

Journey School
A California Public Charter School

February 25, 2021

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Approved March 25, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom Webinar

This meeting was noticed and was held in accordance with the guidelines and flexibility from the Governor's Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20, due to a statewide public health emergency.

www.journeyschool.net

NOTE: Board members conducted the meeting via Zoom using the Webinar format. Members of the public wishing to observe and/or contribute participated in the Zoom meeting by accessing the webinar.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Julie Chiaverini, Council President: Present

Amy Capelle, Council Treasurer: Present

Richard Martin, Council Secretary: Present

Jeannie Lee, Board Member: Present

Melissa Dahlin, Board Member: Present

ADVISORY POSITIONS:

Alanna Hayde, Faculty Advisor: Present

Vivienne Benjamin, Parent Cabinet Advisor: Present

Administrative staff members Gavin Keller, Shelley Kelly and Amanda Simmons were present. Administrative consultants Franci Sassin and Larry Tamayo (for his items) were present.

AGENDA ITEM	
1	<p><i>Call to Order and Roll Call and review of Webinar processes</i></p> <p>The meeting was called to order at: 6:03 pm. It was noted that the Chat function in the webinar will not be used during the meeting. Participants can “raise their hand” to ask to speak for public comment. Anyone on the phone will be asked if they want to speak since they can’t use the “raise hand” function.</p>
2	<p><i>Inspirational Passage</i></p> <p>Jeannie Lee recited the Langston Hughes poem “I Dream a World”, which has been used in her class as their closing poem this month. She also shared a poem written by one of her student inspired by this poem, called “My World”.</p>
3	<p><i>Approval of Agenda*</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: The order of the agenda may be changed without prior notice to the public.</i></p> <p>There was a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded and approved unanimously with a roll call vote.</p>
4	<p><i>PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public may contribute public comment via Zoom Webinar.</i> <i>Reminder: See policy above for time guidelines which are subject to change if necessary due to time constraints. The Council will be using the “raise your hand” function in the webinar to call on those who wish to address the Council.</i></p> <p>A written comment was submitted and shared with the Council via email from Jen Bishop regarding the school reopening plans. Julie Chiaverini read the comment for the board members since it was received by the board just before the meeting.</p> <p>Parent Jessica Monroe addressed the board, she was excited with the dates in place for in person return. She was concerned about the delays and there is ongoing frustration by families about having to participate in Zoom. She also is concerned about the specialty classes continuing via Zoom since these don’t work well remotely. The parents are also eager to get teachers back in person. Parents are feeling that there is still confusion and lack of information on what the plans are. She also believes that the opinions expressed by Ms. Bishop reflect many parents. She was also interested in getting more information about what will happen for students with medical exemptions for masks and whether students with an exemption would be required to use a shield, as this does not seem to be a requirement anywhere that she is aware of.</p>
5	<p><i>CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: Items on Consent Agenda may be approved with one motion and vote for all but without discussion. If an item is to be discussed, it is removed from the Consent Agenda and moved to an Action Item immediately following the Consent Items.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A. Approval of Minutes*: Minutes from meeting of January 28, 2021.</i></p>

B. School Safety Plan*: Annual approval of updates to School Safety Plan.

C. Second Interim Financial Report*: Approval of second interim financial report stating fiscal position through January, due March 15.

D. Consolidated Application*: Review and approval of 2020-21 Winter ConApp submissions regarding federal Title funds.

E. Audit engagement proposal*: Review and approval of audit proposal for 2020-21 fiscal year

There was a motion to approve the consent agenda items, except for Item 5A, which was seconded and approved unanimously with a roll call vote. Item 5A was removed for discussion.

Item 5A: Jeannie Lee asked for clarification on the number of students on the wait list as it was recorded in the minutes. The information was clarified and no changes were requested to the minutes.

