



February 1, 2021
Quarterly Board Meeting
Montessori School of Englewood

Location: WebEx

Present:

Board Members: Thom Hale, Mike Sculnick, Joe Motto, Karen Anderson, Peter Cunningham, Ebonie Townsend, Tanesha Peeples, Marcus Robinson, Jim Sulzer, Marvin Hoffman, Gabrielle Sansonetti, Peter Talmers

Administration: Rita Nolan, Nyela Wells, Maggie Mikuzis

University of Chicago Booth Fellows: Deanna Wiblitzhouser

Roll call and minutes taken by: Joe Motto

I. Call to Order

Hale called the meeting to order and gave opening remarks concerning the school's community support efforts and efforts to enable remote learning of the students through computer distribution and the creation and implementation of workable Montessori curriculum online. Meanwhile, the board is in the process of significantly expanding with the addition of valuable new board members. There are a lot of successes and developments of which the school can be proud.

II. Nomination of Quillen Blackwell

Hale presented information concerning board prospect Quillen Blackwell, his background, interests, and work with the school, and his interest in joining the board. Discussion ensued. Hale made a motion nominating Blackwell for membership on the board, Anderson seconded, all voted in favor, none opposed. Motion passed. The board excitedly welcomes Blackwell as a member.

III. Finance

Sculnick led discussion on school finances through December 31, 2020. *See Ex. A.* We are running a deficit of ~\$133k. The main drivers are four sets of expenses that are overbudget or



that were unbudgeted: (1) salaries, including added IT personnel support; (2) professional development variance; (3) PPP expenses; and (4) computers and other IT equipment purchases. There are also some modest positive expense variances, and we are slightly above budget on revenue due to good fundraising, despite many headwinds. The school is in the process of reassessing and adjusting its staffing needs, given the threatened budget deficit.

Sculnick made a motion that the board pursue forgiveness of our PPP loan. Following discussion, Anderson seconded. All voted in favor, none opposed, motion passed. We do not appear to be eligible for a second loan under the revised program terms.

Sculnick additionally moved that we continue to pursue renewal of our line of credit with Inland Bank. Discussion ensued. Motto seconded. All voted in favor, none opposed, motion passed.

IV. Executive Director, Principal, and Head Start Report

Nolan circulated in advance and led discussion, with Wells and Mikuzis, of the Executive Director, principal, and Head Stuart combined written report (see Ex. B) and various items of interest at the school, including:

- Taproot Foundation selection in relation to revamping our training center mission vision.
- Rebrand and reworking of school websites.
- Working with INCS on reopening protocols; detailed new plan submitted to CPS.
- Enrollment: we had budgeted 320 in the charter school and are presently at 317 enrolled. Enrollment has continued to grow even during the pandemic, and we are not adding at this time. Enrollment has dropped in head start. We have 80 slots, with 54 enrolled.
- We are presently in-person schooling for about 80 students in the lower age levels, using pods of 15 or less.
- School attendance is at 87%. That is positive relative to our peers.
- Head Start: we are working through certain compliance issues. The local budget is up for rebidding.



V. Strategic Planning Committee Formation

Hale moved for the creation of a strategic planning committee to develop a strategic plan setting out 5-year, 3-year, and 1-year visions for the school. Motto seconded, all voted in favor, none opposed. Motion passed. Robinson will chair the committee.

VI. Public Participation

Opportunity was given for public comment.

VII. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next quarterly meeting of the board will be on April 3, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., via videoconference.

Exhibit A

Montessori Network

Budget to Actual

For the Six Months Ending 12/31/2020

Description	Actual (UR) YTD	Budget (UR) YTD	Variance (\$)
Revenue			
CPS Funding			
CPS SBB & Non-SBB	1,226,086	1,292,255	(66,169)
CPS Special Education (SPED)	357,127	357,127	(0)
CPS Supplemental Aid	125,832	125,832	(0)
Total CPS Funding	1,709,045	1,775,214	(66,170)
Government Funding			
Title I	71,249	74,092	(2,843)
Title II	0	3,804	(3,804)
Title III	0	728	(728)
Other Government Funding	522,474	422,623	99,851
Title IV	4,784	1,133	3,651
State Bilingual	0	3,150	(3,150)
Total Government Funding	598,507	505,529	92,978
Student Fees			
Release from Restriction			
Donations			
Individuals Donations	124,421	205,000	(80,579)
Corporate & Foundation Donations	80,390	0	80,390
Total Donations	204,811	205,000	(189)
Other Revenue			
Other Revenue	96,851	0	96,851
Total Other Revenue	96,851	0	96,851
Total Revenue	2,609,215	2,485,743	123,471
Expenses			
Personnel Costs			
Salaries	1,801,528	1,702,411	99,118
Health/Dental/Life/ADD benefits	173,892	170,241	3,651
Pension CTPF	10,837	22,974	(12,137)
FICA/Medicare	95,099	130,235	(35,136)
State Unemployment	6,408	8,512	(2,104)
Worker's Comp	10,141	8,512	1,629

