

JUNE 2014

Washington Montessori Public Charter School

DIFFERENT IS GOOD.

*“Dedicated to pursuing our greatest potential to fulfill
our responsibility to the world”*



Washington
Montessori Public
Charter School

Proposal for restructuring the school

- Interim solution
- 6 month check point
- Long-term solution

If at the check point this is not working, we can still look for an outside solution, but keep continuity though the start of our major projects (HS, gym, curriculum consolidation and review, etc...)



Guarantees

You will hear that:

- This is not feasible (Remember what we have accomplished that was not considered feasible: a gym, High School, integrating Montessori lessons with the common core, etc...)
- The school has to have **ONE** leader (look at past tenures and issues with sole leadership models)
- The proposal has conflicts of interest due to nepotism (look to our individual performance as well as if this has been brought up by staff over the last couple years under the current model that has the same conflicts)
- We should not promote from within (not many leaders out there currently who have public school, charter school, governmental, classroom and Montessori experience)
- The system will create “a territorial environment” (ask any of the staff if Darla and I have ever fought over areas of responsibility)
- The school always rushes into things (in this case only if immediately searching for a HoS without analyzing the situation and possible other solutions)
- We have to have a single leader for our charter (the State does not dictate charter school organizational structure)



- Identify a leader for Washington Montessori Public Charter School
- Develop innovative programs that foster the school's mission and commitment to our students
- Put controls in place to assure accountability (student, community, State and Federal)
- Put systems in place to foster staff retention and faculty growth



- Half of all principals leave their position in NC after 4 years (Miller 2009)
- Only 47% of principals last more than 3 years in their position (Fuller 2012)
- Principals are only second to teachers as the most influential in-school factor in student achievement (The Wallace Foundation 2012)
- Odds a teacher will leave a school are 17 % higher when a new principal enters (Beteille, Kalogrides and Loeb 2011)

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544706.pdf>
<http://shankerblog.org/?p=6196>
<http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/principal-perspective>
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/02/23principals.h31.html?override=web>



The research has shown that principals who are highly effective are more likely to:

- Have at least more than three years of experience overall
- Have at least three of experience at that school
- Have shared leadership responsibilities, rather than just delegated paperwork
- Have a clear sense of instructional goals
- Give ongoing, informal feedback and support toward those goals
- Have school board leaders who exhibit a clear vision of what constitutes a good school and creates a framework that gives principals both autonomy and support to reach those goals
- Additionally, being an instructional classroom leader increases school achievement



Over the last 14 years, we have had 6 Heads of School

Heads of Schools have come from the following backgrounds:

- School Administration
- Parent
- School Principals
- Department Heads
- Assistant principals

Average term is between 2 to 3 years



We are:

A Public Montessori Charter School

What does that mean?

1. Our pedagogy is Montessori based.
2. The state has granted us the opportunity to receive public funds and be innovative in our approach to education.
3. We have to follow all State and Federal public school requirements while maintaining the integrity of our charter.



Multiple re-structuring, but primarily based on classroom and administrative changes.

No upper tier organizational changes have been made or pursued.

Have these changes changed our own HoS turnover rate? No.

Do we expect a different result every time we implement the same structure? Yes.

Is this current system innovative or does it match the philosophy of our pedagogy? No.



1. **Continue.** Fill the current HoS vacancy with a past principal, parent, professional manager, teacher, etc...
2. **Innovate.** Restructure the top level management and operation of the school. Implement a dual leadership role that allows:
 - individual accountability
 - delineation of responsibility
 - use of current staff 's expertise and backgrounds
 - allows teaching Heads of School in BOTH capacities
 - allows the focus to be on our students, teachers, parents and community
 - eliminates learning curve of a new leader



Dual leadership that is clearly delineated between:

Montessori (Pedegogy) and
Administration and Finance (State)

Darla Prescott as the Head of School/Academics and Education

Austin Smigel as the Head of School/Finance and Administration

Other taxonomy: Because the school has always had a single Head of School it may make sense to have Darla's role as the Head of School and Austin's title as something different so there is no confusion with the parents. Other titles on the administrative and finance are :

- Chief Financial and Administrative Officer (a government, business, nonprofit title)
- Administrative Officer (governmental title)
- Head of Finance and Administration



What the school receives:

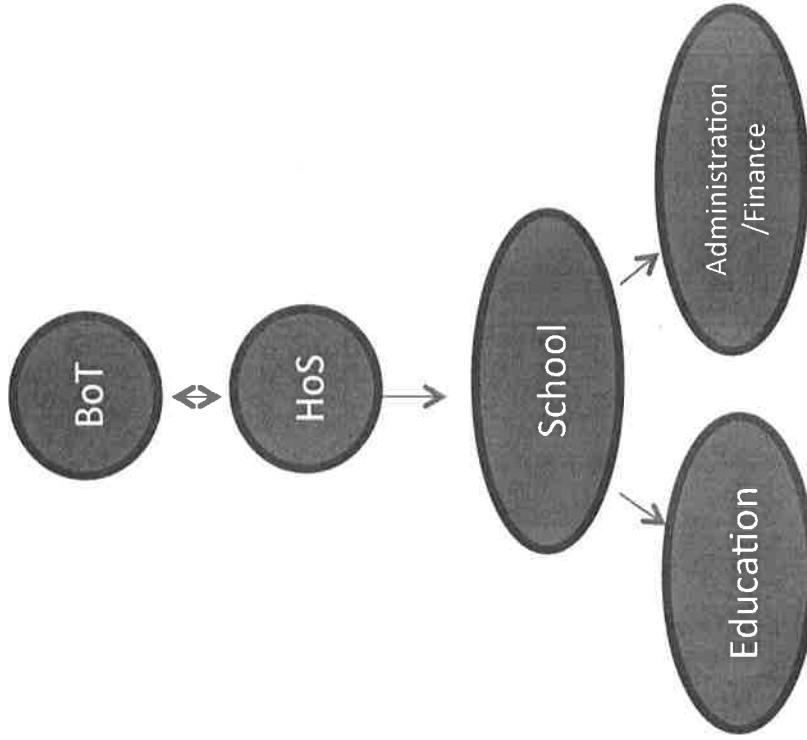
A combined:

