



**Elm City Montessori School  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
3 May 2018**

Attendees: Mira Debs, Mike Nast, Keith Krolak, Julia Webb, Eliza Halsey, Susan Clark. Alayna Stone and Fernando Muniz joined by phone. David Low joined by phone at 6:47 PM.

| Meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm.

**I. April Meeting Minutes**

The April, 2018 meeting minutes were approved pending a correction of a typo in the heading of item I: "November Meeting Minutes" will be corrected to "March Meeting Minutes".

**II. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**III. Principal Updates**

- 1) ECMS Strategic Goals 2017 data for April, 2018 was presented.
  - a) Stronger Community
    - i) Staff attendance remained at 87% for April with a goal of 93 %. It was indicated that one faculty member (not named) has had consistently more absences than others.
    - ii) Student chronic absenteeism was 15% for April. This exceeds the 20% goal.
  - b) Safe and Productive Classrooms
    - i) Removals from classrooms decreased to 23.7 per week in April.
    - ii) The ECMS goal for June, 2018 is to have fewer than 20 removals per week.
  - c) Academic Growth
    - i) April data shows the current reading goals for the entire ECMS student population are currently short of year-end goals, but students continue to make considerable progress since the beginning of the current school year.
    - ii) Current data shows 14.29% of first graders are at grade level (year-end goal of 60%), 54.55% of second graders (year-end goal of 60%) are at grade level, and 55.56% of third graders (year-end goal of 75%) are at grade level.

**IV. Executive Director Updates**

- 1) Finances
  - a) March 2018 monthly expenditures for ECMS managed-funds were \$73,960.
  - b) Currently, our average monthly expenditures for FY18 are \$70,684 for ECMS-managed funds.
  - c) \$232,097 in cash on hand as of March 31, 2018
  - d) Received second FY18 quarterly payment (\$90,000) from NHPS on April 3, 2018. Awaiting third FY18 quarterly payment from NHPS. ECMS expects the fourth FY18 quarterly NHPS payment in June 2018.
- 2) Grants and Fundraising
  - a) The Great Give: ECMS families, board and community members engaged in The Great Give 2018 with a goal of raising \$10,000. ECMS surpassed its goal by raising \$14,296 through 249 donors and won a \$5,000 prize for the number of new donors.
  - b) Walton Foundation: ECMS will submit a brief proposal for short and long-term facilities funding needs by May 10th based on the recommendation of Blake Noel.

- 3) Contracts
  - a) Charter School Business Management (CSBM): current FY19 contract is for \$4,950, though we have \$15,000 for financial managements services included in the approved FY18 budget. We have paid \$4,916.25 for CSBM services through February 2018. The Finance Committee approval an additional \$1,500 to the current CSBM contract to cover financial management services through June 2018. We will reassess our contract with CSBM for FY19.
- 4) Enrollment and potential ECMS move
  - a) ECMS continued its robust student recruitment efforts this year, engaging hundreds of community members and sharing information about ECMS. There will be approximately 45 to 50 new families across all grades joining ECMS in the fall of 2018. Majority of new students will be in the Pre K program (approximately 36 children)
  - b) Communications have gone out to all families regarding the potential ECMS Elementary program move to the proposed Blake Street location.
    - i) Concerns about families with children in two locations.
    - ii) Many resolution details have been discussed: bus stops, extended day options, and carpools.
    - iii) Feedback from parents has been mostly positive
  - c) Discussion occurred regarding research on Montessori schools that begin as start-ups and then move to different neighborhoods and cause a change in the diversity of the student population.
    - i) If a school moves to a more affluent neighborhood, the lottery often results in more white students joining the school and thereby reducing the number of minority students.
    - ii) May need to consider a weighted lottery to insure student population diversity – but ECMS would have to engage the State Department of Education on this issue.
    - iii) As an alternative, the outreach program could focus more on the low income areas of the surrounding West Rock community.
    - iv) Explore Head Start and School Readiness programs as a vehicle to keep student population diverse.
  - d) Discussion occurred about the letter that went out notifying parents of the potential ECMS move to a different neighborhood. Concern was expressed about the amount of information that has gone out regarding the move prior to the signing of the lease. Executive Director will share with the board an update of the meeting with the Blake Street property real estate agent that is scheduled for Monday, 7 May 2018.
  - e) Attempts have been made to discuss the potential ECMS move with the District. To date, despite several efforts by ECMS to contact the District, ECMS has not been successful in scheduling a meeting with the District personnel regarding updated ECMS plans for the potential move to a new location. ECMS will continue efforts to schedule an update meeting with the District.
  - f) In the recent budget meeting with NHPS budget adviser, Darrell Hill, NHPS Director Madeline Negrón and others from the NHPS team, the NHPS team noted that the district was open to ECMS approving new facilities, but could not convert in-kind rent to cash to support rent at a new facility.
- 5) Board
  - a) Keith Krolak has fulfilled a three-year term as the parent representative on the ECMS Board of Trustees.
  - b) Discussion occurred regarding inviting other ECMS parents to run for election to the Board. The general consensus was that having a different parent assume the parent representative role would be desirable.
  - c) The board expressed interest in inviting Keith to join the Board as a community member with architectural expertise for a three-year term.
  - d) ECMS will communicate to parents that the parent representative position will become available.
  - e) It was suggested that Keith be the mentor for the future new parent representative of the Board.
- 6) ECMS Organizational Framework
  - a) The Principal and Executive Director presented a proposal to revise the ECMS leadership structure:
    - i) The role of the Principal is to lead the school.
    - ii) The role of the Executive Director is to lead the nonprofit organization.
    - iii) The ECMS would be better served by no longer having the Executive Director report to the Principal as the roles are separate and distinct to the management of the ECMS.
  - b) Discussion occurred around the importance of a clear identification of management roles at ECMS.

- c) Discussion occurred around having the proposal include a semi-annual review of the organizational framework to track progress and allow for amending if required.
- 7) Leadership Team and Salaries
- a) Discussion occurred about current salaries relative to leadership positions and comparable salaries at other New Haven public schools.
  - b) No recommendations are being made at this time, but the Principal and Executive Director will be reviewing ECMS salaries at a later date and may come to the Board with recommendations.

## **V. Committee Updates**

There were no committee updates

## **VI. Action Items**

- 1) The board voted to approve the motion for the Principal to run the academic side of the ECMS and for the Executive Director to run the operations of the ECMS, to no longer have the Executive Director report to the Principal, and instead have the Executive Director report directly to Board. The approved motion includes a semi-annual review of the ECMS organizational framework for amending if so required by the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM

End of Meeting Minutes