

**School Governing Board Committee  
(AKA Advisory Council)  
Minutes**

**Wednesday, January 30th, 2019, 5:30 P.M.**

**6050 N. Invergordon Rd., Paradise Valley, AZ 85253**

**Pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.02, notice is hereby given to members of the Montessori Academy Charter School that the School Governing Board Committee's specially scheduled meeting is open to the public on Wednesday, January 30th, 2019, 6050 N Invergordon Rd., Paradise Valley, AZ 85253, Room 11**

1. Call to Order at 5:38 p.m. by Kara Tustin.
2. Record Member Attendance. Present: Kara Tustin, Debra Berkey, Maieta Clark and George Wood. Absent: Dr. Jeff Trent and Maegan Dixon. Executive Board Members – Juli Newman. Guest attendance: Andrea Corbin, Jill Plonski, and Sean Olivier.
3. Initial call to public- Non-agendized item: Sean Olivier was introduced and shared with us the possibility of acquiring 20 'Thin Client' computers (windows CE 3150 SE) at a discounted price and has been in contact with our IT company, 365, regarding this proposal. Debra Berkey spoke to the purpose of our computers for the campus: Internet programs such as Moby Max (math program), Lexia (reading program), research for science and history presentations, power point, and specific cloud based programs. He mentioned 20 inch monitors could be purchased for a very reasonable amount and upgrading our system would be very easy. Jill Plonski asked if the AZ Merit testing website could be added to these computers through a secure web browser and Juli Newman asked how much information these computers could handle. Sean is looking into the answer for all of these questions and having on-going conversations with 365.
4. Acknowledgements/Introductions. Kara Tustin thanked the staff for rescheduling Nation's Celebration as it is a very special day on campus.
5. Action item. Approve minutes October 24th, 2018. Debra Berkey moved to approve as submitted. Seconded by George Wood. Deb Berkey, Kara Tustin, George Wood, and Maieta Clark voted in favor. Approved 4-0.
6. Old Business

a. Strategic Plan update:

Kara Tustin expressed a desire to create more organization for current and incoming families via the website. She would like an information page stating specific information about each grade level and what to expect in the transition to the next level to help, including what the parents can expect in the next program level of Montessori education. She also stated she would like to see a bullet point information sheet explaining why the 3's and 4's are combined with Kindergartener - the benefits of blended age classrooms. Kara has asked the teachers to create a summary of their program levels. This information would help create an organized expectation for parents as they look for a school and continue with our school. Hopefully, they will be committed to our programs and all we have to offer.

Juli Newman gave a broad technology curriculum update. Google Suite Education is the program we are moving forward with since the acquisition of 30 Google Chromebooks. There was a glitch integrating them into our internet

software and 365 is working on it. George Wood set up our original computer/internet and is great contact for information. Debra Berkey facilitated a discussion regarding wireless/hardwired/spatial size of screens to size of desks and classrooms. This will be an on-going and ever evolving conversation as we move our campus into 2020 and beyond. Special attention will be given to the state mandated online testing.

Juli Newman facilitated a discussion regarding the foreign language program. We now have a new language teacher. She is fluent in French and currently teaching our middle school children French; while teaching the other grades Spanish. The Executive Board has asked for input regarding the language of choice and which direction we should go with the language program. Kara Tustin expressed her concern regarding the lack of consistency, which is due to having to hire a part-time teacher (most want full time and higher salary) and finding someone that is committed for an entire school year. She thought that the omission of a language program would be better than the inconsistency we have currently. Perhaps we should move back to an online program (Duo Lingo) or have a current teacher holding ASL certification or other language instead. Maieta Clark was in favor of the French program in Middle School having already received feedback from her son regarding his enthusiasm with the teacher's ability as well as the beauty of the language. She also mentioned having had French in high school her thought was it was an excellent addition to the language program. Debra Berkey, speaking as a parent, communicated an introduction to language program with a clear curriculum would probably be a better fit. Juli Newman agreed consistency is key. We will continue to have an on-going conversation regarding the language program at the school.

b. School supplies for students:

Kara Tustin would like to see an online option for the school supply list be added as a choice for parents. She feels Educational Products, Inc. is a great company and economical. We can sell the items at a small up-charge to the parents, creating a fundraiser for the school, or, pass the savings along to the parents. They are able to do each grade specific list as well as each item on the list and even have the bargain brand or name brand as an option. Each student's supplies are then placed in one large box and sent to the school one week before school begins. All the parent has to do is enter payment after picking out which supply list pertains to them. The orders MUST BE in by the first week of March for the following school year. Debra Berkey said it sounded like a great option to have. This will be an ongoing conversation.

7. New Business. No new business.

8. Review status of upcoming events:

Debra Berkey reported: Senior Elementary speeches. 1.31.19. Field Day/early release, 2.1.19. Middle School fundraiser Valentine's Day balloons and stuffed animals begin 2.4.19. Move up day, 2.13.19. Science Fair (open to parents 3-5), 2.22.19. Senior Elementary yard sale fundraiser, 2.23.19. Montessori Week, 2.25-

2.28/19. Open House (excellent educational opportunity for parents and children moving up to the next grade), 4:30-6, 2.27.19. Kara Tustin: Move up day. What are parents looking for? Parent communication regarding what they can expect in the next program level for their children. What is the benefit of the program, lessons, etc. The overall experience. She suggested sending a welcome letter from the prospective move up teacher to the parent regarding the specific individual child with a brief overview of what they and their child can expect in the next grade. Other schools have a sales pitch and she feels this would be a nice way to create higher numbers or returning students. Debra Berkey will follow up with Mrs. Cross regarding this process.

