

LE MONDE IMMERSION

October 2021 Board Meeting

Atlas Immersion Academy Parking Lot,
3643-B SW Vermont Street, Portland
Sunday, October 17, 2021

In attendance:

Shouka Rezvani (non-voting), Ben Melix-Stanciu, Mark Williams, Michal McCamman, Ali Garfinkle, Dory Hobbs, Jarod Hobbs and parents

Meeting called to order at 4:06pm

1. Approved: Q4 Financials, increasing staff parental leave to 12 weeks paid, Revised Budget including ESSER III expenditures, PPS Annual Performance Framework, and June board meeting minutes.

2. School and Facility Report

The school completed MAP Reading (grades 2-8) and Math (grades 1-8) testing, and at first glance the scores seem unusually high, especially given distance learning last year. The MAP percentiles are normed against pre-pandemic times, and Shouka, David and the teachers will do a deeper dive analysis starting next week by grade. Some teachers have started support meetings with students who need additional academic supports.

Shouka would like to implement French STAMP assessments in the elementary grades (we recently started them in 8th grade). The STAMP test is an online assessment that is graded by native speakers remotely, and provides a good snapshot of French language progress. The 8th grade students would also still do the DELF B1 and B2 assessments.

The IB verification visit is happening this coming week. The school has been sharing videos and photos to prepare for the visit, providing a lot of information to the IB team. The team will then give feedback. Implementation of IB happens over time and is about continual growth and modification, but if approved during this visit we could switch from being an IB candidate school to an IB school. Shouka reports that the teachers have been implementing a lot more of the IB techniques in their classrooms now that we are back in person, including more project-based, multi-disciplinary learning.

Covid update - In general things are going really well, especially as compared with other local schools. To date this year we have had no in-school Covid transmissions of which we are aware. The school has been following very stringent protocols. Tents have been erected for outdoor set up with heaters. Shouka has been hearing from parents on all sides of issues – parents wanting more protocols and parents wanting less. Shouka feels like the middle ground is probably a good place to land.

With the latest Covid positive diagnosis of a child in 2nd grade, a parent questioned the testing guidance, so Shouka provided a written response (letter provided to board). Shouka described two types of tests: diagnostic vs screening, both of which require parent consent. Students are not supposed to come to school for the sake of testing. The school is not allowed to pre-emptively test

asymptomatic students nor to do exposure screening testing absent direction from the county health authority to do so. Testing is time consuming because it involves a lot of reporting. Shouka is currently doing a lot of testing; no recent tests conducted at school have been positive. Screening testing will be conducted via OHSU, and we are working within their timeline (Shouka submitted paperwork timely and participated in their webinars). This screening test is a spit test which is administered once per week in homes by families who have opted to participate. Results are provided only to participating parents/guardians; it is up to them to tell school if there are any positive results. Currently we are waiting for OHSU to provide labels and our testing day.

Ali asks if we can clarify the Multnomah Health Authority guidance? Board agrees that sending the draft letter Shouka wrote to families is a good clarification. There are links on our website as well. Some will think sending this is too much information, but in this case the board is in agreement that more information is better.

The school follows the OHA/ODE “Planning for Covid-19 Scenarios in Schools” guidance, always with consultation and oversight of the Multnomah County Health Authority. Shouka hears a wide variety of parent suggestions including things like “in my daughter’s preschool” or “in California”, but we follow Oregon guidance with the oversight of the Multnomah County Health Authority. The school is expected to make every effort to keep the school open in as safe a way as possible. Is school a risk free environment? No. There is some risk being at school. Le Monde has 385 students – families all have very different levels of risk tolerance, honesty, and reporting. Students come to school sick all the time. Students are being sent home and tested every single day.

Hiring new staff has been very difficult, both for Le Monde and for the district for its Special Education (SpEd) staff. Currently PPS has not found a permanent Learning Center Teacher or School Psychologist to do SpEd services, although we do have a speech pathologist and an occupational therapist. The school is not seeing a lot of SpEd service provision by PPS. Internally Le Monde is able to offer decent support and we are trying to help those students who need it. We are definitely concerned that students need more support. SpEd hiring and staffing is very challenging everywhere. Dory asks if there is anything we can do? Families are encouraged to do what they need to in order to support their students. Board discussed whether it could apply for a waiver from ODE to be able to hire its own SpEd staffing. Definitely pros and cons to such a statement, which historically we have been advised would be unlikely to be supported by the district and thus approved by ODE.

Champions has not been able to provide after school services, because they also have a hard time hiring despite offering signing bonuses and close to \$30 per hour initial wages. The lack of an after school program is a big issue of concern for some families. Because of the new vaccination requirement Champions is needing to rehire staff, and it is causing a lot of challenges. Shouka notes that they are planning actively and they have bought a lot of equipment which is now stored at the school, which is hopefully a sign that their intention is to start the program soon.

