



New Discoveries Montessori Academy

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Official Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 25, 2021 – 5:30 p.m. – **NDMA and Electronically via Zoom due to pandemic**

(Contact tara.erickson@newdiscoveries.org for Zoom link information or see website

[https://newdiscoveries.org/agendas-minutes/.](https://newdiscoveries.org/agendas-minutes/))

The Official Board Meeting of New Discoveries Montessori Academy of Hutchinson, MN was held at New Discoveries Montessori Academy, Hutchinson, MN and electronically due to Covid-19.

1. Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.
Voting members present: Shari Colvin, Peggy Enerson, Spencer Kangas, Tara Oberg, Amanda Sundblad, Patti Hoerner, Meytal Stancek, Patrick Selchert.
Non-voting members: Dave Conrad, Kirsten Kinzler, Tara Erickson, Dustin Reeves.
2. Guests: Tamara Polzin
3. Spotlight Report – none.
4. Agenda – MS (Enerson/Hoerner) to approve the agenda with addition of 9.d. and Board Activities ii., roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.
5. Consent agenda – MS (Hoerner/Kangas) to approve the consent agenda, roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.
 - a. Minutes of December 21, 2020 Meeting
 - b. Submitted Committee Reports
6. Financials
 - a. Received December 2020 financial statements, Dustin Reeves provided an overview of the current financial status – with the addition of a couple more students the ADM count will be at the revised budget level and 219 ADM will increase with students back onsite, work on the FY22 budget to start soon.
 - b. MS (Colvin/Hoerner) to approve December 2020 supplemental information report – questions were answered at finance committee meeting and noted in those minutes, roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.
7. Reports
 - a. Executive & Associate Directors – please see attached reports.
 - i. Personnel changes – resignation – Laura Stuber, paraprofessional, new employments – Laura Ranieri and Jennifer Bahrke, paraprofessionals, Tanya Jacobs, cook.
 - ii. Strategic Plan Update
 - iii. Environmental Education Update – Kinzler provided comprehensive update on the EE progress towards meeting contractual goals. With the planting of half a dozen trees this past fall, Conrad will update the site horticultural map.

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- iv. Academic Testing and Achievement Update – students will begin NWEA winter testing next week when onsite learning begins again.
 - v. Enrollment Update – In January NDMA has 82 students attending in-person school on T, W, TH from 9:15-12:15. Only 21 will continue with Distance Learning on Feb. 1st – all other students will attend onsite.
 - vi. Activities and Happenings related to the school, staff, students, families, community – 27 students have been participating in the NDMA childcare, and we have been delivering approximately 100 meals M-TH weekly. National SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK was celebrated by handing out scarves for all students along with letters to families thanking them for choosing NDMA and poster templates for students to indicate why they love their school. COVID relief funds were used to purchase enough Chromebooks for E2 and E3 students to use when onsite and for students/families needing a device during distance learning and plexiglass divider shields for classroom use. Additional funds may be used to provide summer school transportation and services.
- b. Board Activities
- i. Board training in the area of governance: Discuss “Keeping the Board out of Trouble” (pp.161-172, Charter School Board University) – Selchert led the group reviewing this reading about privacy of information, open meeting law, FERPA, collective bargaining, intimidation, more reasons for your school to have a good attorney. Next month, Kangas will lead a discussion on the final section, Leading for the Future, pages 173 – 181. At that time the board will select a new resource to utilize for board growth – possibly *The 7 Outs* by Carpenter.
 - ii. Reviewed Osprey Wilds Board Meeting Observation Form, Strategic Plan, Academic Performance, and Environmental Education. Kinzler reviewed the 2 items that were not compliant on our last review. Oberg had a follow up conversation with the Authorizer and believes the questions regarding compliance were detail related and have been appropriately addressed.

8. Old Business

a.

9. New Business

- a. MS (Hoerner/Enerson) to approve review of the following policies with the amendment to 404P that a conditional hire be for no more than 30 days without the background check results: 103.1P – Whistleblower, 401P - Equal Opportunity Employment, 402P - Disability Nondiscrimination, 404P - Employment Background Check, 406.1P - Data Practices, 406F - Public & Private Personnel Data, 406P - Public & Private Personnel Data, 407P - Employee Right to Know - Exposure to Hazardous Substances, 533P – Wellness – the only suggested revisions were to 404P: expand the definitions section and make the amendment listed above, roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.
- b. Receive Triennial Assessment Report of School Wellness Policy Action Plan – tabled.
- c. MS (Kangas/Hoerner) approve the amended FY21 School Calendar to allow for additional teacher planning and preparation time in response to Governor Walz’s Executive Order 20-94 mandate, roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.
- d. MS (Colvin/Enerson) to approve extended medical leave for Lois Tritz until end of FY21 school year – there was a question as to the financial impact to the school budget. There will be an impact but the extent is not known at this time. Conrad will seek a replacement for the position for the remainder of the school year, roll call vote unanimous; motion carries.