There was a motion to approve item 5A, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

6 **INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports**

A. Faculty Update: Update on Faculty activities.

Alanna Hayde reported on the experience of the Games teacher doing Games classes through distance learning. It can be challenging for students to stay on screen during physical activities. The big athletic events, such as Pentathlon, etc. will likely not be taking place so they are looking for ways to do something special for students. Games has been using a lot of the indoor activities, such as circus arts, which are normally not utilized during regular in person instruction. There have been a lot more discussions with students, many students have been doing their own in home fitness regimen, such as using soup cans for a workout, and coming up with unique routines. She allows students to talk very freely to try to mimic the social experience of Games. She is positive about the doubled up specialty classes in the school reopening plan.

The community is excited about the reopening dates and there is a lot of trust that the school is making the best decisions for everyone. Teachers do have concerns about vaccine availability and the timing.

Teachers are wrapping up Black History Month lessons. Students are very engaged when on Zoom live but there are challenges with turning in work samples, even this late in the year.

B. Parent Cabinet Update: Update on Parent Cabinet activities

Vivienne Benjamin reported that the fundraising on the Read a Thon is going well. The Journey

branded socks look great and they might be able to use them as prizes. The dance party was fun and another chance to participate is coming up. There are a lot of questions about the return to campus, but the school leadership is responding. The auction will be taking place on April 17. If any board members have connections to sponsors or donations contact Vivienne or Amy.

C. **Administrative Update:** *Report from School Director, including update on technology implementation, ELPAC and CAASPP testing, race and culture working group, 21-22 enrollment, Strategic Kids partnership, etc.*

Gavin Keller wanted to celebrate the hard work all the staff has put in this year in a very difficult year, the quality of instruction is excellent, especially given less than ideal circumstances.

Gavin provided a reopening update that is very recent: The COVID Safety Plan was approved by the state agency yesterday evening, so this allows the school to start reopening the remainder of the grades. Grades 3-6 will be back on campus next week. As soon as Orange County is in the red tier status for 5 days, grades 7-8 can reopen without any further updates to the plan.

Administration is working with the teachers including some accommodation requests within the window set at the January board meeting. The teacher return to campus schedule so far is: March 9 for 1st grade, March 16 for K, April 13 for 4-6th grade, with all remaining teachers on campus by mid April. They are attempting to stagger the return so that the live streaming can roll out a bit more slowly and are also taking individual circumstances into account.

State testing is going to take place, although there is still some uncertainty on the details. The Joruney window is open now, but testing will begin in late April. There are two parts: language arts and math. Gavin reviewed the way testing would work. The test has been shortened. The school will administer while students are on campus, but some students will be taking the test online.

The IT infrastructure is still being installed; the project has taken longer than expected. It has been more challenging than expected, and there have been a few change orders, but only about a \$600 increase. Completion is expected next week.

Shelley Kelly reported on the work of the Race and Culture Committee, also known as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or DEI group. The group is working with OC Human Relations to create 3 surveys, the data has come back. There were 4 main topics covered. There was a town hall meeting to share the data with the community. There are also going to be follow up meetings, such as at faculty meetings, to go more in depth on the results. Then next steps will be determined. One major topic is to address the curriculum and reviewing in depth to be sure it reflects the broader community with “windows and mirrors”. It will take about 2 years to do this work. Shelley is finalizing a proposed timeline for this.

Amy Capelle reported on how well the work is going and that it is great that this work is being done proactively instead of in reaction to an incident. Alma Partners, which is a Waldorf based organization that does this type of DEI work has a reasonable cost and is being considered. They can provide facilitators with Waldorf background. The recommendation is to have a series of meetings/workshops. Some would give background on what it is, how it works, (head) then go into how it affects people (heart), and then what can be implemented (hands). The work should partner

well with the OC Human Relations and the student run program that is being developed.

Amanda Simmons provided an update on the independent study (IS) program, which is going really well this year, even though the on campus hybrid program is not how it normally would be. The IS wildflower K students had about 10 students who were interested but there is not enough interest in the older grades. There are 8 students back on campus part time. Once the two teachers are back in person, there are more than 45 students interested in returning. There has been a lot of scheduling challenges but the groups will be on campus on different days. There are up to 66 applications for next school year and the deadline is at the end of March. Many families apply to both the seat based program as well as IS. This year there will be more openings in the seat based program.

