

# Washington Montessori, Inc. Board of Trustees

## Retreat Minutes - Final

Date: April 21, 2018

2330 Old Bath Highway, Washington, NC 27889

**Mission Statement:** *Our mission is to inspire academic excellence; to nurture curiosity, creativity, and imagination; and to do so within an environment rich with warmth, kindness and respect.*

Board of Trustee Members (Voting)	Board of Trustee Ex-Officio Members (Non-Voting)
X Lisa Lawless, Chair X Christy Walcott, Secretary X Rick Yakubowski, Treasurer X Charles Smith, Member	X Darla Prescott, Directress of Education and Academics X Austin Smigel, Director of Administration and Finance X Jessica Adams, Faculty Representative Stephanie Grimes, MPTO Representative Mason Smigel, SGA Representative

Acronyms Used: Board of Trustees (BoT), Head of School (HoS), Montessori Parent Teacher Organization (MPTO)

### Open Session

Item	Responsibility and Basis	Reference (on File)
<b>Call to Order</b>	Lisa Lawless, Chair called meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Members were present as represented by "X" mark above. Christy Walcott read the mission statement.	Member Sign In Sheet
<b>Agenda</b>	Agenda reviewed.  <b>MOTION: Rick Yakubowski made motion to accept the agenda as presented. Charlie Smith 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Motion carried.</b>  Lisa Lawless, Chair, welcomed the staff in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to come out on a Saturday. Reflected on the year and the uniqueness of Washington Montessori Public Charter School.  Levels represented in the audience include: Children's House, Upper Elementary, and EC (Exceptional Children).	
<b>Strategic Plan Review</b>	<b>Board Report:</b> The Board began by discussing the 5 Year Strategic Plan. Lisa Lawless read from the current plan. Four main components and who is reporting as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buildings and Grounds - Charlie Smith</li> <li>2. Student Achievement - Lisa Lawless</li> <li>3. Community Connections and Diversity - Christy Walcott</li> <li>4. Governance, Finance and Advancement - Rick Yakubowski</li> </ol> Charlie Smith reported for Buildings and Grounds. Goals from the Strategic Plan included new buildings to replace modulares and	See Strategic Plan 2017-2021 handout

protecting and providing open spaces and natural environments to enhance the Montessori teaching. Currently, two new buildings are planned for Children's House and Secondary I. Two Upper Elementary guides have applied for a 2018 ExPLORE NC Teacher Professional Development grant for Place-based Learning Outdoors in Rivers and Ecosystems of North Carolina. This will train 4th and 5th grade teachers how to use natural resources and the campus environment.

Lisa Lawless reported for Student Achievement. She referred to the Mission Statement and list of strategic goals. This year, to complete and implement a 3-18 curriculum, the Board approved hiring Jocelyn Swinson to assist in implementing the curriculum through Secondary I and II with staff support. Evaluation methods that have been established to monitor student progress while adhering to Montessori pedagogy include RTI/MTSS, EasyCBM and SPIRE as measures that fit our learning style. For the low teacher student ratio goal, the Board is using the student numbers that the faculty provided as the maximum per classroom when budgeting. To reach the goal for Montessori staff education, the board has allocated \$40,000 and will continue to budget for training annually. The parent education goal is still open for discussion.

Christy Walcott reported for Community, Connections and Diversity. For the goal of diverse student body and faculty, Christy reflected on our original charter which included reaching the Hispanic community. Currently, WMPCS is working to recruit and retain diverse students and staff. This is still a work in progress. The school is working on translating our marketing materials and hope to be completed by the end of the 2018-19 school year. Currently, student service opportunities in the community are offered for the students. Creating student entrepreneurial endeavors that reach outside the school community is a component that is still developing.

Rick Yakubowski reported for Governance, Finance and Advancement. He stated that governance is all encompassing. Goal is to evaluate the long term model of dual director model to establish success and offer a model other Montessori schools could use. Develop the job descriptions and evaluation plan for each director's position. Job descriptions are being developed. Rick read from each job description and praised current directors' for their strengths. Finance by the end of this year develop a financial plan outline to carry through 2027. Plan for advancement. This will ensure that the financial resources of the school will grow and advance funding. Committee to be established to develop a 5 year plan that would include a donor base. This is to include businesses and individuals outside of our school community.

**Directors Report:** Austin and Darla shared a PowerPoint titled 2017-18 Director's Response to Strategic Plan. Discussed the education of the whole child that prepares him/her for life. Education accompanies life during its whole course.

