

Marine Area Community School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
July 28 – 6:00 PM  
Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

**Mission - Marine Area Community School will utilize the natural resources, history, arts, and civic stewardship of the community as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, art, and other curriculum subjects. The place-based learning environment will be student-centered, designed by teachers, and reinforced and supported by the local community.**

- 1.0 Meeting called to order at 6:03pm
  - 1.1 Roll Call – Lisa Dochniak not here. Jackie Henschen, Bre DeCorsey, Marcy Ost, Dan Miller, Angie Hong, Jessica Hansen all present. Also in attendance, Director Drew Goodson and Ele Anderson.
- 2.0 Approve Agenda
  - Chair Miller: We had anticipated the governor making an announcement on school decisions yesterday and since that didn't happen, we can not make very many decisions today. Now the announcement will happen on July 30.
  - Hong: Do you think we'll need to hold a special meeting next week?
  - Goodson: Yes. There will also be a survey going out to parents after the Governor's announcement.
  - Hong: Motion to approve agenda. Hansen second. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.
- 3.0 Approve Minutes May 2020, June 2020
  - 3.1 May 26, 2020 Minutes: Motion to approve – DeCorsey. Second – Henschen. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.
  - 3.2 June 23 Minutes: Motion to approve – Hong. Second – Henschen. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.
- 4.0 Community Comment
  - 4.1 River Grove Community Updates
    - 4.1.1 Board member driven initiatives
      - Hansen: On Thursday we're going to have a day for staff to come in. We invited the whole staff to come in and work on projects in our shared spaces. Hopefully that'll be a really good morning. We'll have lunch at the end and hoping we can get a lot done to get our campus in really great shape.
  - 4.2 Citizen Comments
- 5.0 Authorizer comments (if in attendance) – not in attendance

## 6.0 Reports and Discussion

### 6.1 Financial report and budget workshop

**Kyle Knudson:** This is the second to last set of financials that you'll see for fy 20 and that's only because this one's preliminary. Because while the fiscal year is over we haven't completed all of our year-end accruals and reconciliations. So this is what I'm calling preliminary and in a ballpark for how we're finishing for the year. I'll talk about a couple of things that could affect this still as we work through on this first page. We had just \$195,000 in cash at the end of the fiscal year. We're estimating right now of just about \$260,000 due to the state are due to us from the state from the 10 hold back. We had about 180 thousand dollars that we owed staff for benefits and pay at June 30 that they're getting paid out July and August - just a little bit of accounts payable. We're at 98% of what we had budgeted for revenues we received as of June 30. That includes the holdback number. And we've spent 99.7 percent of our budgeted expenses for the year. So we're about 150,000 dollars in what we're going to add is a surplus to our fund balance at the end of the year.

We're at 98.6 so almost 99 percent here on our gen ed revenues and that's it's going to be closer to 100 percent. I think the initial calculation that I did for state special ed money owed to us is off a little bit. I think that they're going to lose more than what I've got calculated right away. But, again, I've finished reconciling all that stuff. And the other part is the budget that you approved was based on 193 kids and the last report that I saw from the department of ed, instead we had just over 189 kids. 189.4 I think. So, if we're at 193 ADM then our state aid revenue will go up. We'll be closer to 100 percent and all will be right in the world.

As far as River Grove financials go: A little more detail on the revenues on page eight. We are a little bit low here. This is some of the third-party billing, which is special education related, that comes in as a miscellaneous state payment. Safe and secure money. Long-term facilities maintenance is all good. Federal aid's coming in real close. And then our food service also is really good, so we're within two percent which is where the auditor wants us to be. But again, we'll be closer to 100% by the time we're all done. When you see big numbers like this, that might cause you to freak out. 375.2 percent above budget for instructional contracts and services. It looks really bad but we're off by \$3000, which is no bog deal in a \$2.8 million budget. You did a good job of living within your budget.