10. Upcoming Meetings/Events/Announcements

- a. Next board meeting, February 22, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
- b. Finance Committee Meeting, February 8, 2021 – 12:00 p.m.
- c. Policy/Governance Committee Meeting, February 8, 2021 – 1:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tara Erickson

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Executive Director Report for NDMA's Board of Directors – Dave Conrad, Monday, January 25, 2021

1. Contractual Performance Areas for Osprey Wilds (OW)
 - a. Academic performance related to charter contract goals – see Kirsten's report.
 - b. Environmental education performance related to charter contract goals/environmental literacy plan (ELP) – see Kirsten's report.
 - c. Financial performance for FY 21
 - i. Enrollment
 - ii. Fund Balance
 - d. Board training & Development
 - e. Open Meeting Law 13D.01
 - i. Date, time, place posted properly on school website and/or onsite at school
 - ii. Board member participation via interactive compliant with MN Statute 13D.021
 1. On agenda?
 2. Location of off-site individual(s)?
 3. Video and/or audio of all participants?
 - iii. Quorum
 1. Convening of meeting
 2. Action items
 - iv. Board materials available for public inspection
 1. On-site
 2. On-line
 - v. Closed meeting? 13D.03
 - vi. Actions clearly articulated
 - vii. Motion and Second clearly articulated
 - viii. Result of voting articulated by Board Chairperson, including tally of votes
 - ix. Performance Improvement Plan consistent with Charter contract
 - x. Follow meeting agenda
 - xi. Board packet inclusive of all materials relevant to meeting agenda



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2. Governor Walz Announces New Education Initiative - The Due North Education Plan

The plan Prioritizes:

- a. Meeting the needs of students during and after the pandemic
- b. Ensuring every student receives a world-class education
- c. Ensuring every student learns in a safe and nurturing environment
- d. Ensuring every student learns in a classroom with caring and qualified teachers
- e. Expanding access to opportunities for students of color and Indigenous students
- f. Expanding opportunities for students in greater MN
- g. Funding a 21st century education

You can learn more about the [Due North Education Plan](#) on MDE's website.

3. Teacher Observations/Evaluations

Teacher Observations/Evaluations are well under way. What a joy it is to see the thoughtful, creative, and amazing things our Teachers are implementing during this profoundly challenging time for educators. To observe our Teachers interacting with students, some of whom are onsite and others who are remote at the same time is incredible.

4. Security Update

We installed 22 digital security cameras inside and outside of the building. This is up from the 13 original analog cameras (none of which were outside). The picture quality, ease of use and coverage are just three of the advantage of this enhancement project. They are operational, and we are becoming acquainted with how to use them.



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5. COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to drive much of my decision-making, as well as dominating my expenditure of time.

- A. We are on track to resume on-site learning Monday, February 1st. 21 of the 228 students we are serving will remain in Distance Learning as of February 1st.
- B. It has been encouraging to see the 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate in most Counties we serve decline since mid-November. Although McLeod County saw a small blip last week, the trend looks to continue downward for the near future.
- C. Nurse Nicole Grack and I will host NDMA's first onsite COVID-19 saliva testing clinic Tuesday, February 9th. We believe we have things in place to get this off to a good start. It is likely Nurse Joanne Bolland will also be on hand to help us with this effort. After February 9th, the clinic will be offered every two weeks.
- D. Our first three Staff members were vaccinated for COVID-19 last Friday and Saturday in Marshall, Minnesota. We have been given (potentially) nine more slots in this week's statewide "lottery" for educators.
- E. Fortunately, McLeod County Public Health opened an opportunity for our Staff to register for appointments at their Glencoe clinic tomorrow. 14 of our Staff were able to register online.
- F. McLeod County Public Health has also invited us to register NDMA Staff on a waiting list for their upcoming weekly Tuesday and Thursday clinics.



6. Personnel

- A. Request for Extension of Medical Leave of Absence for Remainder of school year for Lois Tritz, Children's House General Education Teacher
- B. Note resignation of Special Education Teaching Partner (Elementary I, Maple Classroom), Laura Stuber.
- C. Note hiring of the following Staff:
 - a. Food Service/Cook Tanya Jenkins
 - b. Special Education Teaching Partner Jennifer Bahrke
 - c. Special Education Teaching Partner Laura Renieri

7. Professional Development

We had a full (virtual) house Friday, January 15th, for Jane Schuette's *SOS – Manage My Stress* presentation. I believe Jane offered a practical guide for us to deal with the stress that is inherent in our work of serving children and families. COVID or no COVID, stress impacts our brain functioning, and ultimately our actions. She gave us some insight into how to achieve a more optimal brain functioning by dealing constructively (and honestly) with our emotions.

