



**Elm City Montessori School  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
5 November 2020**

Attendees: Mira Debs, Alayna Stone, Dave Low, Arianna Arreola Joseph, Fernando Muniz, Michael Van Leesten, Haci Catalbasoglu, Julia Webb, Eliza Halsey, Susan Clark, Keith Krolak

Meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm

**I. Meeting Minutes**

- A. The September 2020 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**II. Public Participation**

- A. There were no members of the public in attendance.
- B. A notice for the board meeting is included in the weekly news letter which is emailed to parents of students. A link to the board meeting will be provided to anyone in the community who emails ECMS requesting it.

**III. Principal's Report**

- A. Covid Update
  - 1. ECMS had five weeks of in-school classes during the fall session
  - 2. Two cases of Covid were reported in the school community, outside of ECMS, and there was no transmission within ECMS.
  - 3. Due to a recommendation from the Health Department, ECMS suspended in-school classes and returned to online remote learning procedures as of Monday, 2 November 2020.
  - 4. ECMS leadership is currently meeting on a weekly basis to assess the overall community health situation to determine when it will be safe to return to in-school learning.
  - 5. Part of the consideration for suspending in-school learning was due to the recent Covid outbreak among several bus drivers, forcing a shutdown of school bus operations throughout New Haven.
  - 6. Outdoor learning is continuing for approximately 2.5 hours a week at ECMS.
- B. Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
  - 1. New Dean of SEL has joined the ECMS staff
  - 2. Implementing SEL work within the context of Covid
  - 3. Helping learners work through the trauma of Covid by mindfulness, meditation, breathing, rituals and routines.
  - 4. Will begin family wellness workshops in the upcoming weeks.
  - 5. Working on restorative work in the classrooms by incorporating ABAR principles.
  - 6. Strengthening interventions to support SEL work so that students can be present for academic work.
- C. Montessori Curriculum
  - 1. Recreating classroom work to incorporate ABAR principles
  - 2. Gathering and updating Montessori materials to provide more accurate learning tools.
  - 3. Working on strengthening Science Research Based Intervention (SRBI)

**IV. Executive Director's Report**

- A. Finances/Fundraising
  - 1. Average monthly expenditures for FY21 are in alignment with overall budget outlines.
  - 2. ECMS received the first two NHPS quarterly payments. Third quarter payments from both NHPS and CSDE are scheduled for January 2021.
  - 3. ECMS received \$25,000 of general operating funding from Bill Graustein and \$10,000 match for funds raised in the Great Give.
  - 4. ECMS has applied to the Graustein Memorial Fund to support ABAR work at ECMS and anticipate a response by December 2020.
- B. Facilities/Operations

1. Installation of new NHPS security and PA system is fully complete. ECMS staff have badges and keycard access. The district is planning to upgrade our wireless access in the coming weeks.
  2. Facilities Assessment: As we plan for growth at 495 Blake St, we are assessing the costs of several major facilities improvements including additional roof repair, new windows and upgraded HVAC systems. We aim to have assessments and projected costs by the end of November.
- C. Community & External Relations
1. ECMS has been selected as inaugural member of The Bridges Collaborative, a nationwide initiative to advance diversity, equity & inclusion in education. This innovative collaboration connects 56 school and housing groups from 21 states, covering 3.5 million children
- D. Enrollment:
1. ECMS enrolled 259 students as of October 1, 2020. This includes 245 New Haven students and 14 Open Choice students.

## **V. ABAR Director's Report**

- A. Montessori Materials are being reviewed for the following items:
1. Setting goals to incorporate ABAR awareness.
  2. Creating spaces for children to see themselves in the ECMS curriculum.
  3. Provide an accurate understanding of history.
- B. Family Partnerships work continues as follows:
1. Montessori Night
  2. Engage families that have not been showing up to ABAR meetings
  3. Color Brave Sessions
- C. ABAR Staff Work review of the following items:
1. Self-Work and Awareness
  2. Critical Race Theory
  3. Practicing Direct Action
  4. Book Club

## **VI. Committee Reports**

- A. Finances
1. ECMS has adequate cash on hand currently.
- B. Governance
1. Efforts will be made to better organize all Board Committee documents into a centralized Google drive.
  2. Position of Assistant Secretary has been identified in the Board Guidelines – the Governance Committee has nominated Haci for this position.
- C. Capital Planning
1. A proposal to complete a base set of architectural drawings for the entire ECMS building has been submitted by Andrei Harwell
  2. HVAC systems throughout the building need to be upgraded, particularly in the context of Covid. Requests for proposals will be issued to qualified contractors for this work.
  3. Costs for the ongoing repairs to the building need to be factored into the upcoming negotiations for ECMS to purchase the building by the end of January 2021.
  4. A meeting will be scheduled to review the draft purchase agreement with the Board in the upcoming weeks prior to voting on the final purchase agreement.

## **VII. Action Items**

- A. The board voted unanimously to elect Haci as the Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trustees.
- B. The board voted unanimously to amend Section 4.01 of the Bylaws to read: "All officers shall be elected or appointed to hold office for a term of two years."

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM

END OF MEETING NOTES

Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Keith Krolak.