



SHINING STARS
MONTESSORI ACADEMY
— PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL —

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2021
9:02 a.m. – 10:24 a.m.

A virtual meeting of the Board of Trustees (hereafter the “**Board**”) of Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School (hereafter “**Shining Stars**” or “**School**”) was held on Saturday, October 16, 2021, at 9:02 a.m. to 10:24 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Anthony King (Board Chair), called the meeting to order. R. Rodriguez recorded the minutes.

Agenda

1. Introduction
 - a. Welcome to the public
 - i. The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet.
 - b. Roll Call/Attendance
 - i. Anthony King, Esq. (Chair)
 - ii. Tatiana Laborde (Parent)
 - iii. Aldel Brown
 - iv. Regina Rodriguez-Garcia (ex-officio)
 - v. Kamal Wright-Cunningham
 - vi. Teicha Harris (Parent)
 - c. Missing Board Members
 - i. Shawn Samuel
 - ii. Willa Golden
 - d. Establish Quorum
 - i. A quorum of directors was present, and the meeting, having been convened, proceeded with the business.
2. Old Business
 - a. Vote to approve – September 18, 2021, Board of Director Minutes
 - i. No comments from Board members
 - ii. Chair moved to accept and approve Board of Directors meeting minutes
 - iii. Motion to approve made by Tatiana Laborde
 - iv. Second by Teicha Harris
 - v. An I from Kamal Wright-Cunningham, Aldel Brown, Tatiana Laborde, and Teicha Harris

- vi. September 18, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes unanimously approved by the Board.
 - b. Vote to approve - July and August 2021 Financial Statements
 - i. No comments from Board members
 - ii. Chair moved to approve July and August 2021 financial statements
 - iii. Motion to approve by Kamal Wright-Cunningham
 - iv. Second by Teicha Harris
 - v. An I from Kamal Wright-Cunningham, Teicha Harris, Aldel Brown, and Tatiana Laborde
 - vi. July and August 2021 financial statements unanimously approved by the Board for submission and publication.
3. Public Comment
- a. This time is reserved for citizens, employees, and representatives of school groups to address the Board on items that are not on the agenda. By law, the Board cannot take action upon or discuss items that are not on the approved agenda, but welcomes your comments. Persons addressing the Board are asked to state their names and whether or not they are a resident of the District. The Board Chair reserves the right to limit comments from the public as well as the amount of time spent on any one topic.
 - i. The **October 16, 2021**, meeting of the Board was open to the public.
 - ii. There were no members of the public present.
4. Executive Director's Monthly Summary Report
- a. Academic
 - i. All charter schools are required to submit the following both to OSSE and PCSB
 - 1. School Wide Plan – of schools who are Title I schools, which SSMA is, and it gives a visual of what are the major focal points for our looking at school improvement, as well as accelerated learning at our school. This plan coincides with our Continuous Education Plan (CEP). This will go on the school’s Transparency Hub on the website and in the News & Notes.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/185P6Gh7RvnPd1qH9RGvIaqImpUUBITYeVvZdRRCu2yE/edit>
 - ii. Annual Report for the past year, which all charter schools are required to submit to PCSB, and it must be posted.
 - 1. Question from Parent Board Member Tatiana Laborde: Will this go in the News and Notes?
 - 2. Response from Regina Rodriguez: Yes, it will go in the News and Notes, as well as on the Transparency Hub.
 - b. Non-Academic
 - i. COVID-19 Updates
 - 1. Covid vaccination policy was shared with staff. All staff members have it and consistent with what has been shared during staff meeting.
 - 2. A letter was sent to those staff who are claiming medical or religious exemption, along with the form they have to complete.

This form requires them to put their request in writing, that is, the exemption they are claiming and their rationale for it, which is different from the previous form. The previous form was an internal document that required them to place a check next to the exemption the staff is seeking. It also adds the disciplinary measures that will be taken if (1) they do not submit their completed form by October 22nd stating what their exemption is, and (2) if, by following the Mayor's November 1, 2021 mandate, staff will either comply with the vaccination mandate or they will be terminated. The next step, if they do not respond by the 22nd, will be suspension without pay.