8. COVID RELIEF MONEY

We just finished up the paperwork for the GEERS & ESSER Funding (first round) and are preparing to write a budget for the newest round of COVID relief. Hopefully, I will have some details to share with the Finance Committee in time for our February Finance Committee meeting.

1) Student Achievement - Data/Assessments – Academic Goals

NWEA MAP for the Winter assessment period will be administered when students return to in-person learning next week.

2) Environmental Education/Focus on our environment – Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP)

Attached you will find our EE goals. I met with a couple teaching staff and we reviewed the ELP. Current results are noted on the ELP.

3) Marketing/Fundraisers - PTO

National School Choice Week – This week is recognized as National School Choice Week. All students received a scarf and a flyer that thanked families for making NDMA their educational choice.



4) School Happenings

For the month of January, we have had (82) students attending in-person school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:15-12:15pm. Students were selected by licensed staff to attend the on-site component. We continue to serve approximately 200 breakfasts and 200 lunches per day. There are (27) students that are part of the NDMA childcare. Six van drivers and NDMA staff have been delivering meals to approximately 100 households Mondays-Thursdays. In addition, they deliver our students to and from school on T, W, TH. On Wednesdays they also deliver materials to all the Distance Learners.

Beginning February 1st, we will have (21) students that will remain in the Distance Learning model and the rest of our students will be in-person. We are so excited to have the majority of our students back in our building!

5) Other

- See Dave's Weekly Update/Board Report for other information...

Indicator Area 1: Awareness

Students demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between the environment and human life and the diversity of life that shares the earth with humans.

Goal: Students and staff at *New Discoveries Montessori Academy* have the awareness, or are increasing their awareness, of the relationship between the environment and human life.

Strategy 1.1

- All classrooms (Grades K-8) will have a designated Outdoor Classroom Space where they will focus on the outdoor environment at least 20 minutes per week.

Evaluation method 1.1.1

- Each week, classrooms will track and document time spent on the Outdoor Classroom Space calendar page in the Environmental Education binder. Minimum school year results will be 36 weeks x 20 minutes/week = 720 minutes or 12 hours spent in Outdoor Classroom Space per classroom. By exploring the outdoor environment, students will demonstrate their awareness and their relationship with the environment with reflections of time spent in their Outdoor Classroom Space articulated in their Environmental Journal.

CLASSROOM	# minutes x # times	Total minutes	# minutes x # times	Total minutes	# minutes x # times	Total minutes	TOTAL MINUTES	TOTAL TIMES	NOTES
EXAMPLE: ELM - CH - 313	30x21	630	40x2	80	20x2	40	750	25	No documentation after April recorded.

01.25.21 - Currently, 3 of our 11 classrooms have documented their outdoor classroom time. This reminder, however, has prompted several of them to make time to get their times on the calendar. The good news is that all our classrooms do explore their outdoor environments on a weekly basis and reflect on their findings.

Indicator Area 2: Knowledge

Students have knowledge of how natural systems function and how human systems interact with and depend on them.

Goal: Students and staff at *New Discoveries Montessori Academy* have the knowledge, or are increasing their knowledge, of human and natural systems and processes.

Strategy 2.1

- Students and staff will be able to identify the trees, plants, birds and animals that are found on school grounds.

Evaluation method 2.1

- Student Environmental Journal will contain a checklist of the trees and plants found on the property. 80% of E1 students (Grades 1-3) will complete the checklist over the course of the school year.

Strategy 2.2

- E2/E3 students (Grades 4-8) will learn about climate change and its effects on our environment.

Evaluation method 2.2

- E2/E3 students (Grade 4-8) will take a pre- and post-assessment on climate change and will reflect an increase in knowledge on their post-assessment by 10 points.
- 80% of E2/E3 students (Grade 4-8) will be able to articulate one way in which they can positively affect climate change.

01.25.21 - All E2/E3 students have completed the pre-assessment on climate change and classrooms are including climate change in their curriculum.

Indicator Area 3: Attitudes

Students demonstrate respect and concern for the earth’s health and the motivation to participate in environmental stewardship.

Goal: Students and faculty at *New Discoveries Montessori Academy* have an attitude, or are increasing their attitude of, appreciation and concern for the environment.

Strategy 3.1

- Students will be able to model recycling practices in their classrooms and school, describe why it is important to recycle and share their knowledge with their families at home.