Variance (%)	Budget Annual
94.88%	2,584,510
100.00%	714,254
100.00%	251,665
96.27%	3,550,429

96.16%	148,184
0.00%	7,607
0.00%	1,456
123.63%	845,246
422.40%	2,265
0.00%	6,300
118.39%	1,011,058

60.69%	410,000
0.00%	0
99.91%	410,000

0.00%	0
0.00%	0

104.97%	4,971,486
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105.82%	3,404,821
102.14%	340,482
47.17%	45,948
73.02%	260,469
75.28%	17,024
119.13%	17,024

Description	Actual (UR)	Budget (UR)	Variance (\$)
	YTD	YTD	
Professional Development	46,616	15,000	31,616
Staff Recruitment	344	1,200	(856)
Total Personnel Costs	2,144,865	2,059,085	85,781
Direct Student Costs			
Classroom Supplies	15,083	7,500	7,583
PPE Expenses	57,830	0	57,830
Educational Materials	21,351	7,500	13,851
Instructional Equip & Technology	45,563	12,000	33,563
Transportation/field trips/student events	200	2,500	(2,300)
Consultants (RSP, Special Ed, direct student related)	26,501	0	26,501
Parent Activities	1,323	1,750	(427)
Related Service Providers	70,089	59,500	10,589
Other Direct Student Expenses	1,130	0	1,130
Total Direct Student Costs	239,069	90,750	148,319
Office & Administration			
Office Supplies	3,642	5,000	(1,358)
Accounting & Audit	117,548	111,000	6,548
Payroll Fees	7,759	6,000	1,759
Phone & Internet	3,323	6,000	(2,677)
Printing & Copying	7,149	9,500	(2,351)
Consultants (Admin)	15,842	14,000	1,842
CPS Admin Fee	51,271	53,500	(2,229)
Total Office & Administration	206,535	205,000	1,535
Occupancy			
Repairs & Maintenance	94,840	75,500	19,340
Building Supplies	14,118	12,500	1,618
Consultants (Security, Custodial)	1,200	9,500	(8,300)
Occupancy Other	6,103	8,000	(1,897)
Total Occupancy	116,260	105,500	10,760
Other Costs			
Corporate Insurance	17,716	15,000	2,716
Student Recruitment	1,750	500	1,250
Interest Expense	1,302	2,200	(898)
Membership Dues & Subscriptions	7,823	1,250	6,573
Depreciation	10,738	10,500	238
Capital Lease	0	4,000	(4,000)
Postage and Shipping	4,712	0	4,712
Travel	77	750	(673)
Other Expenses	(8,140)	5,000	(13,140)
Total Other Costs	35,979	39,200	(3,221)

Variance (%)	Budget Annual
310.78%	30,000
28.64%	2,400
104.17%	4,118,169

201.11%	15,000
0.00%	0
284.68%	15,000
379.69%	24,000
8.00%	5,000
0.00%	0
75.60%	3,500
117.80%	119,000
0.00%	0
263.44%	181,500

72.85%	10,000
105.90%	200,000
129.31%	12,000
55.38%	12,000
75.25%	19,000
113.16%	28,000
95.83%	107,000
100.75%	388,000

125.62%	151,000
112.94%	25,000
12.63%	19,000
76.28%	16,000
110.20%	211,000

118.11%	30,000
350.01%	1,000
59.19%	4,400
625.86%	2,500
102.26%	21,000
0.00%	8,000
0.00%	0
10.31%	1,500
(162.79%)	10,000
91.78%	78,400

Description	Actual (UR) YTD	Budget (UR) YTD	Variance (\$)
Total Expenses	2,742,708	2,499,534	243,173
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(133,493)	(13,791)	(119,702)

Variance (%)	Budget Annual
109.73%	4,977,068
967.96%	(5,582)

Exhibit B



The
Montessori School
of Englewood

Report From The Executive Director

Taproot

In December, we were chosen by the Taproot Foundation to revamp our training center's mission and vision. The Taproot Foundation is a national nonprofit that connects nonprofits and social change organizations with passionate business professionals who share their expertise pro bono. Taproot offers organizations dedicated to social change to have full access, through pro bono service, to the marketing, strategy, HR, and IT resources they need to be most effective.