**Board members:** Speculation about what the Governor might decide for the 2020-21 school year.

**Dan Miller:** Going forward with COVID, even with ppp loans and enrollment growth, we're still anticipating running about \$100,000 deficit. Fortunately, thanks to Drew's management and our staff management, we were able to sustain that hit. Thanks to our debt reserve fund. I would say, by no means, are we out of the woods, just with all the unknowns and costs that we have coming. So the finance committee had a lot of discussions about other ways to raise some funds. I think we're going to do a fundraising round for our families and community members. We'll talk with the PTO.

There's a lot of things that we're trying to anticipate but it's just so many unknowns. Additional nursing hours, sub hours, cleaning and contract services. But I would say our school is as well as positioned as anybody. I know a lot of charter schools are envious of where River Grove is at.

**Kyle Knudson:** If I could throw two other things in there that I forgot. One is that River Grove's been really fortunate through the community support to be able to do a lot of things that charter schools that are 10 years old still aren't able to do. Some of the extra programs you offer, having the Zephyr come in, the band, orchestra teacher. Those are special things that obviously make you appealing over other schools and are really important to your families. But all of our schools are going to have to make some tough decisions.

It is really easy, once you agree to a \$100,000 debt to continue adding to that debt. So you should have an up-front conversation now about whether to cut programs or add to the debt.

**Dan Miller:** With kids in pods, we will also need to hire additional staff to avoid having people work with multiple groups. This year, we might need to focus on the essentials of educating our kids and keeping them socialized and might need to do simpler things for art and music.

**Drew Goodson:** Our priority right now is to re-open and do it safely. Or to provide excellent distance learning if that is the directive. That is where we'll need to devote our resources. It's going to be a year of choices.

#### 6.1.1 June 2020 approvals

Motion to approve June Financial report: DeCorsey. Second, Ost. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.

Motion to approve June 2020 payment registry: Ost. Second, DeCorsey. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.

#### 6.2 Director's report

Chair Miller: We're going to be doing the elections call in August with the intention of doing the elections in September, and then seating those members.

##### 6.2.1 COVID-19 Response Procedures Update – Drew Goodson

Enrollment numbers are not super confident. I think we're pretty safe with hitting our 205 budget number. A lot of it's going to depend on the model that we're allowed to be in. Distance learning will be a choice even if we have an in-person or a hybrid model. We want to protect those families and keep them in the River Grove family as much as possible, if they're electing to do that, as opposed to homeschooling. So, we want to make sure that we have a quality distance learning option for those families.

It's challenging to run two models at the same time and we've been meeting with teachers. As far as enrollment's concerned, we hope family's stay and don't choose to homeschool because we don't get funding for those students if they do.

We are doing multiple tours, pretty much every week. Families are attracted to our outdoor space and seeing that as an advantage. We continue to have positive word of mouth in the community. We're definitely still a draw. With the nature of COVID, the added protection of more time outdoors is good. would uh lend to our

The facilities and operations: We have very minor remodel adjustment to the sun building. Some carpeting and things like that. The structure is pretty much done, the carpet and painting should be wrapped up here in the next

couple of weeks. Our windows are being cleaned. Terry is cleaning and Sandy, our lunch lady, is now a part-time custodian. She's been deep cleaning every classroom. And she'll be assisting the school with some deep cleaning every morning so that the classrooms start off very clean and disinfected.

Staffing: we did have a kind of a unexpected change in second grade. Miss Bingham, who was moving from kindergarten to second grade, she's elected to pursue another teaching opportunity at a different school. And we've hired for her position. We were lucky to find a really good candidate, local to the area. She's going to be a great addition to the team. She's got some experience in second grade from St Paul public schools.

Special education: We're still looking for one position. We've had a couple of applications.

We're also hiring a dedicated classroom aid for every room instead of having specialists move from room to room. Students will also be having lunch in the classrooms this year and will need supervision so teachers can have prep time. There are a few existing staff members that are interested in taking on extra hours. Megan also anticipates needing more nursing support. We'll also need bus aids, especially for the first few weeks, to help maintain safe distancing. And people to help take students temperatures as they arrive at school each day.

