

BIRCH LANE MONTESSORI PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MPAC)  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 20, 2016 at 7pm

- 1) Welcome/ Introductions- Cindy Pickett
  - a) 16 people present
- 2) Review of Minutes- Shawna Stevens
  - a) Soji Howe moved to approve the October 18, 2016 minutes; Sheryl Soucy-Lubell seconded the motion; passed
- 3) Treasurer's Report- Cindy Pickett (Liz Truong absent)
  - a) Received \$550 dollars in donations on Giving Tuesday
  - b) Expenses: paying for t shirts, Villalobos and Hansen teacher requests
  - c) Outstanding expenditures for each teacher- not all have spent it.
    - i) Ms. Vellanoweth- do the \$200 teacher funds roll over? Cindy Pickett asked to please spend it this school year.
    - ii) Teachers- don't assume we can't do items priced higher than \$200, please ask.
- 4) Principal's Report- Jim Knight
  - a) Board approved Carol Sadler for half-time teaching position in Ms. Markley's K/1 classroom. Transition time will be 2 weeks.
  - b) Interviews for half-time 4/5 position tomorrow (12/21/16); applicant just finished credential program. Jim Knight observed her and she looks promising.
  - c) Mr. Knight met with parents in Almeida's class. She's out until 2/7/17. Long term sub (Ms. Yu) in place until she returns. Communications are now in place with teacher and parents; Mr. Knight answered all questions and concerns. Amanda Guyer asked about distribution of a parent email list to the classroom. Mr. Knight volunteered to gather classroom emails to ensure good communication between parents and the school.
  - d) District paying for all teachers that want to go to conference in March. Includes hotels and flights.
  - e) District paid for and completed the American Montessori School membership. We're at the initiate level this year and next. Will give us credibility and a hiring pool. Will advertise with them for all teaching positions.
  - f) Dorte Madsen- asked about art teacher and PE teacher positions. They are not district employees, but are covered by a PTA stipend. They need to be credentialed. Art teacher being posted through the district. PE teacher contracted (Mr. Lam) - he's hurt but is planning to come back. Teachers have been having to implement PE due to the sub situation. Craig asked about the PE curriculum. Mr. Knight answered that there is a dance unit, yoga unit, dodge ball, infinity tag, frisbee, kickball, tennis, racquetball and baseball.
  - g) Feb. 9 is Montessori Kindergarten Information Night. Registration is Feb. 15. Tours run by Mr. Knight on Jan. 30, 31, and Feb 2 at 9am. Keeping registration window open longer, possibly a few weeks.
- 5) Teacher's Report- All Teachers Present
  - a) Ms. Villalobos: On campus field trip with amazing animals. Math- 1st graders using snake game and golden bead. Language: Kinders still mastering letter sounds and word

building. Received clay grant to implement clay/art unit classroom. Completing 2nd year of BITSA with Lakshmi Aradhya.

- b) Ms. Palow- Poetry slam in October; do it every other year. It's a well-attended event in the MPR. 6th graders working on an ancient China project. Working on scrolls of the different dynasties; there will be an informal assessment via a Jeopardy game. Must be knowledgeable of all dynasties. Math coach coming to classroom- teaching how to conceptualize math skills; great experience. Decimal division- readiness for 7th grade math. 5th graders- working on colonies. Pocket folder research helps categorize citation sources. Re-enacting battles and historic visitors (Ben Franklin, Betsy Ross). Grammar unit/ Montessori second level. Holiday party with puffy snowball fight and traditional conga line out the door.

Reviving Birch Lane newspaper for intermediate students. Meet every Thursday at lunch. Meet in Ms. Palow's classroom.

- c) Ms. Sater: Heritage project in November. 2nd graders create a heritage box; 3rd graders complete a heritage report. Learning about Native Americans and visited the Maidu Center last week; that will continue through Jan. Will also do the third great lesson in January. Using \$200 from MPAC to purchase the timeline of human life for the third great lesson; sensorial timeline. Learning about Festivals of Light and the different holidays celebrated by different cultures. Math: 3rd graders- fractions with decimal on the horizon. Ms. Sater attended the Math Talk lesson through the district. Helped teach different ways to solve a problem since there are a lot of pathways to solving a problem. Social skills work: Susie Carroll has done work with mindfulness activity.
- d) Ms. Vellanoweth- getting to know the classroom. Kinder- addition strip board, snake game, golden bead material. 1st graders- subtraction board. Moveable alphabet with Kinders; 1st graders- conjunctions and homophones. Focusing on animals in Antarctica- 1st graders are doing research. Mo Willems author project. Yoga, cursive writing, and learning about different holidays.
- e) Ms. McBride- 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are working on parts of speech; nouns and articles. 3<sup>rd</sup> graders- sentence diagramming and practice learning how to use the dictionary. Cultural studies- field trip to planetarium. Lots of questions students are interested in- example: What was here before space? Studying different continents; a diverse group of parents talking about their different countries and cultures in the classroom.
- f) Ms. Aradhya: very similar to Palow. Field trips coming up- grow and give project- 5th graders serving to seniors; received DAF grant; holiday party; buddies and reading books.

6) Vice President's Report- Craig Spence

- a) Excited about teachers going to San Diego. Trying to raise profile of our school. Fundraising has been squeezed out by other school activities. Need to make a push around early February to begin our donation drive. Asking teachers for cool list of projects- like video blogs to get people excited about supporting the program. Looking for an event that would be fun for parents. Ms. Sater suggested highlighting what we recently purchased. Parents suggested highlighting the student experience. Cindy Pickett said seeing the child work with the materials in a video would be powerful. Craig

Spence supported that by also noting that people like to know where their money is going.

- 7) President's Report- Cindy Pickett
  - a) See below
- 8) District Updates- Cindy Pickett and Soji Howe
  - a) SPAC- presentation on concussions; letting the nurse know so the children and the school can go through a protocol. District talking about achievement gap. Cindy is interested in how the achievement gap looks with Montessori students. District trying to document the gap right now. Focused on long-term English learners. Are they doing better in Montessori vs. traditional programs? Would our methods be helpful?
  - b) Dorte Madsen- trying to reach out to low-income preschoolers, but not reaching them. Hard to reach those families. 100 English learner students at school and about 27% of them are Spanish speaking. Mandarin and Chinese follow at second and third place. Amanda Guyer: what are the markers? Ms. Palow: There is hesitancy with new families. Draw parallels between Montessori and their culture. Draw on parents in the program who speak Spanish and Chinese and can advocate for our program. Craig Spence- Is there a benefit to recruiting all these children if they won't get in? Sheryl Soucy-Lubell- we need to recruit them so they apply before the deadline and are in the running; often apply after the date. Ms. Sater- we've succeeded with special needs kids, but not English language learners.
- 9) Other Business- T-shirts are still being delivered.
- 10) Adjourn at 8:17pm