During our Taproot Marathon, we were able to create a new mission and vision statement and a statement of purpose.

Mission: The Montessori Residency of Chicago's mission is to recruit, train, and coach a diverse corps of teachers in underserved schools, primarily in urban areas. The training and coaching program is designed to leverage the Montessori approach's strengths and offer a relevant, high-impact education in these communities. Our goal is to develop and retain high-quality teachers that push students to reach their most significant potential.

Vision: Our vision is to create a pipeline of diverse and highly-trained Montessorians equipped to educate underserved students and help them become leaders and changemakers in their communities.

Statement of Purpose: The Montessori methodology has long been recognized as an innovative, progressive, and successful teaching model worldwide. However, this methodology often faces significant challenges in underserved communities, where Montessori schools see major growth. There are substantial burnout and high turnover of Montessori teachers in these areas, and many schools are failing to show success and growth in literacy, causing some closures.

TMROC addresses this challenge by engaging teachers to tailor and adapt the Montessori training methodology to underserved students. We are working with Montessori teachers to equip them with the resources, guidance, and skills needed to meet all students' needs.

In January, we submitted another project to Taproot that was also accepted. This time, we worked with one individual who helped us create a new logo for the school.

Website

As we continue to rebrand align our message, we have updated our school and The Montessori Residency of Chicago websites.

www.tmsoe.org and www.chicagomontessoriresidency.com

Maggie and I have been participating in an Illinois Network of Charter Schools working group. The group was established to review evidence and data from both the Center for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Enrollment and attendance

Charter School: 317 students enrolled- budgeted 320

Preschool: 54 students enrolled-80 budgeted

MSE's Total overall attendance is hovering at 87%. Englewood's average attendance is between 83%-87% (comparison was completed by analyzing local schools via the CPS Dashboard). Attendance is lowest in grades kindergarten through second grade averaging weekly between 70%-75%. Middle School has the highest attendance with an average of 94% weekly.

Link to MSE' Annual Report [MSE Annual Report 2019 2020.pdf](#)

Finance Update:

Last month, we were informed that a \$450,000 deficit would occur by the end of fiscal year if necessary changes were not made. To date, we have cut this deficit in half through the realignment of staffing and minimizing specific budget line items.

Fundraising Update:

Board: \$84,268.00	Corporate: \$24,475.12	Individual: \$58,556.86	Grants: \$91,500.00	Total: \$258,799.98
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Principal

- We have identified a need for more Social and Emotional Support for some of our students. We will be reengaging with the Children's Research Triangle to see what additional assistance they can provide for our students. We are considering hiring a full time social worker for the 2021-2022 school year.
- We are completing teacher self-evaluations
- Currently the principal meets with all level heads bi-weekly

Operations

MSE has been in constant contact with CPS to develop our Operational Plan. The full plan can

be accessed via [MSE Operational Plan](#) [Return to School Metrics](#).

Partnerships:

- MSE is continuing to serve 300 meals Monday-Friday through World Central Kitchen until at least March.
- Family and Community Engagement met with The Trotter Project to discuss programming for the year.
- Rogers Park Montessori donated a pair of pajamas for each child. We were able to distribute the items at packet pick-up. Family and Community Engagement will continue to work with Rogers Park Montessori to develop informational plans for parents to understand and receive vaccines.
- MSE is currently finalizing our partnership with Bernie's Books for the drop-off of books for 2021.
- Two certified therapists led a Zoom Call to discuss the stress we all have been feeling in the past year and the trauma our families and students may be feeling.
- Dr. Audrey Stillerman led a zoom call for our staff to answer any questions or concerns regarding the Covid vaccine.

Middle School

- NWEA Testing showed improvement in both reading and math, which is an indication that remote learning in middle school has been effective despite the challenges of distance education.
- Student attendance has been overall strong; our students are engaged and attending class. This has been a challenge this year, and we continue to focus on it. It means a lot of phone calls and texts to follow up on absent students.
- 7th and 8th-grade parent meetings have been productive and positive, with a good turnout.
- We have advocated for attention to our students' social-emotional needs. The administration has responded by contacting psychologists/therapists in the school community who may help with this. In a remote-learning environment, and with the recent chaos in current events, this feels especially important.
- Feedback from the parent community has encouraged the middle school teaching team; the parents are with us as we work together to make this year as right as it can be.
- The 8th-grade high school application process was efficient, with specific attention to our SPED students. We have begun 7th-grade parent meetings around next year's high school applications.
- Students have started up various clubs, including Student Leadership, Rock Band, Baking Club, and Anime Club. A BLM Club is in the works.
- We are looking forward to going back to in-person learning as soon as possible!

