GS There's some confusion regarding the board vote. In the middle of November we voted to follow the recommended learning model on the AZDHS site. I understand the confusion because previously we had voted regarding the three specific benchmarks. But after we said we'll follow these benchmarks, we said that all three had to be in the yellow or green categories to offer in person. Then the state changed that guidance to all three had to be red to recommend virtual. Because the guidance changed, we reconvened and decided to follow the new guidance. We voted to follow the recommended delivery model. We decided that in the middle of November. After that meeting the metrics all ticked up. Right before winter break we had our first week when all three were in the red. We all expected the state would suggest virtual, but it didn't on that first week. We didn't know what to do because the state was contradicting itself. We decided to reconvene with hybrid for the first week and see where things stood. As we all know now, AZ is the world leader in covid rates. Our numbers are off the charts. All three benchmarks are still in the red. GS shared some data on his screen from AZDHS website. This is why administration-FM and TM—have been moving the transition from hybrid to virtual learning starting Monday. JT will be making a comment shortly regarding the governor not mandating a shut down, but this is heartbreaking. The storm around us is still going. I remain convinced that we've struck the right balance of protecting the staff, faculty and students. Percent positivity is dipping down, hopefully that goes down and the other benchmarks go down, but we as a board have to make tough decisions that are not popular with everybody and have to take in the info of all stakeholders. We don't do this with zeal. We have to acknowledge that staff and faculty and students are not protected from this disease. There's not a tremendous amount of evidence regarding high transit rates in a school setting, but we are not health experts. Kathy Hoffman and AZDHS are saying things are out of control and we need to be in virtual. I'm not looking to reopen this decision, but I wanted to explain how we made this decision a month and half ago. We got an email today stating teachers will have the opportunity to get the vaccine, and I hope they take it. I think that changes the calculations, and it may change how we think about it. We don't know how many supplies will be available or how many staff and faculty will be willing to get it. The benchmarks are going down. I wouldn't be surprised if in a few weeks after teachers are vaccinated that the metrics may change or they may suggest hybrid. We have to look at the reality of where we are today. I understand there are dissenting and differing opinions. JT, I'd like to give you a moment to speak, so if you'd like to say something you're more than welcome to do it.

Approved 01.20.21

JT It says on this document that the state of AZ is fully recommending virtual?

GS Yes, that's correct. It's the red box on the screen.

JT Thank you for that. My eyesight gets worse as it gets later. Are the board members willing to get the vaccine?

GS I'll certainly be getting one. I'm in the Moderna vaccine study myself.

DF I probably have to get it done at a hospital because I have allergies, but I will definitely be getting it.

FM I plan on attending that webinar regarding the vaccine. The staff wanted information about the vaccine, so I forward that webinar to the staff.

DF I'll be attending that webinar as well.

GS So that being said, that's why we're here, that's why the plan is to start virtual on Monday. I hope it only lasts a few weeks, but it may be longer at least until we can get vaccines to staff and students. With that said, TM/FM, what else is going on on the ground regarding Covid? What do you need from us as a board?

FM The tough decision has been made. We're going virtual on Monday. We need to work out details regarding On Site Services. We had a teacher who got it, and two other teachers were exposed, and they are now in quarantine. Our numbers are fairly low in terms of how many have had it in the community. Is that right, JT?

JT I'm not sure, but please continue.

FM I've heard a few students and a few teachers.

JT We don't know where people are getting it, but we don't think they're getting it on campus. Our mitigation plan works. Since I have the floor, I do want everyone to understand that this is a jeopardy for the students. So yes, we respect the board and the board's decision, but it needs to be plainly stated that students are behind in their education.

FM I agree with JT but will also add that this is a deadly disease. And the country is split down the middle in how they feel about it.

JT I think more people die from the flu than Covid, but I respect what's going on and plan to follow the law as stated by Maricopa County and the state.

DF More people have died from Covid this year than have died of the flu in the last decade.

JT I'd like to see the research on that.

DF I'll send that to you.

Approved 01.20.21

FM I sent the message home to parents about Monday and within minutes parents sent emails thanking us for the decision and wanted me to share that with the board. It was about five emails.

GS The board got messages on both sides. You cannot decide without dividing. If I've learned anything watching the news today, it's that real leadership is about acknowledging what's happening and responding to it.

COMMUNITY

GS We've been talking about a community contemplation exercise. The alliance put me in contact with a few individuals to help us with this—George, Peter, and Joan. We've organized these individuals, and now that we have FM I think we're in a position to schedule a meeting with these folks. We need to decide who is going to lead, what's the end product, and how do we communicate that? My thought is I'll try to schedule a meeting with me, FM, George, Peter, and Joan and another board member to discuss the details.

DM Yes.

FM Do you have a time frame in mind?

GS Hopefully before the semester is over. At the latest by the end of this calendar year. I think with the sheer number of people involved, I don't think it'll be a short process.

FM Step one is the hardest, so you have time between the first meeting and the second, so maybe planning that first intro meeting should happen before Valentine's day. Then we'd have time after to talk amongst ourselves and decide

DM Aren't there some days in February we have off?

AS We have President's Day off.

GS I'm hesitant to ask anyone to work on their days off. Anyone interested in this project?

JT, DM, AS All yes.

Discussion regarding which board members will serve to make decisions for this contemplation exercise.

AS Mentioned that GS should absolutely be involved since he is the first individual being contacted by staff and parents when concerns arise. He knows the most about our school wide concerns.

GS Perhaps FM and I and the guidance members will meet first, and we'll think more on who will be involved from the board after that meeting.

Approved 01.20.21

BOARD PROCEDURES

Approval of Minutes

GS Moved to approve the 12/16/20 regular meeting minutes. DM second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: GS, DF, JT, AS, DM. **Motion passes.**

Charter Review

GS Thanks again to TM and faculty and staff for putting that together. I'm pleased to report there are a small amount of things we've been asked to do that are really quite simple that we can do. Shared screen of Five-Year Interval Compliance Report and reviewed the document. Issues regarding paperwork for enrolling students. Fire Marshall issue has been resolved. We need to submit information regarding a new building we placed on campus years ago. We need to make a motion for that. These are pretty minor things we can take care of quickly here.

GS Moved for the approval for submitting member campus amendment request to the board to add the facility located at 6036 S 28th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85042. DF second. No further instruction. Vote unanimous in favor: GS, AS, JT, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

GS I hoped to talk about the calendar and strategic initiatives, but I'd like to table that for our next meeting due to the time..

GS Moved to adjourn. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, GS, AS, DF, DM. **Motion passes.**

GS DF, do you have the agenda? Will you read the closing verse for us?

DF Sure.

CLOSING VERSE

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Prepared by AS on 01.06.2021.