



**Morris Jeff Community School (MJCS) Board of Directors Meeting**

Monday, March 26, 2018

5:30 pm

211 South Lopez Street New Orleans, La 70119

Library (2nd floor)

**Board Members Present:** L. Amoss, I. Bell, S. Williamson, B. Smith, W. Payne, B. LeCene

**Board Members Absent:** L. Lawrence, T. Lucas, M. Newman Carrere, R. Perque,

**Staff Present:** P. Perkins, J. Frank,

**Others Present:** Matthew Tuttle (MJUE), Kelli Gann (faculty), Julie Hitch (faculty), Claire Byun (Mid-City Messenger), Gilda Butler (parent), Vicki Clarke (MJUE and Parent), Chris Roe (parent)

*Meeting called to order at 5:40 pm.*

**I. Review and consideration for approval of Board meeting minutes**

L. Amoss moved that the minutes for the February Board meeting be accepted as presented. B. Smith seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. Morris Jeff Principal's Update**

Scholastic Book fair had a much larger profit than ever before. We are very pleased about that as it funds the library's development.

School safety is an issue both in the nation and city. MJCS is follow directives from NOPD and OPSB and has completed recent trainings.

New Partnership with Youth Force Nola to identify sectors of what industries jobs will be in and help develop a career center for the New Orleans Youth.

In May we will have Give Nola day. We did quite well last year and one of the reasons was that had a significant match. Jared is the point of contact for that event. If the board has contacts for a match please contact Jared.

We are switching to power school for a SIS. There is a cost for this switch but the tool is more robust.

See Principals Update for detailed information.

**III. Finance Committee Update**

NSNO grant provides influx in revenue.

There are some grants that don't have any revenues yet because reimbursement is requested at the end of the year.

The IDEA grant was originally around \$375 but the rules changed so the award came in at \$200K. This grant is specifically for students who cost more than three times the amount of a normal student to educate. The City Wide Exceptional Need fund is similar but is a bit lower than the three times threshold. They give you an

opportunity to apply for all the students who were applied for in the IDEA grant but weren't fully funded. We should hear back in late April to know yet how the grant will be funded.

SPED services are over cost, but they were budgeted before the school year started and we did not know what the caseload would be. Substitute teacher line is also over cost due to several teachers out on leave.

The final audit report was submitted. There were no significant findings and the audit was submitted

B. Smith moved that we approve the financial statements as presented. L. Amoss seconded. No public comment. Motion passed unanimously

#### **IV. Morris Jeff Family Partnership**

MJFP met last week to plan school fair. They are doing well to have committees filled and volunteers recruited. Lenten Fish Fries went well with an increase in profits from last year. They are beginning to have conversations around racial equity and they completed the Overcoming Racism training with Matthew Kincaide. At the next meeting Matthew will come back to train parents on how to raise race conscious children. It should be an interactive evening that is engaging and builds community.

#### **V. Student Support Committee Update**

The committee has worked really hard to develop a matrix to ensure that we are serving our students with IEPs well. Teachers will review during their April faculty meeting. The matrix explores what level of service students need and what staffing is needed.

#### **VI. Community Engagement Working Group**

The Community Engagement Committee has not yet met. Irvin is working with Crystal Daspit to pull a group together. Part of the committee's work will be to consistently communicate information to parents and families as we grow with a second campus.

#### **VII. Secretary Update**

In response to the public comments last month Shannon updated the Board Committee List and distributed to the board. She also created an email list serve for those who want to receive public notice and updated the sign in sheet so visitors can easily opt in to email messages.

Shannon met with Crystal Daspit to organize board communications. Shannon asked Crystal to include board and committee meeting dates in the Pelican Press in order to comply with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Shannon also stated that the Open Meetings Law requires that notice of meetings and a public agenda is required 24 hours in advance of the meeting, excluding weekends and holidays. In order to comply with this state law our agenda must be posted on Friday before the meeting at the latest. Committee meetings are also subject to the open meetings law. Minutes from all meetings must be posted on school website and filed with the board secretary.

#### **VIII. Governance Committee Update**

Committee meetings and other board communications are not publicized well and not easily accessible. Bill suggested that a permanent schedule and location for each meeting. Shannon will work to help committee make a master schedule.

Irvin suggested last month that a motion to reserve two seats on the board for parents (one from the HS facility and one from the Cleveland Street property). Irvin also pointed out that at one time there were two parents on the board. He indicated that the sense of community is strong at MJCS and to stay with that spirit of community and inclusion we should reserve a second seat.

Irvin Bell moved that the board reserve two seats for parents/guardians, one to represent the elementary school and one to represent the high school property provided that those parents meet the necessary qualifications and are elected by directors as indicated in the bylaws section 2.5 and 2.6. Bill Payne seconded.

Lisa Amoss indicated that she had some reservation about including additional parents on the board. She pointed out that it was critical to ensure that they have been vetted as other board members are.

Public Comment: Matthew Tuttle noted his support for the motion and identified that the Operations Manual also be amended to reflect the new change.

Kelli Gann expressed that she was in full support as we will have a second campus and expressed the importance of guardians being included in addition to parents.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **IX. Open Public Comment Period**

Matthew Tuttle expressed that it would be helpful if committee meetings could happen after the school day so he could participate in committee meetings without having to take off work.

Chris Roe, the parent of 2 pre-K special needs students and a member of OPSB Parent Advisory Council brought forward a concern about special education (SPED) at MJCS. He joined the parent advisory board to work on parent engagement and special education. According to Mr. Roe, a review of the latest data on student mobility found that 1 in 4 special education students did not return to Morris Jeff the following year, meaning that the school ranked 51 out of 52 in Orleans Parish with regards to retention of SPED students. Mr. Roe feels that there is a lack of communication between administration and SPED parents. A group of SPED parents met with administrators earlier in the year but they have yet to hear back about the outcomes of that meeting. Mr. Roe feels very lucky to have two amazing teachers but the IEP process has been frustrating and he does not feel that his family has been given the opportunity to participate as equal members of his children's IEP teams. He cited that he has been denied twice to observe his children in the classroom and indicated that other parents have had similar requests denied. He requested that the appropriate board committee meet with special education parents to work on improving the state of special education at MJCS. Bill Payne responded to Mr. Roe's comment indicating that either the Student Achievement Committee or the Community Engagement Committee would meet to further address the issue.

## **X. Adjourn**

*The meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm*