

APPROVED



Urban Montessori Charter School

Minutes

Regular Board Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday April 27, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Location

4551 Steele Street, Oakland, CA 94619. Ring the front bell or call/text 510-290-4005 for entry. Signage on campus will direct you to the correct room, generally the Head of School's Office.

The public may comment and participate [via Zoom](#) if they prefer. The public may also email comments to board@urbanmontessori.org to be shared by the Board's Secretary during the meeting. Please make that intention clear in your email.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82592855160?pwd=cG02OTRoUVdrdngwOTI2WFBrOTBzQT09>

Meeting ID: 825 9285 5160; Passcode 510 842 1181

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Additional teleconference locations:

This meeting will be audio recorded. The public can find documents related to this agenda either linked directly on the agenda or under "Other files" after selecting the meeting in BoardOnTrack prior to viewing the agenda. Downloading the "packet" may not include all of the "Other files" that are still otherwise available to the public.

Members: Kara Fortuna, Greg Klein, Sarah Morrill, Ann Rhodes, Donald Williams

Urban Montessori Charter School welcomes your participation at Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of the organization in public. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our school and assists the Board in making the best decisions for our school. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, guidelines are provided at the bottom of this agenda. All materials for all board and committee meetings, including audio recordings of Regular Board Meetings, are available on our [BoardOnTrack public portal](#) and also through the [UMCS School Calendar](#).

Directors Present

A. Rhodes, D. Williams, G. Klein, K. Fortuna, S. Morrill

Directors Absent

None

Guests Present

D. Bissonnette, K. Feeney

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

S. Morrill called a meeting of the board of directors of Urban Montessori Charter School to order on Thursday Apr 27, 2023 at 5:41 PM.

B. Record Attendance

C. Review of Action/Discussion Items

No changes needed.

D. Review Community Agreements

Sarah gave an overview of the community agreements, and Daniel read them aloud. The Board and community members shared specific community agreements that resonated with them for this meeting.

E. Board and Community Appreciations

Donald shared appreciation to teachers, staff, and parents for being a community and showing how much they care. Sarah shared an appreciation the FAC and everyone else who helped plan the Left Coast yoga parents night out, and Moveathon, and also to the Middle School team for taking students out on the trip to San Francisco last week. Anna E. appreciated getting to visit different classrooms in her role at the school. Krishna appreciated Ms. Melody for her work in the Expanded Learning Opportunity. Greg echoed that appreciation. Daniel appreciated the classroom teachers for their planning on classroom transitions that occur between K and 1, and 3 and 4, and to Ms. Tobie for helping facilitate one of those meetings. A parent appreciated the teachers and staff, and also to the volunteers who help the school.

F. Board Member Comment

No public comments on items not on the agenda from Board members.

G. Presentations from the Floor

Sarah reviewed what is on the agenda.

No public comments on items not on the agenda.

II. Head of School Report

A. Head of School Report

Krishna shared her Head of School report, including reviewing community agreements, land acknowledgement, and anti-racist / anti-bias statements. Daniel shared recent upcoming events including upcoming NWEA testing, Shrek the Musical performance is tomorrow, Move-a-thon is May 6th, and the last day for students is Friday June 2nd. Daniel shared about classroom placements for kids moving up to new classrooms, including a family night to share with those families. Coach Elizabeth Slade is coming to visit classrooms again, from Public Montessori in Action. Krishna shared about Performance Management and Employment procedures. Krishna shared that when there is an issue with job performance specific to a role's job description, staff are supported with a performance support or improvement plan (Krishna linked a blank template in her report). These can be used at anytime throughout the year, and typically run six to eight years. Additionally, the school has an Employee Handbook (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eUDkXT0gtgB7KH-JUI-yhfUgVMV/haaC9aonsMNBnZD4/edit>). [note: if this link does not work for you, a link to this document is also in the Documents section of BoardOnTrack under Adopted Board Policies]), and have staff sign on to those each year to be sure its understood. That is typically updated at the end of the school year for the following year. When they arise, concerns from the Employee Handbook are communicated in writing to an employee, and