Upper Elementary

- Most of the Google suite glitches, particularly those concerning Google Meet, have been worked out.
- We will continue to partner with Cadence Learning for the second semester. They are still providing teachers with PD sessions twice a week. These have now become more tailored to a teacher's specific online needs.
- Teachers are now able to use all that Newsela has to offer. Newsela is a site that provides articles on current events, reports on science topics as well as novel study materials. The reading level of all of their articles can be adjusted to meet the needs of each student. Teachers attended a PD session on utilizing this online platform.
- Some teachers have noticed an increase in student participation, which is a positive sign as we hit the winter doldrums. Good books always help. We have been reading *Finding Langston*, *The Tiger Rising*, *Out of the Dust*, and *Inside Out and Back Again*.
- Virtual field trips helped add variety to our on-line learning routine. Facets theatre and Cook County Farm Bureau were two of the hosts.
- Witnessing historical events has provided topics of in-depth discussion for students. All classes viewed a live feed of the inauguration.
- The new semester begins shortly with hopes that a return to in-person learning will follow in the not-to-distant future.

Lower Elementary

- Lower Elementary teachers are looking forward to implementing their month-long Black History Month unit that includes activities, music, read alouds, and much more!
- Reading growth, in the area of phonics specifically, has been increasing at a faster rate as the year goes on (with a higher percentage of students meeting their growth goals). The teachers are enjoying carrying out the Cotner scope and sequence and look forward to teaching these skills and more in-person.
- Teachers continue to create packets with materials to be picked up/dropped off by parents. This will hopefully help with the transition to in-person learning, as students will be used to independent work based on materials.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten parents were surveyed on whether they would like their child to stay remote or return to in-person learning. Out of 42 enrolled Kindergarten students, 26 have decided to come back into the building for in-person instruction. We currently have two in-person classrooms and one remote learning classroom. Julie Drew has returned to the Kindergarten Level-Head position as part of our reorganization alignment.

Primary

ERSEA/Disabilities/Mental Health:

- Referred two students to be registered with CPS to have evaluations for the 20-21 school year.
- TMSOE enrolled four new students this month, one student with an active IEP.
- Conducted mental health staff and parent meetings with Mr. Dabney (mental health consultant) on "Self Care."
- Mr. Dabney conducted classroom observations and meetings, and his feedback was given to make certain behaviors are positively redirected.

Family Community and Engagement:

- CEDA and LIHEAP home energy assistance program remote application
- SAMHSA Taking care of your behavioral Health: Tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak
- Help your child handle stress (Parents as Teachers)
- Section 8 assistance
- Dabney Behavior Health "Helping Children be Children" family therapist.
- Handling Frustration Before a Tantrum Starts (Parents as Teachers)

Head Start Education:

- Leap is presenting professional development on Thursdays for staff.
- Leap will interview students on January 28th.
- The Head Start staff has started Teachstone Training.
- We are working on completing checkpoints and assessments.

Specialized Support

- We are working on scheduling the last of our IEP meetings for the year. All re-evaluations have been designed, and clinicians are working with parents to either conduct remote or in-person evaluations, depending on the situation.
- The Specialized Support team will be working closely with Stephanie, Jamie, and Rick to create an inclusive plan for next year. We are discussing a co-teaching model of instruction and are thinking about the support students,, and classroom teachers will need for that to be successful.
- Foundations materials have arrived, and both kindergarten teachers have been trained. First - third grade SPED teachers have also been trained. We recognize the need for an early literacy intervention program and are working on a plan to bring daily, whole-class, phonics-based instruction to all of our primary students starting in the fall.
- Our partners at The Children's Research Triangle present a professional development program on early childhood mental health on February 5. The goal is to help give our teachers knowledge and skills to support our students' emotional wellbeing. We hope to continue this partnership into the future and provide more professional development opportunities in this area. We will also work with them on hiring a full-time social worker for the next school year.

MTSS & Bilingual

- **MTSS:**
 - MTSS interventionists are in consistent contact with parents to ensure students are in attendance and able to log in for progress monitoring
 - MTSS interventionists collaborate with general education teachers to ensure students attend and make the necessary changes to the schedule based on students' needs.
 - The MTSS winter universal screener is planned for February 8th- March 5th
- **Bilingual:**
 - Tutoring is offered for K-8th bilingual students on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 3 until 4
 - Letters have been sent home to remind parents of this opportunity.
 - The bilingual team collaborated on an extensive translation of the in-person learning plan.
 - The bilingual team has attended grade level parent meetings to conduct live translations.

- The bilingual teacher has kept consistent communication with families and general education teachers of bilingual students.