Evaluation method 3.1

- E2 students (Grades 4-6) will collect the recyclables in the school each week as part of their classroom jobs. Recyclables are brought to the McLeod County Solid Waste Management site 2x’s/week and will be tracked on a calendar indicating a commitment to school-wide recycling practices.

Evaluation method 3.1

- Student/Staff/Family Satisfaction Surveys will include the following survey questions about recycling: (yes or no)
 - I think recycling is important. (students/staff/family)
 - I recycle at school. (students/staff)
 - I/We recycle at home. (students/staff/family)
 - Students and staff actively engage in recycling. (staff)
 - My child knows how to recycle paper, plastic, glass and aluminum. (family)

Responses will indicate at least 50% of the respondents will respond “yes” to the above statements. Tracking the survey responses from year to year will indicate an increase from the previous year in awareness in environmental stewardship.

Recycling Survey Data – composite average score of survey questions from Student/Staff/Family Satisfaction Surveys			
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2020-2022
59%	62% (August 2019 -February 2020)		

01.25.21 - Satisfaction Surveys will be completed this spring.

Indicator Area 4: Skills

Students possess the skills needed to identify and critically analyze environmental issues, and to contribute to resolving the root of environmental challenges.

Goal: Students and faculty at *New Discoveries Montessori Academy* have or are increasing their problem solving and critical thinking skills as it relates to the environment and human life.

Strategy 4.1

- Students at New Discoveries will care for their outdoor environment by planting trees, cleaning up the grounds and working in the gardens.

Evaluation method 4.1.1

- The 3rd grade students will learn how to plant trees on the property in the spring of each year. This will be documented in their Environmental Journal. When surveyed, 80% of the students will write or verbalize 2/3 of the following
 - how trees are important for environmental health,
 - what causes trees to die
 - and why we need to remove and replace diseased trees.

Evaluation method 4.1.2

- Kindergarten students will learn how to plant, identify, weed, harvest, cook and donate garden vegetables from our gardens. Teachers will take photos of students at each phase of the gardening process and 80% of Kindergarten students will be able to correctly list 2 ways in which the gardening process impacts the environment.

01.25.21 - 3rd grade students planted the following trees this fall instead of the past spring due to the school closure: Willow, Tamarack, and Maple trees.

Kindergarten students observed and tended to their school garden daily this past fall. They harvested carrots, sunflowers, watermelon, pumpkins and tomatoes. They also prepared a carrot cake that we were able to sample. Delicious!

Indicator Area 5: Action

Students have the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to perceive and interpret the health of environmental and social systems and take appropriate action to maintain, restore, or improve the health of those systems.

Goal: Students and staff at *New Discoveries Montessori Academy* demonstrate the capacity, or are increasing their capacity, to work individually and collectively toward sustaining a healthy natural environment.

Strategy 5.1

- Through adult instruction, modeling, and student practice, all NDMA students (Grades K-8) will compost their breakfast and lunch food at the compost center.

Evaluation method 5.1

- Breakfast and lunch garbage waste will be tracked reflecting a reduction from 4-6 full garbage bags of waste to less than one garbage bag per day of waste improving waste management at NDMA and overall environmental health. Compost bags will be tracked on a calendar and delivered daily to a local farm where animals will eat the composted food. Through tracking the number bags, students will become aware of the impact their food waste and garbage affects the environment, discuss ways to reduce both and improve the environment.

01.25.21 - During in-person learning this fall, we produced 2-3 full garbage bags of waste. With our new head cook, the students seem to be eating more of their food thus producing less waste. Also, our kitchen staff is very cognizant of using leftovers and using up the food that we have available.

With Distance Learning meals in school, we have purchased an environmentally friendly serving plate for students (instead of Styrofoam). This biodegradable choice greatly reduces the daily waste impact on the environment.



A gift for your child celebrating National **School Choice** Week!

What is school choice? School choice is the process of allowing every family to choose the K-12 educational options that best fit their children. Every child is unique, and all children learn differently. Some children might succeed at the neighborhood public school, while others might fit in better at a charter, magnet, online, private or home learning environment. That's why school choice is so important! These options include all forms of education, from traditional public schools, to public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online academies, and homeschooling.

Every child deserves an effective, challenging, and motivating education. And, because each student has their own unique set of talents, interests, and challenges, having a variety of options in education is crucial. What works well for one child may not work well for another child! In short, school choice ensures that each student can find a learning environment that allows them to be inspired, successful, and happy.

We are grateful that you have made the choice to send your child(ren) to **New Discoveries Montessori Academy!** We love our **NDMA** family and celebrate you!



NDMA Administration & Staff