3. Question from Parent Board Member Tatiana Laborde: Percentage wise, how many staff are we talking about?
 4. Response from Regina Rodriguez: We're talking about 6. The 2 requests for medical exemption have been satisfied. They are now vaccinated.
 5. PCSB COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement Policy – to be voted by PCSB's Board on Monday, October 18, 2021.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZOpeYcBNQ6JEgNbRYZX/C8wCwQgiWNmq5s8ZmNL1G8Uw/edit>
 6. Question from Parent Board Member Teicha Harris: As we were talking about the policy and I know you gave us the updates from the Mayor's office, how does that affect the religious exemption?
 7. Response from Regina Rodriguez: Exemptions are exemptions. It doesn't affect them.
 - a. The staff person will fill out the form;
 - b. The form will come to Mrs. G;
 - c. It is then reviewed internally at all schools; and
 - d. And then schools will make the decision whether or not this request for exemption will be approved based on EEOC and the sincerity clause, that drives that exemption. The schools will decide either to accept or reject.
- ii. Discipline
1. We have had no in-school reflections required and we have had no out-of-school reflections required.
- iii. Enrollment
1. Final enrollment for last year was 288, which was our target for this year, but we did not make that target. At the cut off it was 246. That was essentially 108 families that did not return. A number of those had siblings, so there was more than one child that did not return. I looked at some of the reasons they are leaving or not returning, and the reasons given to us were the following:
 - a. The largest percentage of folks went to DCPS schools because of commute. They wanted to stay in the neighborhoods because of concern for transportation, traveling, and pandemic.

- b. The next group of people wanted a virtual option, which was something the school could not offer, and it was being offered by one other charter. We saw a number of students go that charter because of the virtual option.
 - c. A significant number decided to home school and sought that approval, which is now requested by OSSE.
 - d. A number of people have left the state, and the reason for that was to go to a school that offered bilingual opportunities with a high school feeder.
 - e. About 1% went to Montessori schools.
 - 2. At-Risk population – number of at-risk students increased from 81 to 84, which is 34% of our population.
 - 3. ELL population – percentage of ELL students is 16%, but it is down from last year and a lot of that has to do with our new ELL administrator, who has been reviewing our ELL data to determine
 - a. if any students were misidentified,
 - b. duplicates, and
 - c. whether or not children were not exiting the program and are being counted twice or they have exited the program and have been counted twice.
 - 4. Special Education (SpEd) students are 12.2% of our population. There are 30 students this year and last year there were 33 students.
 - 5. FARMS Number - Free and reduced lunch is at 37 percent, which is where we have been the past few years. We have no students who are in the reduced and the balance is about 152 students are in the paid category.
- iv. Attendance
 - 1. We have 4 students who are learning remotely.
 - 2. We are able to provide, given the new legislation from the DC Council, remote learning to those families who do not have medically fragile children but can provide evidence that they have an immune compromised adult or child in the home and there is “supreme hesitancy” to return in-person. We have two families that are in that category, and they are receiving virtual remote learning.
 - 3. Student attendance for September is at 91%. Our goal is to be at 93% every month so that we are compliant. We are following those students or those families that are having attendance issues. At this time, it is about 2 to 3 kids and so it is giving us an opportunity to dive in and find out what is going on there.
- c. Financials
 - i. Federal Grant Allocations

<u>Grant</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Notes</u>
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Federal Grants		
ConAPP	\$96,583.89	submitted 9/29/2021
IDEA- PART B	\$38,204.26	submitted 9/29/2021
CRRSA (ESSER II)	\$207,633.88	submitted 9/28/2021 reviewed and returned 9/29/2021
ARP (ESSER III)	\$307,800.35 available	submitted 9/28/2021

