

APPROVED



## Lee Montessori Public Charter Schools

### Minutes

#### January Board Meeting

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##### **Date and Time**

Wednesday January 10, 2024 at 6:00 PM

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Zoom link: <https://leemontessori.zoom.us/j/89686538399?pwd=dGJPa1JZbStaNUVBRWNFdXZlc2dIZz09>

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##### **Directors Present**

A. Dogbe (remote), A. Southerland (remote), E. Silberstein (remote), J. Milton (remote), K. Little (remote), K. Wendel (remote), L. Madala (remote), S. Woldemichael (remote)

##### **Directors Absent**

*None*

##### **Ex Officio Members Present**

S. Rodberg (remote)

##### **Non Voting Members Present**

S. Rodberg (remote)

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#### **I. Opening Items**

##### **A. Record Attendance**

## **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

L. Madala called a meeting of the board of directors of Lee Montessori Public Charter Schools to order on Wednesday Jan 10, 2024 at 6:05 PM.

## **C. Approve Minutes**

K. Little made a motion to approve the minutes from December Board Meeting on 12-13-23.

K. Wendel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **D. Approve Minutes**

E. Silberstein made a motion to approve the minutes from Executive Session on 01-04-24.

A. Southerland seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **E. Approve Minutes**

K. Wendel made a motion to approve the minutes from October Executive Session on 10-09-23.

A. Southerland seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **II. Leadership Updates**

### **A. Leadership Updates**

#### East End Leadership

Simon has been there almost all week, and he can confirm that kids are learning and thriving and happy. The staff wants to know what is next, of course, but they are focused on the kids and really digging in to help them. Simon has really enjoyed his time there. Staff and Families need an update, so we are working hard to make a final interim plan and get that out to them. We will also have a strong long term plan.

#### Lessons and Equity: New Data

Equity is a core value.

What we are seeing equity-wise is a good trend.

Board-approved goal: Black students get at least the same number of lessons, At-Risk and Students with Disabilities receive more

- Lessons are typically not whole-class; they're individual in primary, and small-group or individual in elementary. A lesson typically has three parts (three times working with the teacher on different days).

- We track lessons in Transparent Classroom. There are lessons by classroom teams, interventionists, and special educators.
- We are working towards consistency in lesson entry, and there's been improvement, but we're not there yet.
- Black students and at-risk students and students with disabilities are all getting at least as many lessons (actually more), across the board, than all students.
- The same is true for literacy.

### **Academic Planning and Staff Committees**

- Literacy work this year
- Special education
  - Professional development and strategic planning with SELF (largely grant-funded)
  - Compliance support from DC Special Education Co-Op
  - External reviews of IEPs and of special education spending
- Work starting in staff committees towards next year
  - Math curriculum and professional development
  - Cosmic Education curriculum
  - Social, Emotional, and Equity Learning (SEEL) review & updates
- Staff
  - Fellowship
  - Joy!

### **Summer Camp Update**

- Likely to provide summer camp through Apollo, at Brookland, with a free bus for East End families
- Prices will be a little bit higher, \$10

## **III. Finance & Construction Updates**

### **A. Monthly Financials & Enrollment**

- **Net Income:**
  - **VS Prior full-year forecast, we are unfavorable by \$7k for the full year. NI is now forecasted at -\$4k, vs budget of \$123k, an unfavorable variance of \$128k. This variance is due to:**
    - **+\$137k Per-pupil funding (Enrollment of 501 vs budget 499; Sped demographics)**
    - **-\$140k Schola loan variable interest rate**

- **-\$60k WTU Taxes**
- **-\$60k Other Revenue (Primarily contributions)**

• **Major metrics:**

- **DSCR of 1.20 vs bank mandate of 1.20. Last forecast was 1.21.**
  - **Enrollment is certified, and grants amounts are also allocated. So, we need to ensure we control costs as best as possible to meet year-end DSCR requirements.**
  - **Spend continues to be disciplined across various controllable accounts (PD, Supplies, etc) to offset unanticipated expenses.**
- **Cash**
  - **We are forecasted to end the year at \$1.1M (32 days vs budget of 34). Current balance is \$2.9M.**
  - **ERTC tax credit of \$2M+ would significantly increase this balance, over the OSSE requirement of 45 days, and also the recommended 60 days.**

**B. Construction Update**

**East End Construction is on track for the building to be ready by Mid-August for students to start in that building by the end of August.**

**IV. Public Comment**

**A. Public Comment**

Egan Short: Curious about the prioritization of hiring leadership: Do we want them to be Montessori trained?

Simon Rodberg: Yes, we would like previous Montessori experience. The language in our job announcement is: "The Principal will serve as the instructional and cultural leader for our school community and must have previous experience successfully managing an instructional team. The preferred candidate will have previous Montessori experience and a minimum of five years of teaching and/or administrative experience."

Egan Short: In terms of conflict between students, I remember a model for conflict resolution that we had in my school growing up. We sat at a peace table and a booklet outlining how it should be handled. My experience of two kids of different ages in different classrooms is that I do not think it is as clear as it was in my school growing up. It seems like there is sometimes an apology required, sometimes there is a punishment, sometimes I get a random call. I would like to know what the policies are on that.

Simon Rodberg: We have updated our policies and are providing professional development to our staff to ensure alignment on restorative processes for conflict resolution. A new document outlining these processes is available [here](#).

Christine Contreras - Slaughter: Recess being taken away as a form of punishment  
At one point in time, the handbook stated in 2018/2019 that recess should never be taken away because it is so important to children. But now that statement is not there. She was told that staff were allowed to remove recess, but it is not aligned with Montessori, and it is also not allowed under DCPS rules. Taking away recess should never be a punishment.

Katie Wendel:

Thank you for Lorraine and Simon and the Board, for all of the work that is going on behind the scenes to keep things on track.

Emily Silberstein:

Thank you so much for the staff and families for joining this meeting, and for all of the work and effort that you continue to put in to make this a wonderful school and community.

Kristin Furio (in Public Comment Q&A chat): Was the Board aware of Ebony's resignation letter?

Lorraine Madala: Board has seen a copy of the resignation letter, but cannot comment further on individual personnel matters.

Several questions were submitted live in Q&A and were responded to on the call. See the recording for detailed responses.

K. Little made a motion to move to an Executive Session for Rationale 4 (attorney-client privilege) and Rationale 10 (to discuss employment matters).

K. Wendel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

## **B. Executive Session**

## **V. Closing Items**

### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

L. Madala

This meeting is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Please address any questions or complaints arising under this meeting to the Office of Open Government at [opengovoffice@dc.gov](mailto:opengovoffice@dc.gov).