- 33 years of managerial experience
- 28 years experience in education
- 16 years of experience in non-profit management
- 15 years of experience with WMPCS
- 11 years experience in working at WMPCS
- 8 years in the classroom
- 2 years in administration
- 7 years of grants management
- 6 businesses started and successfully managed
- 2 Bachelors
- 2 entrepreneurs
- 1 Montessori Credential
- 1 MBA

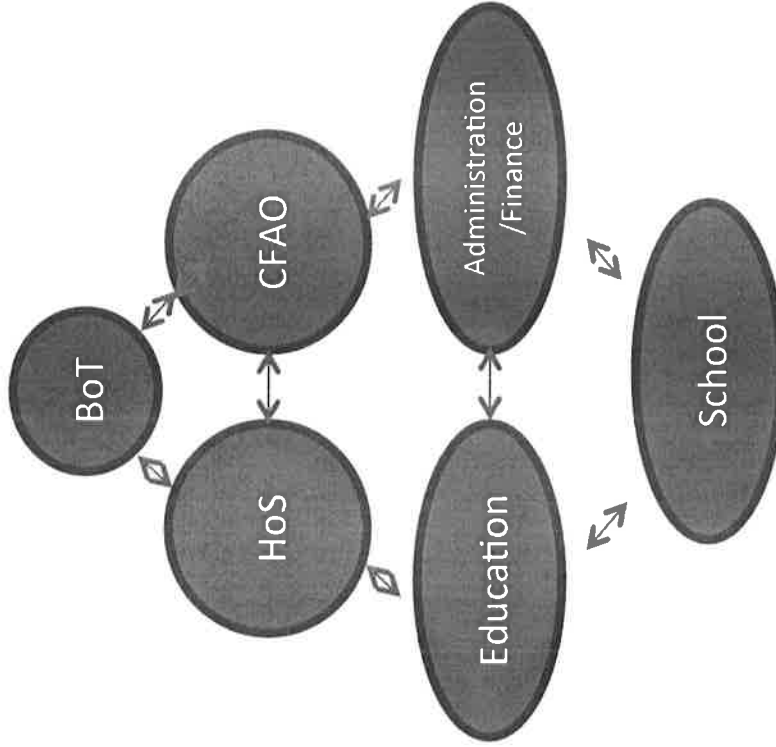


- **AND MORE THAN ANYTHING:** an understanding of the current and future needs of our students, parents, faculty and staff

Continue.



Innovate.



Continue.

- Single accountability
- All information disseminated down
- No ground up (classroom to the top)
- Bottle neck conflict resolution for students and faculty
- All issues one step from BoT
- Work flow bottlenecked

Innovate.

- Dual accountability
- Information disseminated through channels specific to job area responsibility
- Management from top to bottom and bottom to top (having instructional leaders allows insight and understanding in the classroom)
- Divisional resolution prior to getting to the BoT (Each section would be a mediator if issues arose in the other section)
- Faculty and Administrative decisions streamlined and efficiency increased



Strengths:

- Dual responsibility and reporting to the BoT
- Current knowledge base of school's operation, staff, students and community
- Administrators that are also in the classroom teaching
- Current understanding of the school's strategic direction, areas of needed improvement and challenges
- Knowledge of all key personnel outside the organization at the State level
- Understanding of the school pedagogy
- Distributing the burden of the HoS workload
- Financial considerations (discussed in closed session)



Weaknesses:

- Role cross over (eliminated with proper job descriptions – see attached)
- Confusion for staff on reporting (eliminated with proper job descriptions – see attached)
- Confusion on State reporting (eliminated with proper job descriptions – see attached)



Opportunities:

- Ability to eliminate the learning curve of a new leader in regards to the school's
 - Pedagogy
 - Staff
 - Policies
 - Procedures
 - Direction
- Ability to break the cycle of a revolving HoS role
- Ability to cross-train on operation of the school
- Redundant leadership (not contingent on a sole source)



Threats:

- Misunderstanding of structure by teachers and or community (able to be eliminated through increased communication and job delineation)
- Possible cross-over of responsibility (eliminated through job delineation and communication)



6 months of implementation before recruiting for a specific HoS.

- Implementation starts immediately
- Evaluation will occur in Dec.
- If a single source HoS model is needed at that time the transition would happen at the start of the 2015-16 school year. This allows for a longer and more thorough recruitment cycle.
- Progress of school goals to occur at regular BoT meetings





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