Austin discussed Goal #1: Buildings and Grounds

Objective 1.1: Develop plans and begin a building campaign for replacing Secondary I modular building and Objective 1.2: Develop plans and begin a building campaign for replacing Children's House modular building.

- conceptual plans for Children's House as well as Secondary I at the time of the review
- steps have been taken to implement their execution with the goal of building within the next year and a half based on financing and final approval of the plans from the Board of Trustees

Objective 1.3. Prioritize areas set aside for natural habitat as well as areas set aside for educational programming outside the classrooms.

- a classroom partnered with an external agency to install a wildlife camera tracking and research station on the trails at school,
- the school has been registered with the National Wildlife Society
- planning an outside amphitheater to replace the one that has been damaged,
- a quiet space in the form of a student/staff memorial that is in the progress of being constructed
- outdoor classrooms have also been included in the two new building designs
- initial planning has begun to work towards determining the feasibility of having a school farm or greenhouse where the students can incorporate their lessons in biology and other sciences

Darla discussed Goals #2 and #3: Student Achievement

*Goal 2. Refine the Montessori curriculum for students ages 3-18.*

Objective 2.1: Ensure consistent systems across the full WMPCS curriculum are supported by staff and advance Montessori pedagogy. Curriculum areas are to include, but are not limited to, classroom supported activities, volunteerism, and entrepreneurship.

- restructure the Secondary Program based on training and consultant feedback and are working towards implementing this by the end of year
- additional steps will be taken to ensure staff accountability, consistency, and further developing the business and entrepreneurial aspects of the school
- additional trainings will take place that focus on modeling, independence, and the importance of the classroom environment

Objective 2.2. Routinely employ multi-faceted evaluation methods to ensure the needs of the students are being met while demonstrating fidelity to Montessori pedagogy within the community.

- Methods that are used to evaluate the organization while adhering to the Montessori pedagogy include:
- Community survey, discussion and explanation (further explanation and

- transparency will occur this year at the teacher and community levels.)
- Transparency and use of personal accountability and reporting disseminated and modeled to staff.
  - Student surveys, focus groups and discussions in which the data is collected in a multi-faceted way: not just surveys.
  - Tracking and reporting of student cases and using those cases as touch points to review and augment procedures as needed.
  - Community meetings that revert towards the initial implementation in which the meeting is truly run by the community.
  - 360 staff discussions and meetings regarding issues in, at or with the school operations or planning.
  - Continuation of open office hours ensuring there is a dedicated time for parents to meet with the Directors to discuss issues, events, plans, etc...

Objective 2.3 Maintain and protect low teacher-student ratio for the purpose of protecting the learning environment.

- The current class structure has been maintained and additional teacher recruitment is occurring.

*Goal 3. Continue to evaluate and strengthen Montessori training for community members so that every student may participate fully in the depth of the curriculum.*

Objective 3.1. Offer ongoing training by certified Montessori instructors to faculty to foster a collaborative learning environment and enrich and advance the pedagogy.

- Increased trained teachers and negotiated decreased training expenses in order to allow for the training of additional teachers.
- Invited and hosted Montessori consultants to lead professional development for staff
- Added a trained Montessori Curriculum Coordinator to assist Secondary in their curriculum planning/units of inquiry.

Objective 3.2 Re-evaluate and strengthen Montessori educational opportunities for community members such that students have educational consistency throughout their day.

- Plans have been made to have level parent ed opportunities on a monthly basis next year.
- This year we have increased the number of Montessori trainings and have incorporated Montessori Philosophy training in every parent training offered.
- Significant steps have been made to be purposeful and straightforward in the trainings and meetings. We are purposefully modeling for the parents the methods that are used in transparency and personal accountability. These are the same methods that are used in the classrooms by the teachers as they model for their students.

Austin reported on Goal #4: Community, Connections, and Diversity.

*Goal 4. Examine and evaluate plans to recruit and retain students and staff from diverse backgrounds.*

Objective 4.1. Continue to build ongoing relationships with minority group

partners for recruitment of potential students and staff.

- active engagement with ECU and their Teacher Education Program for recruitment of teachers and interns
- participated on the ECU Workforce Advisory council which targets students who are seeking alternative degrees
- maintain and continue to foster relationships with members in Greenville through the rental of our gym at a reduced rate for volleyball
- the quid-pro-quo use of our soccer field for multiple Washington Riptides soccer teams

Objective 4.2. Develop informational materials describing WMPCS in Spanish and distribute within the community.