We have an existing partnership with Ed Visions and are working to develop student-centered learning. But that has been on pause while we work on COVID related details.

Our incoming teacher Mr McBride, who's coming in as fourth grade teacher, has a connection to the nature's classroom curriculum. I'm excited to share that with our teachers and think it will help with spending more time outside.

We're waiting until Thursday to learn what the state plan is and meeting as a team in the meantime. The hybrid model will be the trickiest to pull off. I'll give you an example of what that might look like. From a safety point of view, we have the best possible campus and we're going to focus on getting the kids outside as much as possible. We also have separate buildings and will focus on keeping the kids in separate cohorts to limit their exposure. Lunch and services will be brought to them. They'll also stay in separate areas for recess and PE. It will be like little schools within a school. We're also looking at how to modify our arrival and departure procedures.

In the past, the separation has sometimes been hard on the teachers and given them a sense of isolation, but for COVID it will be an asset. We are also nimble and can be pretty responsive if things need to change.

We'll need to up our nurse staffing to have someone here daily. We'll be doing temperature checks and more cleaning and sanitation. There will be an increased emphasis on hand washing and hygiene.

Some other charter schools came and got masks and face shields from us and we'll have those available for students and teachers here as well.

What the hybrid model might look like: It will be an ABC model and Stillwater is attempting something similar. Students will be assigned to an A or B day (M, W) or (T, TH) and then the C day (like F) everyone will be distant learning. This will give teachers time for prep.

We considered other options, such as one week on, one week off, or half days, but this seemed to be the best way to get all kids on campus every week. We're going to ask parents how many intend to do fully distant learning and if enough families choose that option, we may have small enough classes to let everyone else come to campus every day.

This year, teachers will be doing art and music with support from the specialists instead of having kids travel to another room. It may look more like having kits for each classroom. We still think art and music are very important but it will be hard this year.

We're going to encourage parent-provided transportation as much as possible. We don't want to limit bus transportation to anyone who really needs it, but it would reduce the number of kids in a confined space where there will be difficulties in keeping them physical separated. There will also be assigned seats and bus aids. And we're looking at staggered dismissals. We're hoping we can get by with just the existing number of buses and routes. Otherwise, we may need to buy a 5<sup>th</sup> bus, which would cost \$35-40,000.

Dan Miller: Could we use multiple parts of the campus for drop-off to reduce congestion? Maybe we could ask parents to drive their kids this year as a way to financially support the school?

Drew Goodson: There are some additional benefits to a 5<sup>th</sup> bus and we will probably need one eventually as we grow to reduce ride times for kids.

Angie Hong: The new Equity and Inclusion committee met once so far. It was mostly a brainstorming conversation of what we could and should be doing. Some of the things might be future aspirations once we're not so bogged down by COVID planning. Some of the things we talked about include sorting through the library collection and looking at either new books that we could bring in, in addition to existing books that maybe are outdated and should be replaced. A letter is being crafted to send to families looking for donations for the library. We are also seeking a donation of Crayola skin color crayons. This is a new thing that they have a big box of crayons that have the whole spectrum of skin colors. Providing cultural awareness and or anti-bias training for the teachers. We had a lot of conversation about setting up a pen pal program or a similar exchange program with an urban school where the kids would write to one another and get to know one another and be able to talk about their different lifestyles and what's different about their families. Looking forward, potentially doing cultural events involving art and music, maybe in partnership with other local schools that would expose our students to a wide range of different cultures.

Ele Anderson: I also talked with the folks who run the library about this. I wanted to get their input.

Annie Beck: I can't remember the name but the organization that put on that underground railroad reenactment that Emily Geffert and I were able to stay and be a part of it was phenomenal. They did an amazing job and they have lots of different programs from like things they do with adults down to things they do with kindergarten level so that would definitely be a resource.