3. Financial and Fundraising Update

Shouka provided the Board a copy of the audit and management letter, reporting a clean audit and including some best practice recommendations. An ongoing question continues to be if it is best practice to have multiple accounts at a single institution or accounts at different institutions given

our new higher account amounts? Is it good to have a different bank account/institution for FDIC insurance purposes? We could look at opening an account in a different institution. Previously the Board talked about acquiring a line of credit that was denied by the bank, as we have no real assets to post as security and no one willing to post personal guarantees for school debt.

The Board reviewed the audited financials and were referred to the balance sheet and profit and loss statement to date. There is nothing unusual to note, except that the SIA funding for year 2 will be distributed at an unknown time in the future, while ESSER III funding will be provided as a reimbursement, although we don't know when. The ESSER III funds can be used for up to 3 years (though we will likely seek reimbursement of all allowable funds over 2 years). Q1 reporting will happen at the end of October. The PERS percentage that the school has to pay into PERS has gone up.

Right now it is very difficult to obtain substitutes from usual sources—few substitutes, and many teachers on leaves around the state.

ESSER III budgeted expenditures coincide with the surveys conducted last year (support for students, playground, small class size, more social/emotional support). The school has purchased an anti-bullying curriculum. We have invested more time in staffing and assistants to have consistent support in classrooms.

Run for Arts update from Michal – Young Audiences (YA) is permanently changing its model away from a running event, moving to a regional dance once per year on a given day. YA is working to make it a more local and cultural event for all schools, creating a more equitable way to divide money raised and allocated. This model leaves a hole in the “running event” fundraiser. It is a great opportunity to have a fall run to provide general support to the school. Michal suggests remaining a part of the YA community event, but to also do our own run. The YA event date will be March 8, 2022, and it is called “Fun for the Arts”. YA is planning to get local businesses and radio stations to support. If Le Monde held our own running fundraiser we could work with the LMPC. A parent asks what the time commitment looks like for organizing this event? There is work leading up to the event in procuring location, snacks, word out to students, organizing volunteers. The day of run time intensive and also two week window prior to collect money. Michal recommends collecting money all online for tracking purposes. The school collected approximately \$46-47 K (netted about \$30K, YA take 7%). The program does a good job bringing interesting and diverse artists into the classrooms.

Discussion around new run for school and how to make it happen. Good ideas floated for motivation – donut day for class, uniform violation day for class, most laps run, etc and these resonate with students. We will stay away from publicizing amounts raised by individual students as it is not appropriate for school.

4. Le Monde Parents Community Update

Welcome Michelle Lamanet, new Le Monde Parents Community Chair. The group has made it a priority to foster community. The First Friday coffees have been very successful. Outdoor park

playdate have been offered once per month, and community services project once per month. They are organizing staff snacks and staff appreciation. The directory is almost finished. Questions asked to confirm the best way to publish the directory in the future. The school cannot give out student or parent information, which is why the school encourages the LMPC can ask people to self-include any information they wish. LMPC invites board members to a meeting to do a Q & A on January 13th meeting.

An LMPC member said that there is inconsistent messaging from the school. The example shared is the recent second grade cohort with one Covid case in each class, but the entire school community only being informed of the first one. Shouka shared that the school is not being inconsistent, but in that circumstance, since the second case came the day after the school community was informed of the first case, and was in the same cohort, but did not result from an in-school transmission, the level of risk to families beyond the second grade cohort was deemed by the health authority not to be materially different from that of which the entire school community had just been advised. In both instances, the Multnomah County Health Department was not advising quarantine even for the students in the classes with the cases (only the infected students themselves), with whom the school did share all exposure information in an abundance of caution. We have been lucky to have so few cases at school, and no in-school transmission—if there was in-school transmission, that would immediately change the risks and the messaging. So much time is being spent on testing, following guidance, checking in with health officials to have their oversight. Communication may not come at the pace people prefer, but it is accurate and prioritized based on recommendations of the health authority. The parents present and the board expressed appreciation for the tireless work being conducted.

5. Families for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Emma Colburn presented on behalf of this group, and announced a new name: Families for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Le Monde French Immersion. Co-chairs this year are Nadine Salama and Sue Bickerstaff. They hosted a great LatinX Heritage month event at Welcome Weekend in the park. About 100 families participated, it was well attended. Continuing with some events from last year such as the Haitian cooking class again. A recital in February will celebrate Black History month. There will be new events as well. Sue and Kelly are updating the website, they will host a monthly emailed newsletter and a monthly catch up meeting. The committee will also publish 3 paper newsletters focused on topics like mental health awareness, women's month in gender, and disability access.

6. Executive Session (HR Discussion)

Meeting adjourned 6:40pm