9. Executive Board report.

Juli Newman:

a. Review Audit FY 19- already reviewed. Public document.

b. Financial Review. November/December financials. Utilities extremely high. Nicholas Toronto is analyzing the cost effectiveness of the solar panels. When the name of our school was changed in the refi process, we think perhaps a billing issue was created. The financials are good. We always hire lead teachers first, based on enrollment numbers, assistants accordingly based entirely on number of students to maintain ratio. We are considering offering a few of our shining assistants Montessori training as we would like them to stay and teach as a profession. Special Education Policies and Procedures have been updated and approved. Insurance cost for employees is up 8.4%. We will continue offering our employees insurance at 50% employer paid rates. Per legal guidelines a few changes have been made to the faculty handbook.

1. 990 (non profit). This is a public document. Reviewed. Approved by Executive Board.

2. & 3. Construction Loan/Projects Completed. Of the original \$250,000, we have \$13,000 remaining. Project lists have been paid with construction funds, donations, or M&O facility funds as appropriate. Toddler shade structure and two retention walls to eliminate the flooding issues of the past; updated plumbing in the form of a French drain; the removal of the south door from room 2 coupled with the installation of the brick and frame wall to replace the door and concrete pour out to level the ground creating a new water flow pattern; a complete upgrade of the large pool including pool deck, pump, and upgraded technology. New plumbing from the main line up the north side of the property, new asphalt, and some smaller projects. We are currently receiving bids for a complete bathroom restructuring between rooms 7 and 8. The upgraded security gates have been ordered and paid for. We are in conversation with the company on delivery and install date. Debra Berkey inquired about the storage facility being built at the west end of the property. Our General Contractor, Josh Kattau is also a parent and generously donating his time and money to have this building constructed. We are eternally grateful to him and his company for his time and generosity. (Addendum: Maieta Clark sold the second and final storage pod. Removal will happen on Monday, February 18)

4. **Fundraising.** Our annual Shining Stars **Gala** is on April 13, 2019. We will be having our first ever annual **golf tournament** sponsored by PGA tours

Superstores at OrangeTree/Firestar golf course. It is open to parents and the general public. PGA superstore does every aspect of the organization for this event. Flyers are currently being circulated within the golfing community. We will have them for disbursement on campus shortly. Montessori Academy will be the recipient of the monies received from this fantastic event. We have received donation to add a new golf cart for our Facilities manager to manage the time and transference of materials from one job to the next on our larger campus. We are eternally grateful to the PGA tours Superstore for their support of our school.

5. **Tax Credit.** Our annual tax drive is at \$9,000. This is very low from where we were last year. We need to do a big push to bring these funds up. Debra and DeGraff Berkey have generously donated \$10,000 dollars to match the tax drive donations we currently have. Where does it go? To name a few: Outdoor environment teachers, P.E., the beautification of our outdoor environments, playgrounds, more shade, less sand, etc. An information packet regarding the specifics of where the monies for the tax credit go will be available for review by the end of February.

III. Governing Board committee membership (Advisory Council) Jennifer Dunn has stepped down as Co-Chair and is taking a leave of absence from Board Membership. If we have board members absent more than three times we will need to remove them from the board. We are currently accepting applications for new members to the board. We have several available slots.

10. Final Call for Public Comment. Andrea Corbin asked about the capability of storage for the supply boxes and it was clarified they arrive in mass just before the start of the next school year. A proud moment, George Wood told us his son, Owen Wood, alumni of Montessori Academy just made the Dean's List. He is now in Engineering. Juli Newman was very proud. Kara Tustin wants the subject of Early Education lunches to be agendized for next meeting. She feels the children, per conversations with assistants and fellow parents, should be moved from the outdoor lunch environment to indoors. DHS does not allow children to eat on the floor, and having established lunch tables within the classrooms would be a spatial and timing issue as lunch would have to be set up and removed daily in order for this to happen. Sean Olivier shared with us American Turf sells artificial turf at 73 cents a sq ft and would be an excellent company to receive a bid from in our need to replace the sand on our playgrounds.

11. Set date for next meeting. Kara Tustin set the next Board Meeting for February 27, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

12. Meeting moved to adjourn by Kara Tustin, seconded by George Wood. Deb Berkey, Kara Tustin, George Wood, and Maieta Clark voted in favor. Approved 4-0. Adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

**The next REGULARLY scheduled Advisory Council meeting will be held February 27, 2019, 6:00 pm at 6050 N Invergordon Rd, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253, in Room 11 or other such accommodations as may be appropriate. If members interested in attending desire telephone call-in information, please submit such request in writing to the Secretary at least 48 hours prior to the meeting time so that we may ensure a quorum, or to the extent possible.**

**Submitted by: Maieta Clark, Secretary on February 1st, 2019.**