#### 6.2.2 PTO Report

Katherine Hardie: Kate Sietz is almost done and has been a great co-chair for the past two years. Right now we're working on our budget for the coming year. We want to know what the PTO can do to help out with some of this year's challenges.

Kate Sietz is done at the end of August so we will have PTO elections at our Aug meeting to be seated on Sept 1. So far everyone else is planning to return. I will put out communications to try to recruit new people. We will hopefully be updating our bylaws. Ele put together a wonderful volunteer form that went out recently so we have a large pool of volunteers now. It's basically a database that Ele has access to that we can use for classroom and event volunteers. For fundraisers, we put out a survey to all parents. We won't be having any large gatherings anytime soon so our normal fall fundraiser is off the calendar. We're looking at virtual events like a virtual silent auction. We'll talk about that more at our PTO meeting on Thursday. We will probably be a bit more multi-faceted in our approach to fundraising this year. There's also a lot of support for a River Grove merchandise store. I've heard a lot of people really like the yeti mugs that we gave to all the staff and parents might want one of their own. River Grove brand masks were also brought up because that's the latest in high fashion. So we might have both an event and an ongoing merchandise store.

We'll also have some smaller events like the Read-a-thon to earn \$5000 here, \$5000 there. We're also trying to figure out how to keep the community engaged. We've talked about open play time or trail time. Maybe people sign up and there are a limited number of participants.

One project that I've been working on the past couple weeks is getting access to the lakes on property. If we are going to be outside most of the time we want to utilize all of our space. The dock is on the lake and we'll need to get a water safety plan in place and the appropriate permissions.

We had a grant for archery this year and it expired last month so we frantically bought lots and lots of things. So the good news is we now have tons of archery and fishery equipment which is great. We have a shed coming the first or second week of Sept. to store the equipment. We're working with Drew and with Katie Bruns and Kit Swanson, who was the contractor from the YMCA that was going to do the archery fishery program. Our trails are also in pretty bad shape.

We're still working on getting rid of the playground equipment that we don't want. I believe everything that's left sitting there on the ground is going to go away. Jill Bushman is working on that. We may not get money for it but it won't be an eyesore anymore.

6.3 Board Member Reports  
6.3.1 Operations & Facilities Report

7.0 Old Business

7.1 May Township CUP Amendment Update – Dan Miller

We're very close to having our CUP amendment application ready to submit. Waiting on info from the engineers doing the traffic study. There is obviously no traffic now but they are able to look at the road surface and previous road usage. It will hopefully go before May Twp at the end of August. We will engage our families that live in May Twp when that happens. We're ultimately asking for a cap of 360 students on campus. We have about 60 families who live in May Twp and kids go to our school.

7.2 Wilder Forest Lease Extension – Dan Miller

Also hoping to have this on the August board agenda. Laura Booth is helping us. We are looking to add five years on top of our lease which would basically put us at an eight year lease at this point which would take all the kids entering kindergarten this year through grade six at River Grove. This gives families the confidence that we will be here for a while and give us the opportunities to revisit some maintenance issues with Wilder to make sure the grounds are taken care of properly.

We intend to clean up trails and use them and there are some really beautiful spaces back there. The Sun is almost done and should be available for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The admin building next to Jackie Henschen's room is almost fixed up for special ed. We would also like access to the office near the garage for storage.

8.0 New Business

8.1 Tele-related services policy – Drew Goodson

Quite a few students benefit from special ed related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language. More might have the need to be delivered virtually or over the phone. In order to get reimbursed for third-party services we need a tele-policy.

This is a template policy from Indigo, our special ed contractor. They've already run it by MDE and it has the required elements to satisfy the needs of the policy. It talks about the different platforms that will be used, data safety. This is just for during the COVID pandemic.