are followed up with a second communication with links to the Handbook, and offers for in-person meetings to review everything. There is no zero tolerance or three-strikes policy. Each employee, including those not invited to return for the following year, has access to feedback and support opportunities. Krishna shared improvements underway for next year including a more robust administrative team to provide greater support for students and staff. The school is planning a collaborative review of policies, job descriptions, and processes of support and development; expanded individual coaching; formal evaluation by position; additional onboarding procedures and support; additional professional development focus on the Employee Handbook and job responsibilities. Krishna shared that 42 of 47 staff were invited to return for next year. Two additional staff are not returning, one is moving out of state and the other is leaving to care for a parent. Hiring processes have been underway and still currently hiring for four open positions for next year. Krishna shared about the LCAP and the process for its development and adoption. It shares major school-wide goals and links to specific sources of public revenue that support those goals. The public is welcome to provide input on the LCAP through public comment, and the document is available online for comments.

Greg asked for clarification on the number of roles being hired since five staff were not invited back for next year and the school is currently hiring for four roles. Krishna clarified that no roles were eliminated, two new ones were created, and hiring is in process so at this moment there are still four open positions. 46 of 50 positions for next year are staffed at this time.

Greg commented that he noticed UMCS Staff working hard to complete and update the LCAP document and also flagged the Local Indicators, too, for completion.

A parent asked who makes staffing decisions and Krishna clarified that it is the admin team of herself, Daniel, and Melody. The parent shared how they observed the classroom, and how the kids were working independently even with the lead teacher running late caring for their own child. The classroom was amazing still even in this dynamic that day. And the support teacher was not invited back, and investing in teachers and teachers of color is a big reason why they are here at our school. The parent asked that the admin look at being sure we are continuing to do that and investing in our teachers.

A parent shared that a support teacher wasn't asked to return. When she observed her child's classroom, it was very impressive. The parent recognized the tension with balancing standards of hiring and power of what is currently good already in the classroom. There's a lot of love for this support teacher.

A parent spoke about her hearing from families with Black children, needing more support at the school. Need to protect the schools diversity. Without intention to do differently, culture will default to centering Whiteness, which isn't our vision. The parent is concerned that not inviting back a Black support teacher will impact other Black teachers at the

school. The family shared they notice Black teachers at the school supporting one another. It's important that students have Black teachers. The parent wants administration to listen deeply to Black staff and to what they say they need.

Marcela, FAC leader, shared about a teacher reaching out needing help. It is important to not just criticize, but to help and to help people feel heard and listened to. Marcela shared about encouraging families to be involved. She wants more open conversation and grace for teachers and administration, and we need to be sure teachers need to have a clear voice, and so does administration. The school needs more dialogue and for teachers and admin to continue to communicate.

Parent Irene shared how great the care from Teacher D. has been, and how much work they did last year to keep the classroom going strong. It meant a lot how much care and energy Teacher D. put into the classroom during that time. Teacher transitions are really difficult. We like being at UMCS when it supports staff to grow into teacher roles. Want more open dialogue, more compassion, more grace. It's worrisome when some staff don't return the following year.

Greg commented to the members of the public that if future draft minutes they will be able to view online don't capture well enough what each speaker was trying to say, to please email him to ensure the minutes are accurate.

Parent Alana shared her support for Teacher D. and appreciated the work he's done to support her children in the classroom and positively impact her family.

Sarah shared that these dynamics are always very hard. She has been in the position of looking at policies and implementing them equitably and considering what's best for students and the school, and it is often very hard, and complex. It's important for all voices to come speak, be heard, and she shared her appreciation for tonight's public speakers.

Greg commented that perhaps there could be additional student and family feedback on the Employee Handbook as it and other policies go through future reviews and updates.

Parent Loren shared her gratitude for getting to hear tonight's public comments. She has experienced staff changes in the past, and that it's exceptionally difficult when you can only see part of what may be going on and are not privy to what is confidential human resources information.

