

LE MONDE IMMERSION

Sunday, February 27, 2022 Board Meeting

Atlas Immersion Academy Parking Lot,
3643-B SW Vermont Street, Portland

In attendance:

Board members in attendance: Shouka Rezvani (non-voting), Ben Melix-Stanciu, Mark Williams, Michal McCamman, Ali Garfinkle. Excused absences: Karen Kitchen, Dory Hobbs, Jarod Hobbs

Tara O'Neil (PPS Program Director for Charter Schools) and parents in attendance

Meeting called to order at 3:13pm

1. Board Approved an updated budget with correct SIA funds, Q2 Financials including Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, the organization's Form 990 Tax Return for 2021, two student medical leave requests, updating the organization's family leave policy to return to pre-Covid terms, signing the IB Certification letter, an update to the Communicable Disease Management Plan and the Every Student Belongs Policy, as well as the October board minutes. The board opted to relinquish the ODE waiver request of the license vs. registry requirement for now.

2. School Report

The school was visited by a representative of the French Consulate; they are interested in Le Monde serving as a relationship school and receiving special certification as such. We are a good candidate school to serve in this capacity, as our teachers have a solid level of proficiency and positive things are already in place. There is an application process we can start in a future year once IB implementation is more complete. The relationship with the French Consulate and other immersion/French schools could serve as a resource on a variety of levels.

Started STAMP testing in lower grades with 5th grade (previously done in Middle School). STAMP offers consistent standards as a normed test. We have been STAMP assessing our 8th graders in order for them to earn PPS high school credits. The school is implementing STAMP testing in elementary to a third-party French assessment that is standardized. The fifth grade took the test and did really well. Students scored better on passive items (listening and reading) than production items (speaking and writing). This is good data for the school and it is nice to have measurable scores and goals.

The elementary grades have started our new anti-bullying curriculum (purchased with Corona virus relief funds). The curriculum is very prescribed and provides good information for students, teachers/staff and parents. Overall the curriculum defines bullying to put everyone on the same page, moving kids away from the victim mentality, and helps them identify ways and means to ask for help for themselves or others when necessary. The hope is that over time teaching these skills to younger grades will carry with them as they age.

Shouka confirmed Outdoor School for 6th, 7th and 8th graders (so sending all middle school). Outdoor School will look more like science exploration day camps facilitated by the NWESD Outdoor School staff. The school will be reimbursed by state funds for 6th and 7th students (8th grade will come from

field trip budget). Shouka advised the board that this would result in a significant unbudgeted expenditure that would then be reimbursed later in the fiscal year or early next year, depending on the state program's reimbursement timeline.

Shouka wanted to clarify information about special education (SpEd) services provision, as some parents have asked questions. Le Monde contracts with the district for SpEd services per district requirement; Le Monde can't hire its own SpEd providers. Le Monde has its general education staff collaborate with the district SpEd staff in the provision of services. Le Monde has a history, as do many charter schools, of not having full SpEd staffing, or of consistently having different and changing SpEd staffing from the district. The SpEd team (including SpEd staff, the student's parents/guardians, and some general education staff) determines the number of special education minutes and specific needs of individual IEP students. If the levels of need are high, in some cases the SpEd team will determine that a Change of Placement is the best option for the student. This may involve the move to one of the few schools in the district that has a special Social-Emotional Skills classroom or a Communication Behavior Classroom, where there is a low limit on the number of students, two specially-trained teachers, and often the support of a psychologist. Charter schools don't control that decision-making. This Change of Placement determination can also happen at neighborhood schools that have learning centers and additional staffing as compared with charters. Determining that a Change of Placement is needed is not done lightly at any school. The process of determining that a Change of Placement is the best course of action takes time, and many schools are having situations where escalated students exhibit unsafe behaviors during this process that require room clears to keep others safe. These situations are incredibly challenging for everyone involved and reflect one of the fundamental challenges that schools are all dealing with right now.

Shouka adds that despite these challenges, really great things are happening across the school. We are having some interesting activities and events; a fourth grader won the all-school Spelling Bee in a huge triumph!

The PPS calendar is not yet published, so Le Monde has not yet finalized its academic calendar dates for 2022-23. Le Monde's calendar tends to somewhat (but not identically) mirror PPS's.

3. Discussion of Covid Protocols/Updating Travel Policy

Masking – March 19 the state mask mandate will be lifted. The masking guidance is rapidly changing. The Board suggests waiting for official ODE and county guidance before making a final decision regarding masking at school. While the CDC has updated its guidance, Multnomah County has not made any announcements yet. Because school is the place of employment of staff members, their perspective is important, and Shouka would like the board to consider prioritizing staff concerns. Many staff members still voice concerns about Covid, especially if they have individuals who they care for that are unable to be vaccinated (such as babies, who multiple staff members are supporting in their families even if they do not have them themselves). Shouka recognizes there are varying opinions about masking and doesn't have a strong personal opinion about them, but does feel the need to support those staff members who still feel unsafe. She doesn't anticipate requesting masking forever. From her survey of staff she says most who expressed an opinion would prefer to retain masking indoors, but don't have a strong opinion about masking outside or would be ok with not masking outside. To support those staff members who

