

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 which 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.



May 9, 2016 – GRCDC Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 6:02 pm

Attending

Board Members: Eric Doyle, Andrew Brower, Jon Beer, Lisa Heyne and Mary Witte (Absent: Raymond McDaniel)

Administrators: John Robinson (Absent: Sarah Cooper-Maternity Leave). Beth Scarbrough

GRPS Representative: Esther Kuiper

Guests and Staff: Sana Amash, Andrew Kleinschmit, Melissa Lantinga, Brooke Streu, Danielle Starke, Rosalie Kaser, Deb De Jong, Joe Washington, Jason Ference, Natasha Nyberg, Amanda Rimer.

Motion to Approve Agenda, 2nd-ed, minor change, approved unanimously, (Incomplete action items from September to February are not be included.) A report by Danielle Stark -Cross Indicators Report was moved up in the agenda so Danielle can leave if needed. Subsequent to the approval, Eric saw that one DAL was missing from agenda regarding (lunch program funding), It included in the meeting and is reported in these minutes.

Motion to Approve April 11, 2016 Minutes, 2nd-ed, noted correction of spelling of Pegeen's name, otherwise approved 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

Sana shared her excitement and Discovery B's success in this month's activities around their learning project. The students visited Mel Trotter Mission, Mary Free Bad, the Human Society and Maple Creek Retirement.

Andrew K. reported the fantastic success of Discovery D (C, E and F) at the May 3rd sale at the Museum (and subsequent follow up events at the GRCDC). They made \$485.50 and are deciding how to donate the money. (Unit on business and commerce-tracking the cycle of economics.)

Public Comment

Joe Washington from the MEA voiced concern regarding the GREA agreements held by GRCDC teachers, and for teacher's rights. He "plead to arrange a meeting to discuss the issues of governance". He asked for a conversation with John R and Board President. Eric responded that the board was more than willing to have that meeting.

DAL: Eric asked Esther to assist in researching the steps taken to create the initial "contract" that teachers now have and share any known reasoning and conditions of the contract verbiage around Article 25.

There was continued discussion regarding the state of GRCDC contracts with staff, and it was clarified that we have current employee agreements with all staff and that agreement is the same for all staff. In that agreement it sets the terms of employment and states that the GRCDC is an at-will employer.

Amanda Rimer (Para Pro Discovery A) believes when "everyone counts (is important and treated that as important), everything else falls in place". She expressed her love for the school and how it has impacted her and her daughter's life (a 4th grade student). She voiced her concern for morale based on her experience of some staff sadness. The group responded supportively.

Cross Indicators Report

Danielle Stark addressed the board to present the Cross Indicators Report. Her presence (and need for report) at the meeting is part of the requirement of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring System as a result of a late IEP report from last year. She reported that she and the GRCDC had fulfilled the state requirements for corrective action. Members of the board inquired about reporting since last year and it was reported that we are compliant. John R. acknowledged Danielle's help and commended her on great performance as team lead for special education at the GRCDC. Danielle handed out a CIMS which is part of the attachments for these minutes)

Educational and behavioral data, goals and support

7.1 From previous meeting- DAL: While there was many issues raised regarding the before and after school program, it was agreed that the rising one was the plan going forward. To that end, an informational meeting was scheduled for April 27th at 6pm at school. This date will allow the meeting to be promoted in two Link Letters. The agenda for the meeting will be made public and include information and disclosure on circumstances that brought us to this point.

John R. reported that there was a meeting on 4/27 where several board members, staff members and parents were present. Volunteers were solicited from that group to join a focus group to continue the conversation on the future of the program. There is a May 18 meeting scheduled with this group to "brainstorm and explore the cycle of inquiry". Then the plan is to have a second meeting when the focus group will respond with their recommendations based on opportunities allowed by administrative perimeters and their creative problem solving.

DAL: Prior to the May 18 meeting, John R to send to members of the focus group the perimeters for the discussion. The board acknowledged that John R, as principal, is responsible for the final recommendation for the structure and implementation of the program.

7.2 DAL Continued: 1. the board asked that there be a meeting (John, Beth, Sana and Trevor) to discuss the behavior system. 2. John to work with Sana to get it this topic on next week's staff meeting (CP meeting) so all staff can be involved in conversation.

John R. solicited Sana to report what had occurred. Sana reported that the parties did meet, and the topic was on the agenda for the staff at a CP meeting last month. Sana further reported that it was observed that all parties have different ideas about the system (based on personal history). This discussion is now for administration to continue and will not be brought forward on the board's agenda unless circumstances demand otherwise.

7.3 DAL; (Eric) and all the board asked staff and administrators to continue to work on this issue of performance data importance and data reporting going forward. Be creative, be collaborative-Work on how to keep data front and center. Report progress at the next board meeting.

No specific outcomes but Beth reported that there have been several meetings about performance data over the last month. Jon B repeated the request as outlined in the above DAL to collaborate on a structure for data reporting that is meaningful to all stakeholders. (Not replacing state required items, nor excluding other statistical reports that may also include Reggio or other criteria that is meaning ful.) DAL extended.

DAL this action item is extended asking for reporting at next month's meeting for progress and planning.

7.4 Continued DAL: the Board asked John to meet with this calendar committee volunteer group and report progress, outcomes and deadlines set at the May board meeting.

