

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

Monday, August 9, 2021 5:30 pm
Via Zoom

*NOTE: Pursuant to emergency proclamation 30 JCE 20202, the Morris Jeff Community School Board certifies that it must conduct the August 10, 2021 meeting via Google Meet or the Board will otherwise be unable to operate due to quorum requirements. Board meetings shall be held in this manner during the pendency of this emergency.

Members Present: Shannon Williamson, Blaine LeCesne, Lisa Amoss, Keyana Scales, Missy Sparks, Leslie Lawrence, Dwight Barnes, Janina Jeff

Members Absent: Bill Payne, Elaine Reyes, Maria Newman Carerre

School staff/Members of the public: Patricia Perkins, Jared Frank, Julie Thibodaux, Lauren Homer (MJFP), Michelle Nusinov (MJUE), Eric (MJUE), Kelli Gann, Billie Holmes, Brenna Sapotichne, Zeke Falcon, Sarah Lubow

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm.

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

Missy Sparks moved that we accept May minutes with correction (date change), Keyana Scales seconded. No public comment. Motion carries unanimously.

II. Morris Jeff Principal's Update

Update on covid:

- Last year there was high consistency on the covid messaging among OPS, the state and charters, a high priority on in-person learning and as much normalcy as possible. This year there are some discrepancies, e.g. the length of quarantines. They have consulted with attorneys on where the legal authority lies. They have been advised that the charter schools have the legal authority to set protocols. They are consulting with both OPS and the state. Jared has been taking the lead on these communications. A letter went out to parents today.
- Currently there are two full classes and four partial classes under quarantine. 14 middle school students and 4 high school students are waiting to be tested. The biggest concern is for elementary school students because they can't be vaccinated yet. Dr. Avegno (city Health Dept head) still believes students are safer in school than out. They do not believe any of the cases originated in the school. There will probably be a bump in cases in the beginning of school because students are coming in from a variety of camps, vacations, etc.

- Shannon asked if there was a testing program at school. La. Dept of Health will be providing tests. They have a designated Testing Coordinator.
- MJCS and First Line started last week.
- Our faculty and staff are significantly vaccinated. There are incentives for new staff.
- We were anticipating and planning for a significant drop in LEAP scores and will be doing intervention plans. The elementary school will have an intervention block at the beginning of each school day.
- We don't yet have detailed MJCS testing data in a form to be communicated but will report out at next meeting.
- Missy said she had concerns for her own rising 9th grader who is not where she hoped she would be at this point. The message to students will be important.
- The state is seeing a 15 % drop since virtual initiated.
- Shannon expressed a concern for the staff and their needs. Do we have a social/emotional support system in place? They have hired 2 full-time counselors and an intern. Keyana offered to help with a new mindfulness strategy. They are trying to increase resources for professional development for faculty and staff.
- Dwight asked about temperature checks at entrances. The CDC guidance on temperature checks has changed. Last year they had no fevers detected at temperature check kiosks and they were largely a waste of time.
- Blaine said that he would now depart from our usual protocol and give members of the public a chance to ask questions instead of waiting until the end of the meeting. Eric Schroeder, co-President of the MJUE teachers' union, spoke on behalf of the union. There is a tremendous amount of stress. He's not sure if we have enough resources to handle that. He appreciates that the Board is concerned. He's not sure that all staff know that they are eligible for counseling under the insurance. The stresses are especially high for this early in the year, given the circumstances and policies. The hybrid model has been extraordinarily difficult. Their first concern is for the safety of the children, their health and mental well-being, even if they are falling behind. Also there are problems with the new middle school building relative to ADA.
- Jared said that they do have an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) and information about it is in the materials staff are given. Missy said that maybe that needs to be reinforced periodically and people should feel it's OK to talk about mental health.
- Leslie offered to send some resource referrals to Patrician and Jared. She appreciates Eric opening up about the problems. Blaine also thanked Eric and said we will talk more about what the Board can do to help.

VII. MJFP Report

- Lauren Homer, a six-year parent, reported that MJFP will be concentrating on fund raising and school support on all three campuses.

VIII. Finance Committee Update and Approval of Statements

- Jared presented the finance report. Keyana moved approval, seconded by Shannon. Unanimous approval.

IX. FUNdraising

- Julie reported that there would be no Gala this year. She also wanted to remind everyone that our Board member Bill Payne had been instrumental in facilitating a grant for the school of over \$50,000 over three years.
- Tee @ \$15 and various MJCS materials are available for purchase in the MJCS online school store.
- We have received a grant from KABOOM for a new playground and equipment could be ready for installation in November.

X. Adjourn

- Leslie moved adjournment and Shannon seconded. Adjourned at 6:36.

The meeting adjourned at 6:36pm.