- This has not started as we are recreating our marketing materials. This is expected to happen within the next year.

Austin and Darla discussed progress towards Goal #5:

*Goal 5. Create and implement a plan to increase entrepreneurship among students and engagement with the local community.*

Objective 5.2. Consider feasibility of internal productions or involvement in other events open to the community.

- In progress but developing. Processes have been put into place to allow the students further control of the events and outreach they pursue. An example is the Art Show which was open to the community to raise funds for their end of year trip.

Objective 5.3. Develop creative ways to increase opportunities for entrepreneurial endeavors.

- While this is mainly taking root with the Secondary II program, at this point it is expected to use the system that was developed in Secondary I next year
- The students are beginning to understand the difference in fundraisers versus businesses which is expected to increase in subsequent years.
- Planning has taken place to integrate the actual businesses in the high school with the Principles of Business and Finance class as well as respective math classes.
- Scheduled an additional business community time for the students weekly. As the students take control of their own events and are guided in a more natural process, these events also decrease the levels of fundraising the students have to perform. Some examples of new businesses and entrepreneurial activities created are the Math II breakfast club, the Art Show Committee, and the tee-shirt group that created and are selling the Kidsfest tee-shirts.

Austin reported on Goal #6, #7 & #8: Governance, Finance, and Advancement

***Goal 6: Finalize the evaluation of the Dual Heads of School Administration to determine its formal adoption at WMPCS, as well as its potential use at other Montessori Schools.***

	<p>Objective 6.1: Update the job description and performance evaluation tool for the Directress of Education and Academics against the Strategic Plan: Montessori Philosophy, Academic Curriculum, Teacher Recruitment, Teacher Training and Retention, Student Outcomes, and Compliance with State and DPI requirements.</p> <p>Objective 6.2: Update the job description and performance evaluation tool for the Director of Administration and Finance against the Strategic Plan: Financial Management, School Operations, Facilities Management, and Compliance with State and DPI requirements.</p> <p><b>Goal 7: By the end of the 2017-2018 school year, develop an outline of aspirational goals for student success, financial health, governance, and facilities by the year 2027.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In progress.</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 8: Develop and implement initial steps to grow Advancement Funding</b></p> <p>Objective 8.1: Establish an Advancement Committee comprised of faculty, students, and administration during the 2017-2018 school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In progress. The initial stage of this was started in the last community letter as we asked the community to start a committee to raise funds for the Children's House sensory garden.</li> </ul> <p>Objective 8.2: Develop a 5-year Advancement plan for school years 2018-2019 – 2022-2023 which increases giving each year and expands the constituent donor base (students, community, sponsors, etc.) each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In progress. See above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Faculty Discussion (breakout format):</b> Group in attendance is a manageable number. Breakout format not needed.</p> <p><b>Group Report:</b> Nothing reported here.</p>	
<p><b>Strategic Plan Projections</b></p>	<p><b>Group discussion for ongoing improvement:</b> Discussion held in Open Forum below.</p>	
<p><b>Open Forum</b></p>	<p><b>Opportunity for faculty to address Board (question/answer format)</b></p> <p>Lois asked for definition of a fundraiser vs. a business. Austin explained a fundraisers asks for donations to facilitate the implementation with all funds being profit where as a business has expenses to start up and yields a profit once expenses are deducted.</p> <p>Break from 10:45 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.</p> <p><b>Opportunity for faculty to address Board (question/answer format) cont.</b> Teachers introduced themselves and the level they represented. Board members introduced themselves and gave individual backgrounds and reasons they serve on the board.</p>	

Faculty was given the opportunity to discuss the goals from the strategic plan and progress towards them.

Buildings and Grounds:

- Sara Moore thanked the Board for learning about the Montessori pedagogy in order to fully support our school.
- Jane Hardee, 3-6 Teacher, is excited about the outdoor spaces and supporting local entrepreneurs.
- Jessica Adams, 9-12 Teacher, was thankful for the hiring of Kevin Hardy as a maintenance man. He understands the philosophy and mindset of our school.

Student Achievement:

- Sara Moore stated that parents have a lot of questions about Montessori. Teachers know where the students are and understand the curriculum they teach and use the Easy CBM to support and track student progress.
- Jane Hardee stated that it opens up connections with the parent and student to have the EasyCBM results. (EasyCBMs are assessments used in K through 8th grade.)