The lottery for the seat based program is coming up, the deadline to apply is today. The administration is considering whether to allow students to add to the classes when in person learning is going to happen again.

Gavin reported that there will be an update regarding the Strategic Kids (SK) partnership later in the meeting. Amy Capelle asked about using Strategic Kids for substitute services in the future. There may be an opportunity to do this next year. There are also some SK staff pursuing their teaching credentials. The relationships have been built online and it will make a much easier transition to the in person learning.

D. Financial Update*: *Report on January financials*

Larry Tamayo reviewed the January financial information for the board. He noted that the second interim reports reflect this same information. The guidance from the auditors is to consider the PPP loan, if it is made into a grant, as “Local income” and not federal income. There will be an increased cost for SK but mostly offset by savings in staff and benefits cost.

The ending balance should be positive, assuming the PPP loan will be converted into a grant, but so far they don’t have confirmation of that from the bank.

For reopening funding, as long as the school completes all the tasks and requirements, it will receive that funding.

Cash balance is good and projected to be healthy, even with state revenue deferrals. The federal funding from the federal stimulus package for next fiscal year will be just over \$97K and can be spent over the next 2 years.

Larry reviewed the next steps in the budget development process.

The Council took a 10 minute break at 7:30 pm

SCHOOL OPERATIONS (Discussion/Action):**A. School Re-opening*:** *Update on school reopening, COVID-19 Safety Plan and additional plans for the 2020-21.*

Gavin Keller provided an update. The COVID Safety Plan was approved and the county rates are below the threshold, so grades 3-6 will come back to campus next week. They will start with the programming being used now for K-2, where the students are in person while teachers are remote, with a screen in each classroom for teachers to lead via Zoom, and a site support person in class with the students. In March and April the livestream model will start; this was modified based on the input from the health care agencies that reviewed the plan. The dismissal time was moved up to noon. Other schools in the area are staggering lunch over a 3 hour time period, but that model won't work for Journey for a variety of reasons. So the early release allowed the plan to be approved quickly so that the students could return quickly and then later they can work on ways to allow students to have a longer day on campus. The shorter day on campus also solved the issue of how many hours the teachers would need to be with students in class, which did not allow for any "prep" periods. Families will have access to free extended day care after dismissal. Students will remain with their classroom cohorts and will be supervised by the site support person assigned. If there is a need for additional cohorts to have extended care additional staff might need to be added. If the demand is very high, more support for lunch will be needed. The students who need to participate in the extended care will be in the same cohort. It is acceptable for staff to work with more than one cohort, although cross over will be limited to the minimum needed. The other modification was to change the daily schedule so that the main lesson, plus the language arts and math practice sessions, will be in the morning and all specialty classes will be remote in the afternoon. Gavin discussed the use of the playground space during breaks.

When this is launched next week there will be a lot of transitions to various aspects of the program to be managed. The new schedule of classes starts Monday, the first day for students on campus is Tuesday.

Adam Brody from Strategic Kids joined the meeting to provide input on the partnership and operations and how SK is supporting the reopening plan and providing supervision after the in person sessions each day. He reviewed supervision options and a new role for lunch time, called a "site supervisor" who helps with drop off and pick up, especially to keep students from mingling. This position also provides supervision for lunch. They also give breaks to the rest of the on-site team so they can take breaks from constant in person supervision. He also noted that the weekly amount needed for scholarships will decrease starting next week because of the return of students to campus. This care will still be provided for a full day on Monday for \$400 per week.

The Council asked when an adjustment to the approved reopening plan and COVID Safety Plan would need to be submitted for an amendment. Any changes to the safety and logistics portion would need to be approved, but once the county is in the red tier then the approval is not needed, only submission of

the update and posting the new plan, which must still follow the health and safety guidance from the state and county.