Greg commented that school expects that 40 of 47 staff are returning next year, which is approximately 85% of staff, and that a good goal to consider might be a return rate of 90%.

No additional public comments on this item.

III. Finance Committee

A. Discussion Item - Committee Report, including year to date financial report

Ann shared the committee report. All the financial documents and presentation are included on the meeting's agenda. Through end of March, the forecasted operating income increased slightly. Some one-time revenue will be booked into next year as the school seeks to smooth out the revenue and expenses over additional school years when possible. Ann shared about how the committee looked deeper at demographics of students, lead teachers, and city of Oakland. The city data is from a few years ago, but in general, the school represents the diversity of the city and Lead teachers represent our students. While the grade levels remain racially integrated, one key noticing was that white students are a larger proportion in our youngest grades, and admin reviewed that data and created additional recruitment steps to maximize the school's ability to attract a diverse student population into the lottery process in the long term.

Sarah asked about public school enrollment declines, and Greg shared that California lost an estimated 160,000 public school students this school year.

Greg commented that the forecasted ending fund balance is now at about 30% of expenses. Cash on hand is also projected to be strong through the end of the fiscal year.

A parent asked about the where the City of Oakland data came from and Ann clarified the numbers came from the census. And that teacher demographic data is self reported. A parent asked if there was data that separated out demographics of Oakland school-aged children from residents overall. Sarah agreed that would be good to understand but wasn't sure if or how to get that kind of data. Greg commented that we operate in a tremendously diverse-yet-segregated city, and this line of work is about monitoring and trying to maintain an integrated school. A parent commented that it was worth further research and listening if indeed we are seeing an proportional increase in enrollment of white students at the younger grades. Sarah commented that recruitment efforts are generally focused along the 880 corridor. A parent asked about the demographics of retained students and staff. Greg shared that there has not been any trend school-wide over the last few years in the demographics of the school. Greg commented that the audit was also reviewed by the committee and will be on the May agenda for the Board to vote to accept the audit.

No other public comments.

IV. Academic Oversight Committee

A. Discussion Item - Committee Report

Kara shared the committee's report, looked at attendance for the past few months. Daniel started a Student Attendance Response Team (SART), to wrap around students who have challenges getting to school on and on time. The committee discussed the transition team meetings, and that the whole first cohort of the Oakland Montessori Training Center is going to Chicago's Montessori for Social Justice conference.

Sarah shared her excitement for the SART process and shared more about how it will work. The team is currently Daniel, Jess, and Iris.

Marcela asked about illness policies for students and have they been reviewed. Kara responded the overwhelming majority of schools continue to have lower attendance because bar for most families has been lowered for what constitutes being sick and needing to stay home. Sarah shared that the state still requires schools to send notices and letters just as was true before the pandemic. Greg commented that it is a very confusing policy moment with states of emergency ending but COVID-related plans still in plan, and we need more clarity about how and when to message to families where we are now in terms of sending kids to school or keeping them home. Sarah commented that we need to send updated guidance to families.

Marcela asked about transportation and if it was ok for families to lead their own work to carpool or even collectively contract for transportation. Greg responded that parents can and do create solutions that work for them, and there are companies that provide transportation in smaller groups to students. Greg commented that the school could create a way for families to respond and find one another who are interested in additional transportation solutions. Daniel shared about past efforts on this issue.

No other public comments.

V. Family Advisory Council

A. Discussion Item - Committee Report

Kara shared the FAC's report, including hosting a well attended coffee meeting, and the FAC meeting will be rescheduled because of the Shrek The Musical performance tomorrow. The Moveathon will be a week from Saturday. Parents Night Out is coming up. Dance has been postponed and will be a Back to School Party. Marcela shared about upcoming events including getting a book club started. Donald asked about if the FAC can help support family meetings, and Kara responded that she supports enrollment meetings for families, but they definitely need more representation of families of color helping participate in those. Donald encouraged the school to host additional in-person evening opportunities. Marcela shared that it's important that new to the school families get invited to events this Spring. Ann said she wants to help with Buddy Families, too. A parent commented about important work coming up to plan parent onboarding, and documenting and organizing how families can help and support the school.

