

Le Monde Immersion
Board Meeting Minutes
at Mercy Corps, 45 SW Ankeny
Portland, OR 97204
December 13, 2017
5:45 - 8:45 pm

Board members present: Jarod Hobbs, Jeff Scott, Dory Hobbs, Alison Garfinkle, Karen Kitchen, Ben Melix, Shouka Rezvani (non-voting member)

Others: Various parents

1. **Board approvals** – The board approved unanimously the leave request of a family for two of their children which had previously been consent approved, as well as the October board minutes.
2. **Directors and officers** – As of the end of December, the three-year terms of the board members would expire. The board re-elected for additional three-year terms: Jarod Hobbs, Karen Kitchen, Dory Hobbs, Jeff Scott, Ben Melix, Alison Garfinkle, and Shouka Rezvani (nonvoting).

Shouka Rezvani asked not to be considered for an annual officer position, and the board commended her for her years of service as President. The board considered and appointed the following officers for the organization effective January 2018:

Jarod Hobbs – President

Dory Hobbs– VP

Ben Melix – Treasurer

Ali Garfinkle– Secretary

3. **School Report** – The school has completed its first of three rounds of MAP testing in English and Math, as well as IDAPEL in DIBELS in lower grades. This round of testing is completed early in order to establish a baseline for the year and to help determine needed interventions. Shouka as Executive Director and David Maxey as the Director of Student Support held meetings with the classroom and ELA teachers in grade-level teams to identify students who are either on "watch lists" or in need of immediate interventions in reading and in math. The parents of watch list students will be given some direct feedback on opportunities to provide supports at home. With respect to students needing immediate interventions, philosophically, taking students out for interventions during core instruction will likely result in students getting further behind; instead we hope to close the achievement gap for struggling learners by providing before or after care school interventions with the students (English will be provided before school, and math after school). Instead of more frequent staff meetings, Shouka is encouraging teachers to take extra time to collaboratively plan across grades and work directly with students needing interventions. Shouka expressed appreciation for the teachers who have agreed to do these interventions. So far there has been a good response from the parents with students in need of interventions. Shouka will meet with

teachers at the next staff meeting to collaboratively plan the assessment schedule for the rest of the year.

Teacher Evaluations – the school use the Danielson rubric and model of evaluation. Shouka has asked the teachers to do a self-evaluation, and this year is encouraging peer-to-peer observations and the provision of peer feedback using a rubric provided from another charter school. Shouka will do informal evaluations on a regular basis, and more formal evaluations in January/ February.

Shouka reported that there are great things happening around the school. Yann is studying for his Masters degree through a remote learning program based in France, and his thesis involves an exploration of how participation in theatre affects students' enjoyment in school. Yann's students wrote and performed plays in French that really exhibited great use of French oral skills. Ali's daughter is in Yann's class and she agreed that the assignment was really well received by the students. Shouka expressed appreciation for Yann's integration of a new method into the program. Another teacher-led big success was NaNoWriMo after school during November, initiated by Madame Kate and the ELA teachers. They had a packed room most of the days. Students showed a real enthusiasm for writing as evidence from the massive amounts of words written. A student asked if he could do an after school History club, Madame Beth agreed to "chair" that as the staff person present after school.

The board noted that new newsletter is really outstanding and has received great feedback. Shouka is hoping that upper grade students and teachers will start to contribute regularly. The board discussed challenges in the 6th grade, and also noted the very positive classes like Archeology/World History and Musical Theater. Shouka held a meeting with the 6th grade parents to discuss possible solutions to challenges in that grade.

The current fundraiser Teacher Time is taking place, where families donate towards fun activities for their class.

In general, the year seems to be progressing well. Teachers felt good about scheduling conferences before Thanksgiving, and were thrilled when parent brought food and treats to help support their morning and evening work. This seems like a scheduling piece that we will want to continue going forward.

4. **Intern Report** - Ali reported that we started the year with 8 interns (or when they were able to arrive due to visa issues). Two are not staying the whole year due to personal reasons and family issues at home in France. In general, the interns this year are delightful – engaging, enthusiastic and very helpful in the classrooms. The interns are gearing up to transition to their spring host families, which Ali notes has been a challenge to organize. In general we need additional families to offer to host the interns, although Ali is heartened by the excitement and interest from the families who are new to the school this year. Also, more families seem to be purchasing SCRIP for the interns for food or ride shares (the biggest need to help host families offset costs).