Community, Connections and Diversity:

- Darla Prescott stated parent education is a component included in the classroom letters each week this year. Discussion held on ideas to reach parents with the ideals and reasons behind the Montessori philosophy.
- MPTO (Montessori Parent Teacher Organization) discussed. This year the MPTO has struggled with finding people to serve. In the past, existing parents who were involved helped to educate the new parents who were coming in. Jane Hardee expressed that more teacher involvement might help. Sara Moore recalled from the past the importance of a school wide project for MPTO to focus on and how that is now missing from the overall goal of MPTO. The faculty would supply a wish list and vote on the top items needed. MPTO would conduct fundraising with the goal of purchasing the needed items from the list. Many great things were achieved including the purchase of playground equipment, benches for students to sit on during carline, classroom document readers and projectors, etc.
- Diane Stoddard, Administrative Assistant, offered an idea of having Montessori in action in the community. This could be Board members, faculty or our families going out into the surrounding community to show by their actions that they support and live the Montessori pedagogy of service to others.

Governance, Finance, and Advancement

- Sara Moore expressed great praise for the dual leadership role and is excited that the Board has accepted this model. She

	<p>stated that this model has functioned the best during her years of employment at the school and that we have the right people at the helm with Austin Smigel and Darla Prescott.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Moore would also like to see Montessori conference opportunities (i.e. AMS, American Montessori Society) offered for the staff. This would allow for rejuvenation and rekindling the Montessori flame for the faculty. This can be expensive and the Board would need to allocate funding in the budget.</li> </ul> <p>Lisa Lawless thanked everyone in attendance for taking time to be here and for sharing ideas and input on the 5 year strategic plan.</p> <p>Faculty portion of retreat ended at 12:00 noon. Board took a break for lunch.</p>	
<p><b>Board Policy Manual</b></p>	<p>Meeting resumed at 12:45 p.m.</p> <p><b>Review and editing of manual with timeline for completion.</b></p> <p>500 Policy Series for Human Resources and 600 Policy Series for Finance are the two sections of Board Policy that need to be completed. Austin suggested having the school lawyer review the current HR policy in the WMPCS Personnel Manual. Discussion held regarding the format, amount of manuals and the sections that need to be vetted through an attorney. Board decided to have an attorney review final copies of the series 100-400 and 700 and offer guidance on completing the 500-600 Series. Policies that are already in place will be reviewed as well.</p> <p>Items added to BoT Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Bot Terms at next meeting. Sharon will get current term expiration dates for the Board to review.</li> <li>• Austin will get a pricing structure from the current attorney to have Board and current WMPCS policies reviewed. Board set a timeline of having the Board Policies complete by August 2018.</li> <li>• Strategic Plan timeline discussed and goals to be set for this academic year. An outline is requested from Austin and Darla regarding aspirational goals and tracking of outcomes for student success and faculty advancement. Board asked for it by the June meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	<p><b>MOTION: At 1:36 p.m., Charlie Smith moved to adjourn. Christy Walcott 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Motion carried.</b></p>	

These minutes recorded and respectfully submitted by Sharon Main, Clerk to the Board, for approval at the May 17, 2018 Board meeting.

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lisa Lawless, BoT Chair, WMPCS, Inc.

## BoT Action Items

Action or Concern	Who will complete	Timeframe	Reference
Board requests an update on the curriculum implementation success.	Darla Prescott	Periodically at Board Mtgs	Discussion Items 9/15/2016
Policy Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 first read</li> <li>• 600 first read</li> </ul>	Board members will be re-assigned to series due to resignation of some members	Upcoming Board Meetings	New Business 2/16/2017, 3/16/2017 Discussion Items 07/20/2017 New Business 3/15/2018
Plan to track graduation rates and college paths of former students	Darla and Austin	September Board Meeting - ongoing	Management reports 5/18/2017
Current Board Term Expiration Dates	Sharon Main	May Board Meeting	Board Retreat Minutes 04/21/2018
Pricing structure/options from school attorney to review revised Board Policies and current WMPCS Policies.	Austin Smigel	May Board Meeting	Board Retreat Minutes 04/21/2018
Goals and tracking of outcomes for student success and faculty advancement.	Austin and Darla	May Board Meeting	Board Retreat Minutes 04/21/2018