- ii. Purpose of Grants: In general, raising student academic performance and growth, teacher competence, SEL (social, emotional, learning) of students, staff and parents, and safe and healthy operations with equitable access to ALL is at the core of all these requests.
- iii. These are restricted federal funds, which means we cannot use them outside of the category that the federal government allows.
- iv. CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION - raise academic performance and support SEL
 - 1. The Consolidated Application includes Titles I, II, and IV consolidated and Title III as a stand-alone because it was less than \$10,000. The majority of ConAPP was allocated to staff salaries and benefits, Director of Student Supports and ELL Coordinator.
- v. CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION - raise academic performance and support SEL
 - 1. The Consolidated Application includes Titles I, II, and IV consolidated and Title I as a stand-alone because it was less than \$10K. The majority of ConAPP was allocated to staff salaries and benefits, Director of Student Supports and ELL Coordinator.
- vi. IDEA: Special education services primary and elementary
- vii. ESSER FUNDS are federal dollars specifically (formula) allocated by the CITY based on the number of Title I students served by the LEA. While Shining Stars may have an aversion to the terminology of “learning loss,” the federal language governing these funds is reopening schools and addressing learning loss as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, these terms are used in the narrative and are in no way intended to disparage students. The funds can be used from 2020 - 2024. Amendments are anticipated, particularly for ESSER III.
 - 1. ESSER II funds target maintaining a clean and healthy learning environment and raising academic performance and growth in Math and English Language Arts.
- d. Facilities Update
 - i. We did turn over the HVAC to get ready for the winter. We are keeping the families aware through the guides in case there are any issues.

- ii. Question from Parent Board Member Tatiana Laborde: I just have a question on the windows. Is it a possibility to keep them open during the not so cold months for ventilation and COVID?
- iii. Response from Regina Rodriguez: Of course, it is, but it's a matter of personal preference. It is possible, but it just may not be probable because children may be cold, or it may be raining. I will say that it will depend on the teacher.
 - 1. All the rooms have purifiers, we are monitoring and making sure they are on, and we keep them on even when the kids are not there. When the custodial staff gets to work in the morning, the windows that can be open are, and then the guide can make a determination of whether to close it if they want to.
- iv. Question from Parent Board Member Tatiana Laborde: On the two classes that had to be quarantined, have there been any signs of on campus spread or transmission? Or, has it been isolated cases.
- v. Response from Regina Rodriguez: No, there hasn't been. As you know, we are using Shield T3 as our vendor to do the COVID testing of 20% of our children and our staff on a weekly basis. There has been 100% negative.

5. Members Report

- a. Parent Board Member Tatiana Laborde reported on the school's use of the alley, some issues that have surfaced, and SSMACA's first meeting for the school year.
 - i. Alleyway
 - 1. The school has two entrances to the building per OSSE requirements for COVID protocols and the back alley has been used primarily for 4 or 5 classes that are closer to that entrance. First couple of days were a little rough, with parents trying to figure out how it would work. But within a week or a week and a half things were flowing pretty well.
 - 2. On September 20th, Dr. R reached out to Commissioner Costello welcoming her to the community and inviting her to the school, outside, to meet us and to see what we were doing, since she is the representative for our area. Up to this day, she has not officially replied to that message.
 - 3. On September 24th, there was a written complaint for DDOT about the back alley drop off and pick up procedure. This we did not find out until later because when the complaint was made nobody from the school was approached and there were no attempted communication with anybody on staff.
 - 4. The neighbor complaining, we had already identified the neighbor because she had been around walking by at drop off and pick up taking pictures of our line, taking videos of our children, screaming at our parents, and it kept on escalating up until yesterday. She complained with Commissioner Costello, and Commissioner Costello forwarded the complaint to DDOT again without reaching out to the school, without trying to figure out the pick-up and drop

off process went. And she [Commissioner Costello] was very strongly urging DDOT to make us stop, because we were, according to her, doing something that was illegal and they had to shut us down, I believe those are her words.

5. On September 29th, we met with DDOT. In the meeting, we explained the process and what the disturbance was about, which is no more than 5 minutes when there is a long back up. DDOT had a lot of questions we were able to address.
 - ii. SSMACA held its first meeting this Thursday. We are organizing a virtual event for November 9th or the 11th and we are going to have a guest speaker. She is a pediatric intensive care unit nurse; she is going to talk to our families about the COVID vaccine for children and she is going to be available to answer any questions and share any data that she has.
6. Closed Session
- a. The Board of Trustees entered into a closed session for the following reason:
 - i. **Trade Secrets, Commercial or Financial Information**¹: To discuss trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from outside the government or public body, to the extent that disclosure would result in substantial harm to the competitive position of the person from whom the information was obtained.
7. Closing Items
- a. Adjourn Meeting
 - i. There being no further business to come before the members, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.

¹ See D.C. Official Code § 2-575(b)(11).