The intern program at Le Monde struggles in some minor ways. Interns are not necessarily interested in coming to Portland during the application process, which can affect their outlook if they are looking for a different type of environment. With interns arriving at staggered times, it can be difficult to train interns and set up consistent expectations. Historically, the interns preferred to cycle between classes to receive a full range of experiences in a variety of grades. The current interns seem to have grown attached to the class that they are in.

The interns this year are so good that we are hopeful that some will want to stay and will be successful receiving a visa to stay. Interns might apply to return on a Q1 or H1B visa, but the latter is a lottery (with odds of receiving a visa about one in three). There seems to be parent perception that there is a lot of teacher turn over at Le Monde. In actuality, this often has to do with visa issues and Oregon teacher licensing requirements as a public school, and we will likely continue to lose teachers for these reasons. Each year because we need to wait to hear who will be able to return due to visa challenges, we often are unable to announce who teachers will be until right before school starts.

5. **Equity and Inclusivity in Education Committee Report** – There is good work coming from the committee! Genevieve worked with a positive discipline trainer who suggested we do a positive discipline parenting workshop that she will coordinate. Another school hosted a cultural competency workshop for their community, and Shouka will reach out to that school to see how that went and if we might also host a workshop.
6. **Facility Report** – Shouka, Dory and Jarod met with an architecture firm to discuss a potential facility and were excited to learn that the space has the potential to accommodate our needs. There remain a number of challenges in order to address all planning, zoning and financing hurdles.

Shouka had a meeting with Charter School Capital, a developer of charter schools that well understands the charter school model. A constant refrain from charter school financing companies is that because Oregon is one of the lowest of all states in terms of per pupil funding, it is hard to make the financing work. All of the PPS district charter schools are facing this same financial challenge, for which the fix may take legislative change (and it might be the wrong political climate for this). That said, Charter School Capital is headquartered in Portland, and they expressed that they might be interested in a local project.

In another more hopeful discussion, Shouka spoke with the owner/developer of our current Burnside location. He previously talked about developing a property for us, but one particular property sold already. He is considering other ways to support our needs.

The board approved an extension of our Burnside lease , so that we can remain in our current facilities pending exploration of long term options. We are moving forward actively with regard to facilities, and it seems like we are on a good trajectory despite no solid news.

- 7. Financial and Fundraising Report** - Shouka provided the board with the full audit report, which the Board reviewed. It was a clean and unmodified audit, which is what we are looking for. This was a time consuming process, however we are doing a good job. Ben as the new Treasurer will work on continuing to ensure board oversight of finances. The board extended thanks to Shouka, Terry, and the bookkeeper for assisting with the audit process.

The board also received and reviewed the annual tax return on Form 990. Ben confirmed that he does not see any changes to the latest version. The board approved for Shouka to e-sign and submit

Shouka provided the board for review and approval November financials, including the balance sheet and profit and loss statement. Our finances are trending in the same way, working under budget on expenses and slightly under budget on income. We are currently saving enough on expenses so we are still in the black. \$10K above where we thought we would be in this budget. Operating close to budget on all line items (95-97% accuracy). Don't need to clarify variances with the district unless it is a greater variance. That said, we are very cash poor. Le Monde didn't start with federal start up grants and Oregon has a low per student funding amount, of which as a charter school we get even less, and Le Monde has a high level of programs that we come to expect (specials – art, music, PE) and teachers with significant planning time as compared to other schools (1/2 hour per day vs 1 hour per week for others). A place of concern for Shouka is that AFCA revenue is down against budget. Part of the problem is a collections issue, and we have asked the AFCA Manager to be more persistent with collections. It also may be that having to have staffing at two locations is increasing costs at the risk of profitability. We also need to continue actively fundraising. Shouka reports that the La Fete Committee is very organized and they appear to be working hard. Shouka thinks we will weather the year, but there needs to be constant vigilance in terms of cash flow. Ben asked whether the issue with AFCA was on timing of invoicing. Shouka indicated that might be part of the problem, but as she does not do the invoicing she is not sure. She is asking the AFCA Manager to be copied on invoices and payments to be able to provide oversight. Jarod questioned whether auto-pay for AFCA might help, and will work with Shouka to see if that is possible—previous exploration of this idea showed that it was cost prohibitive. Jeff asks will we see down the line the budgetary need to re-invigorate the fundraising for technology? Shouka agrees and mentions that we just purchased new set of Chromebooks at Division, and refurbished some of the Burnside computers, but that need for new technology is pretty constant.

Wreath sales made about \$2,000, and Teacher Time will likely generate a few thousand more when it is finished. Both of these fundraisers were run by parent volunteers with good success.