Molly Kaliher: Students that get certain services that also have medical assistance and so that's our third-party billing. We have to have rules about that if we're providing that service via telehealth, so that policy is just so that we can use that platform if we're providing services like speech or OT. Again, it's a template policy provided by Indigo and used at their other schools.

Marcy Ost: Is this just so that we can bill for medical assistance?

Molly Kaliher: Yes.

Motion to approve Tele-related policy: Hong. Second by Henschen. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye.

## 8.2 2020-21 Calendar Change (School Day Length)

Drew Goodson: We are still waiting for a directive from the Governor and it might make more sense to make the decision then. Proposal to reduce the school day length by 30-min to provide the teachers with more time to prep and interact with distance learning families. This would make our day 6.5hrs instead of 7hrs. 8:30am-3pm. Would reduce the lunch and recess from 60 min to 45min. This would still allow for three snow days and two early dismissal days. It may also be possible to count snow days as distance learning days if needed.

Annie Beck: Question about 45-min lunch. How will that create 30 extra minutes of teacher time.

Drew Goodson: It's partly how we define "direct contact" time.

Ele Anderson: Do the numbers include the early dismissal days? 6/8 are on Fridays.

Drew: No. That is a good point. Many of our early dismissal days were Fridays, which will already be a distance learning day, so maybe we can use those for more hours.

Dan Miller: I support the proposal. Do others?

Drew Goodson: It sounds like Stillwater District will push back their start day by one week.

Dan Miller: Maybe we can roll this school day length change into the proposal that will be approved next week after the Governor's announcement.

Angie Hong: I say we do what we need to do to get through this school year and worry about our unique identity with the 7-hr school day next year.

Marcy Ost: This is a shortened day for this year only, right?

Drew Goodson: Many parents really like the longer school day and it helps to make up for not having before and after care. Some teachers worry about the long day for kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students. But that is a separate conversation. This is just for this year due to COVID.

Marcy Ost: Could we use snow days as distance learning days?

Drew Goodson: We don't know yet. Are there any concerns about pushing back the start day to the first week of Sept instead of last week of Aug?

Dan Miller: Make sure we include these questions in the survey and tell parents to contact you with concerns. It makes sense for teachers to have more planning time today.

Drew Goodson: We're only doing one week of in-service for teachers this year. It's hard to approve a changed calendar without more info but we don't want to wait until the last minute.

Bre DeCorsey: What about having a special session next week and then keeping our Aug 18 regular board meeting.

Dan Miller: Does one week after the announcement give you enough time? I know you are also working on the COVID handbook.

Drew Goodson: We could approve the calendar next week and the board might be able to approve the learning model (ie. hybrid vs distance). The board also needs to approve the COVID handbook but that probably won't be ready until the Aug. 18 meeting.

Dan Miller: I think it's ok to take it week by week, given the circumstances. As long as we are up front with our school community about what we're doing when.

Ele Anderson: We can turn around a high-level plan pretty fast because we've already done a lot of planning. But the handbook will take longer.

Marcy Ost: If we push back the start date, will that also push back the end date? Parents said they want our calendar to mirror Stillwater 834's.

Drew Goodson: If we go hybrid, it would be nice to align with Stillwater Middle and High School schedule to make it easier on families with multiple kids in multiple schools.

Dan Miller: We just have to be flexible. If we need to meet every week, it is what it is.

Drew Goodson: Could the board meet next Thursday? The teachers support the change in day length but we didn't talk about the calendar change. We won't know what 834 is doing yet.

Dan Miller: Let's try to align with 834 but do what's best for us first.

Angie Hong: Thursday next week works to meet.

Drew Goodson: There will also be other things to discuss. Maybe the bus. And we'll have preliminary data to share.

Dan Miller: Should we meet next Thursday at 6pm?

Yes.

Motion to adjourn by Angie Hong. Second by Jackie Henschen. Roll call vote: Henschen, DeCorsey, Ost, Miller, Dochniak, Hong, Hansen – aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.

9.0 Next Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, August 18, 2020 at 6pm