No other public comments on this item.

VI. Executive & Governance Committee

A. Discussion Item: Committee Updates, including candidates for board service, Form 700, and training

Sarah shared the committee's report, including giving updates on the Head of School evaluation process. Sarah shared the more concise board member job description which is ready to be shared used to help recruit new volunteer board members. Sarah shared that it's time for Board members to also complete the annual board evaluation survey and Forms 700 if not already completed. Greg commented that he shared training materials this month on the Public Records Act and reminded board members to use school email accounts for school business.

No public comments on this item.

B. Board and Committee Officers and Members

No changes needed.

No public comment on this item.

VII. Other Business

A. Oakland and California Updates

Greg shared that Oakland Education Association (OEA) members overwhelmingly voted to approve authorizing OEA leadership to call for an unfair labor practices strike if needed. OUSD's request to PERB for a preemptive strike injunction was denied. The two side have been bargaining a lot and late into the night, and that OUSD put out a statement acknowledging that a strike could start as soon as May 1st. Greg shared that there was a big rally in support of teachers at the most recent OUSD board meeting. Greg also shared the bill related to charter terms being extended for two more years was amended to one additional year and passed out of the latest committee.

No public comments on this item.

B. Approve Minutes from March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting

K. Fortuna made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 03-23-23.

A. Rhodes seconded the motion.

No questions or public comments on this item.

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

C.

Action Item - Vote on General Consent Report

G. Klein made a motion to approve the General Consent Report.

D. Williams seconded the motion.

No questions or public comments on this item.

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

D. Collect New Business items for Future Meetings

No new items collected.

E. Community Agreement Reflection

Sarah prompted attendees to reflect on the community agreements during tonight's meeting. Greg shared that he felt we had some non-closure on some items. Sarah shared that people were vulnerable and courageous.

Greg shared that tonight was the Board's first attempt at better incorporating the community agreements into the meeting and at some point we should reflect on if we have the right structures in place. Sarah shared that she wants to keep this structure for at least a few more meetings, and then assess at that time for changes.

Ann really appreciated having discussion about the agreements at the start of the meeting.

No public comments on this item.

VIII. Closed Session

A. Closed Session Items

At 7:42pm, Sarah announced going into closed session on Public Employee Performance Evaluation - Head of School.

Marcela commented that she is pro-school and wants admin to know that admin, teachers, and Board each have parental support. It's important to remember that we all are working towards building community and that it's good to have dialogue.

IX. Return to Open Session

A. Report out of any closed session action(s)

At 8:58pm, the Board returned to open session. No votes were taken.

X. 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 8:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
G. Klein

Documents used during the meeting

- April 2023 HOS Board Report.pdf
- UMCS_2023_March_Balance_Sheet.pdf
- UMCS_2023_March_Cash_Flow.pdf
- UMCS_2023_March_Financials_Presentation.pdf
- UMCS_2023_March_Financials.pdf
- Handout___The_California_Public_Records_Act.pdf

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MAY BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE Notice is hereby given that the order of consideration of matters on this agenda may be changed without prior notice.

REASONABLE LIMITATIONS MAY BE PLACED ON PUBLIC TESTIMONY The Governing Board's presiding officer reserves the right to impose reasonable time limits on public testimony to ensure that the agenda is completed.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS MAY BE MADE Notice is hereby given that, consistent with the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, special presentations not mentioned in the agenda may be made at this meeting. However, any such presentation will be for information only.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION WILL BE PROVIDED FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, any individual with a disability who requires reasonable accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting of the Governing Board may request assistance by contacting UMCS at 4551 Steele Street, Oakland, CA 94619 or info@urbanmontessori.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION For more information concerning this agenda or for materials relating to this meeting, please contact UMCS at 4551 Steele Street, Oakland, CA 94619 or board@urbanmontessori.org. All materials are available via the Governance Section of our website: <https://www.urbanmontessori.org/boardontrackportal>