have expressed sincere concerns about having to work in an unmasked environment right now, Shouka feels strongly that we should wait and see how those staff members feel over time, and possibly at least for this academic year of a few more months. For the most part, students and staff function fine with masks and are used to it and individuals with specific medical needs can be accommodated. At this time it does not make sense to vote because we should wait for county guidance. Ben suggests if we diverge from guidance we need to establish criteria for doing so. Tara mentions that the district will follow the teacher's union contract, which includes SPED professionals. The PPS vote is important because if we decide to unmask but SPED remains masked, SPED professionals will not come to our school. Masking is also a larger decision that fits within the framework of the layers of Covid guidance generally. For example, the current guidance reads that if we remove masks, and students or staff contract Covid, we then need to contact trace or shut down exposed cohorts. So we anticipate changes from the Oregon Department of Education and Multnomah County Health, with new guidance coming soon. Shouka recommends that we hold off on making a final decision pending new guidance being released, which should happen in the next month. The Board elected to table any changes regarding masking until at least one week after Spring Break, by which point updated guidance should have been released, and then Shouka will re-survey staff.

The travel policy needs updating. As always, the travel policy does not apply to vaccinated individuals. If students are unvaccinated and travel, Shouka proposes we reduce the quarantine period to 5 days (equivalent to Covid exposure). The Board votes yes. This will also likely need to be revisited as guidance changes, and will be revisited after Spring Break.

4. Intern Committee Discussion

Should Le Monde seek placement of French Teaching interns again next year? During Covid the intern program was halted. This year we hired staff instead of interns, and Shouka suggests we keep that staffing if feasible as having employees creates positive stability and accountability. That said, having two or three interns to supplement staffing feels like it could be a good return to the internship program and would provide a big benefit to the school. Shouka is not sure if the program is again ready to place interns but will inquire.

5. Financial and Fundraising Update

The profit and loss statement and balance sheet through January were reviewed. They don't look positive, because we ran the report on January 31 when we had not yet received the anticipated federal relief funds that support some of our staffing in our budget. In February we received 3/4ths of our anticipated SIA funds for the year, and finally were able to submit for ESSER III reimbursement from the district (but have not yet received such reimbursement), so we are actually in a better financial position than it may appear. The district's reimbursement process wasn't in place until late December. Tara commends Shouka as the first charter school leader to submit for ESSER III reimbursement, which helps pave the way for other schools. Thank you, Shouka! All in all the school is operating very close to budget. We operate very leanly and our cash position is a continual challenge. Kudos to Michal on the school's first independent run fundraiser: "Oui Run". The school retained \$8-10,000 more than usual because Michal did the planning for Le Monde instead of going through the Young Audiences organization. Something helpful would be for parents to get a background check to secure volunteers earlier. Let's get the word out to new families! We still will do

a Young Audiences Fun for the Arts Dance, which will take place next week. Money earned will go to a cumulative pool that will then be distributed equitably to schools in the district. In addition, the Portland Arts Tax funds should be distributed soon. The board discussed a Spring Fundraiser. If parent volunteers don't want to do anything, Shouka will do a school wide ask for donations, which seems to work well without the extra work of planning a venue, selling tickets, looking for donated items, etc. Fundraising around something the students produce (art, a movie, etc.) is always well-liked by donors like grandparents, though it doesn't always produce a lot of revenue. Someone mentioned as a possibility a "pay per view" video of something produced by the students

6. Champions AFCA Conversation

This is an obvious ongoing problem in not having an after school care program this year. Champions sent an email saying they were going to start, and then that the individual that had been hired quit. They seem ready to go in terms of completing licensing and those inspections, but it seems they are having staffing challenges still. Shouka asked for another status update on Friday. Shouka learned recently that Champions also failed to start the after care program at another school, again due to staffing challenges. The board discussed if it should consider a back up plan; it will look over the summer for another organization to do the program if Champions does not start by then. Tara reports that this is a massive challenge and that currently most charter schools are not offering AFCA this year. Champions is part of a national childcare for profit; if they can't weather this crisis then who can? A parent asks if there are opportunities to partner with other schools? Le Monde is not capable of taking this on right now, but it is anticipated that hiring challenges should start resolving. Champions has the reach and the skill set to do childcare staffing. Parents want to hear that Champions are out, but we also are hearing from Champions that they will start soon. Since hiring and childcare are national issues, we think Champions could still be a better option. Champions continues to seem like the best option even though them not starting has posed so many challenges for families. The Board requests that Champions communicate soon with the families and make a final decision about service provision. Shouka plans to discuss this with them on Monday.

7. Le Monde Parents Community Update

Coffee and park outings were going great but the parent group will hold off meeting again until after Spring Break. OBOB was held yesterday and went well! Kudos to the organizers! Each month LMPC is holding community outreach projects, which includes donating or partnering with local organizations. LMPC will hold a uniform exchange on March 9, the Science Fair will be April 20 (21 kids signed up and will be virtual).

8. Families for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Tonight there is a DEI recital on zoom! Students are performing and there will be a Josephine Baker focus. The recital will be recorded. Parents/family members can participate in an upcoming book club type event on March 13 to discuss the Multnomah County Everybody Reads – Good Talk. Families for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are increasing recruitment efforts for Le Monde; a website for families was created with information available to share online for the lottery. The group also put up paper flyers at the local libraries. Moving forward the group plans to build into bi-monthly agenda for outreach. Shouka mentions there were a lot of attendees at the virtual info night webinar with Aurelie. The infrastructure will be in place to help with recruitment efforts, so interested parents should email Sue Bickerstaff of the DEI group with additional ideas.

9. Executive Session (HR Discussion)

Meeting adjourned 5:00pm.