The calendar committee met 4/19 and 4/28 and another meeting is to be scheduled for further feedback. Next year's school calendar needs to be set by June 1, 2016

DAL this action item is extended and the board is looking for a report at the June board meeting outlining next year's school calendar.

7.5 Continued DAL: The Board asked John to manage a period of planning for Staff Handbook revisions at least two weeks prior to publishing.

There was a discussion on the editing and republishing of the Staff Handbook recognizing the impact it has on employee agreements. The goal is to have edits complete May 23rd, with board and staff feedback by May 31st. A final draft to be published in time for the issuing of employee agreements due June 15 to all staff.

DAL this action item is extended and the board asked for a report at the next board meeting of the process and the status of completion.

7.6 (Part of Administrators Report) DAL: The board asked John to follow up with Philip Greene requesting permission to use lunch funds to pay for an additional lunch monitor/server every day from now through the end of the school year. This is to be done ASAP

John R reported that Philip Greene had defined the use of fund credits and that they could be used for staffing for serving of lunch. A discussion followed that resulted in a desire to maximize the credit (contracting as many staff as possible) while planning for the future. Questions were raised for the sustainability of the funded staffing, which was not known at the meeting. There was an overall concern expressed for the use of teacher and staff time during lunches and it was agreed that using contract help could alleviate hardship.

DAL this action item is extended and the board asked John to request at least 2 contract workers and to work with Greene to determine how many staff for how long, in what roles performed could be afforded.

Data Review

Beth sent out 2 months of data by email the week before the board meeting for all to review. She reports that the school is maintaining 5% of behavior incidents in the tiered system. (80% no incidents, 15% occasional incidents, 5% repeated incidents). She also reported that the last months of school there are a lot of “fun” activities that helps level behavior. She reminded that this year’s data is creating a baseline.

Andrew B noted the disproportionate representation of Black and African American students, and questioned how we are continuing to ensure we are creating a culture of inclusion.

There was a discussion regarding the need for and the active search for affordable multi-cultural behavioral training resources. (Noting that Eric Jensen and his team (“Poverty in Mind”) is ideal but unaffordable)

Reports

Family Team-

Natasha reported there is \$2,434 in the FT checking account.

The family team’s current push is the annual yearbook publishing. They have raised \$1,500 towards their \$2,300 goal which will afford all students to receive a free yearbook.

There is a need to get more parents and families involved to spread the work of the family team.

Administration –

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

John verbalized that staff evaluations are in progress and will be complete in the next 3 weeks. He reported the continued work on addressing staff concerns.

Eric asked if there were any questions about Johns report. Eric thanked everyone who had taken on responsibilities while Sarah Cooper was out on maternity leave. Sarah returns to school May 23, 2016

Finance and Fundraising-

Andrew reported that a financial review this month found finances to be “sound”. He hopes to influence reporting by reducing the quantity of reporting categories for greater understanding going forward.

The LOC has been paid in full.

Next month this school year final budget needs to be reviewed and approved by the board. The 2016-2017 school year budget will also need to be approved, by June 30 for the year starting July 1, 2016.

Andrew also reporting on the outdoor classroom fundraising project. He has researched past grants we have received and has had new conversations with local grantors. The current goal is to finish funding Phase I of the program (De-paving and greening of the property) that has a \$125,000 budget. Currently we have \$63,000 raised.

Our best opportunity to raise the remaining \$63,000 is a matching grant program from the MEDC, called "Patricinity". This program matches donations we raise dollar for dollar for a campaign structured over 30 days. The good news is that there are donors already secured who will donate a combined \$18,500 during this campaign which reduces the total need to less than \$12,000.

Andrew reported the plan is to identify captains who each will commit to raising a portion of the needed funds; a crowd sourcing fund raising campaign.

After money is raised, the next step to execution would to hire a project manager. The \$125,000 budget does not include funds to pay a project manager so the plan is to cover staffing in an ad hoc way.

Operations-

Lisa reported that the DAL's are helpful to focus administration's efforts and her time this month has been invested in those DAL's as well as HR and operational issues that require support.

Jon B and Lisa will be meeting with individuals interested in joining the board over the next 30 days, 30 minute conversations exploring their interests and explaining our needs. There was discussion on the process to vetting new board members, Esther coached us to contact Julie Anderson at the GRPS for process information.

Sana asked about the future year end administration evaluation, asking if the board had standard for improvements. The staff spend time writing evaluations and she raised a concern that staff comments were considered in the development of administrator's performance. Eric responded that the same survey will be distributed before school ends, and it is the same one used for mid-year. Lisa reported that they survey does create a statistical measurement that can be viewed comparatively.

Marketing/Communication-

Mary reported her efforts to support the family team promotions (yearbook and craft sale) as well as promoting the May 15 Family Health Expo, working with the Junior League.

Rachel H. was helpful this month downloading photos from Trevor so the new web page can now be designed

Board Position Elections-

Eric moved to nominate Lisa to be the new Board President, motion was 2nd and all board members voted unanimously to support the motion. (One year term)

Eric moved to nominate Jon B to be the Vice President, motion was 2nd, and all board members voted unanimously to support the motion. (One year term, and on its completion to become President.)

Lisa called the meeting to a close at 7:54 pm

Meeting Adjourned at 7:54 pm

Next Meeting is June 13, 2016 at GR CDC 6 pm (A second June board meeting may be necessarily to approve budgets by June 30, 2016)