

The Grand Rapids Child Discover Center (GRCDC) is a diverse, urban, K-5 school in the heart of Grand Rapids, MI. The school believes education is based on relationships; relationships to others, to ideas, to the environment and the larger community. This approach is based on the Reggio Emilia method that encourages curiosity, discovery and connectedness. This shared experience in passionate discovery engages all members of our school community in co-constructing a unique and effective education.



June 13, 2016 – GRCDC Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 6:01 pm

Attending

Board Members: Eric Doyle, Andrew Brower, Jon Beer, Lisa Nuyens Heyne. (Absent: Mary Witte)

Administrators: John Robinson, Sarah Cooper and Beth Scarbrough

GRPS Representative: Esther Kuiper

Guests and Staff: Sana Amash, Andrew Kleinschmit, Abby Sutter, Natasha Nyberg and Ted Jauw and Janelle Gaudet.

Motion to Approve Agenda, 2nd-ed, approved unanimously, with addition of Sarah Cooper presenting peer coach job descriptions.

Motion to Approve May 9, 2016 Minutes and supported unanimously.

In the body of these minutes new DAL's are highlighted in blue, and highlighted in green when if they are historic and being reported on.

Reggio Reflection

Eric shared the connection to the Early Discovery Center and their portfolio day, the similarities and the option to share learning across the organizations.

Abby shared the great celebration of the 5th grade graduation. Specifically, ways the commencement speaker (Mr. Trevor) engaged the children for what they've done in the past and how that connects to their future.

Public Comment

Ted took a moment to honor Mr. K and Ms. Amash for their leadership in the before and after care process. Specifically, their integration of the Reggio principals in the ideation and determination of recommendations are creating a great process and experience for everyone.

Decision Action Log Report-out:

DAL- Eric asked Esther to assist in researching the steps taken to create the initial GREA agreement that teachers now have and the reasoning and conditions of the contract verbiage around Article 25.

Esther believes she has found the right contact in GRPS and will report back on this at our next meeting.

DAL- (previous DALs discussed the Discovery Care program) Sana and Andrew are asked to provide an update on the work of the Discovery Care Focus Group

Sana reported that the group has already interviewed one of the two programs that are under consideration. This is a great group to work with that follows the cycle of inquiry, asking two questions: What is currently working? What challenges is the program currently facing? This group also includes parents from the current Discovery Care. This has created an iterative process where ideas are building from each other.

Final recommendations will be presented at our next public meeting (likely at the end of June alongside the budget approvals).

DAL- Board asked for an update on performance data importance, reporting and use (John, Sarah, and Beth)

John explained the intent of this, which is to maintain the focus on Reggio while still keeping key data in front of the school board, leadership and staff, particularly teachers. John and Sarah are integrating this into their plan for next year.

Sarah added that we view all children as capable and the data can certainly help us meet and help students enjoy the highest learning opportunities.

This will be an ongoing DAL to understand how it is being integrated into the coming year.

DAL- Board asked for an update on the school calendar and for the calendar to be communicated in its final form (John)

The action team (Teachers, Leadership and family team) helped develop a series of great options that have now been approved and distributed. This includes adherence to the state and KISD mandates for number of days (180) and hours, as well as modeling our partner district GRPS. School day end times have been adjusted, as well, to allow for two recesses during the day, which was a critical request from the school community.

This is complete.

DAL- Board asked for update on the Employee Handbook (John and Lisa)

In process and teachers/staff will receive a near final draft this month and then a final version by the

start of the '16/'17 academic school year.

DAL- Board asked John for an update on how to staff the lunch room

John has been in contact with food services on multiple occasions. There is some opportunity to use some part of our food service budget. However, over the summer, John will work out a staffing/volunteer plan to be shared.

Lisa clarified that the intent of this DAL is to protect the lunchtime of the teachers as well as ensure a safe and active lunch/recess time for the students.

John will continue to report on this DAL until a plan is established. Options for consideration will be presented by the end of July, so that hiring can occur in August.

This is a hard role to fill with volunteers, but other schools do have more organized volunteer options to engage a broader group. Abby and Ted also contributed some great ideas of how to increase parent involvement and ways to supplement costs for the school to support this necessary role. Natasha and Jessie will be taking some of these up.

Data Review

Beth walked through the data that was submitted prior to the meeting and there have been significant gains and real accomplishments in reading across the whole school. This has been a great effort across all teachers and classrooms leaders. However, in Math, the upper age discoveries are not showing growth in Math and it there is higher concern when the data is disaggregated by race, ethnicity and socio-economic status. The board wants to continue to emphasize the breakdown of the data so we can understand, also, how the different discoveries are performing. This work is being kept front and center each month to make sure we're making decisions at the school that are informed by academic opportunity for all children and support or reinforce strategies that are making a difference.

Abby raised some questions about how the data may be shared better with parents/families so that they may complement or help students throughout the year and the summer.

Lisa suggested a summer DAL to test the validity of our measurement systems so that we have the proper tools to measure student growth as well as the strategies to then address problems or enhance supportive practices.

A second DAL is to align the M-Step data with the school data we are currently tracking.

Abby suggested a way to better utilize the website for learning opportunities that could be shared by the teachers to complement what they are working on during the current school month, etc.

Reports

Family Team-

Natasha reported there is \$5,415 in the FT checking account.

\$3000 was raised for the yearbooks. Once the books and designers are paid, the balance will be closer to \$2500, which is similar to the start of the year.

The craft sale was a success and will be repeated, with some slight changes, next year.

Next year's meetings will move to the 2nd Tuesday of the month to avoid early month holiday conflicts as well as introduce evening meetings to work with parents and families that may not be able to be free during the day.

Administration –

John R distributed a written report prior to the board meeting.

John asked for support to connect with Mary Free Bed regarding the shared use of Cass Ave. John B will follow up with potential contacts.

In regard to ongoing conversations with the teachers regarding time usage, the school day and meetings have been adjusted to honor the desires of the educators as well as meet the needs of the school and community. It is a critical goal to honor the time of all the staff and teachers while recognizing that GRCDC operates as a small not-for-profit with higher staff and contribution needs than large school districts. The school is committing to a predictable and reliable lunch time, protected planning times on Wednesday, one less CP meeting per month and further planning time available during Mind Meets Music.

Exec team and John will revisit the community event/squadra compensation model.

All evaluations will be done on time for this academic year.

Sarah distributed job descriptions (to be paid via stipend) for both a math and science curriculum peer teacher that will serve as a peer leaders for professional development to train across and within Discoveries.

The School Improvement Plan was discussed and all proposed edits suggested by board members will go to Beth and John by Sunday the 19th of June.

Finance and Fundraising-

Andrew reported on both the revised budget for the '15/'16 school year and the very early draft of the '16/'17 draft. We are projected to end the school year well above our 5% fund balance requirement, but note that part of this was due to no expenditures on capital outlay projects.

The Patronicity campaign for the green space is nearly complete and only \$2679.00 remains to activate the match from the MEDC.

John will send out a final share push to get the last remaining dollars in by the end of the campaign. That will be sent June 14.

Operations-

Jon B is leading the board's work around the evaluations of John and Sarah.

Lisa, Jon B and Andrew will attend the teacher strategic planning meeting.

Lisa DAL: Question regarding the status of the website.

Marketing/Communication-

Mary was absent from the meeting and Lisa reported that she will return after the summer, but not leading the marketing team.

Board will need to reconvene for budget approvals and will do so on June 29 at 6pm.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 pm

Next Meeting is June 29, 2016 at GRCDC 6 pm for approval of budgets, School Improvement Plan and the Discovery Care proposals.