Members of the community provided public comment.

Parent Lisa Mehl commented that the reopening plan was not meeting what the school needs, there is still a lot of work to do and parents are reaching their limits.

Parent Jessica Monroe commented that the “half day” schedule is not a “normal day”. She also commented that the Games program is not going as well as was reported earlier and a lot of families have opted out of it.

There was Board discussion about the possible confusion from the community about who is eligible for the extended day care. Gavin reported that he sent an update to the community this evening around 5 pm, or parents can reach out to anyone in administration to answer questions.

Gavin acknowledged that the specialty programs can be challenging to do with distance learning, however, there is no way to keep stable cohorts of students with the way teachers are assigned to multiple groups of students.

Face mask mandates are coming from the state which has a statewide mandate with very limited exceptions. The list is available on the Calif Dept of Public Health. If exempt from face mask, then a ‘non-restrictive’ covering must be used as an accommodation. The consolidated guidance for schools has a lot of details and the mandates required of the school. This also requires that students wear face coverings at all times unless eating/drinking, and the school’s approved plan requires this.

Gavin reviewed the different versions of the COVID Safety Plan which were submitted and rejected.

There was a discussion regarding the increased need for site supervision staff. Options would be to hire additional employees or using additional contracted staff from SK, possibly 2 to 3 additional supervisors to support day to day operations. These positions would be Tuesday through Friday. There are sufficient funds in the budget for up to three. The scholarship need for care is lower so some of that could be allocated. The positions could also be used to help with substituting during teacher vaccinations.

It was noted that there is no guidance yet about what school will look like next year, however, once school reopening has taken place, there will be more capacity to do planning for the upcoming school year.

The Council expressed appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the school community to find the best and most creative solutions to meet the needs of the various community members.

There was a motion to approve hiring up to three additional site supervision from Strategic Kids, at the discretion of administration, which was seconded and approved unanimously with a roll call vote.

There was a motion to ratify the updated COVID Safety Plan and approve the updated School Reopening Plan, which was seconded and approved unanimously with a roll call vote.

B. COVID 19 Response: *Discussion and any necessary Actions related to response to COVID 19 public health situation, if any.*

Gavin Keller reported that the Phase 1B tier for vaccinations has opened in Orange County. There will be more information coming soon. He commented that it can't be required, however staff members will be given paid time off to get the vaccine. He reported that some teachers would like to wait to return in person until fully vaccinated, but that is not possible. The new school nurse position has been very helpful related to COVID response. There was also a discussion about the role of the counselor position and the social-emotional support being offered.

8 BOARD DEVELOPMENT and OVERSIGHT (Discussion/Action):

A. Board Composition: *Updates on search for possible Council candidates for 21-22.*

Amy Capelle reported that she has spoken to several potential candidates recently. Both interested candidates would like to see the campus as the next step, then the Nominating Committee could convene if the candidates are still interested after the campus tour.

B. Review Board meeting calendar and inspirational passage*: *Review and update as needed*

The Board reviewed the open dates and signed up as follows: Melissa will do April, Shelley will do May. After discussion, the Board agreed no changes are needed for the board meeting dates.

C. Conflict of Interest: *Reminder about upcoming deadline to file annual Form 700s online*

The Council was reminded that the deadline for submission for board members and designated staff members is April 1, and forms are submitted online for board members.

9 CLOSED SESSION: *The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the matters described below:*

There was a motion to adjourn into closed session, which was seconded and approved unanimously with a roll call vote. Gavin Keller and Franci Sassin were invited into closed session based on their work in the matter. Those participating in closed session confirmed that were in a private location or were using a headset. The board entered closed session at 9:12 pm.

	<p>1. Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9 (1)(d): Existing Litigation: WCAB Case No ADJ13330775</p> <p>RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION: The meeting was reconvened to open session at: 9:16 p.m.</p> <p>PUBLIC REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION (includes the vote or abstention of every member present) No action was taken in closed session.</p>
10	<p>Adjournment</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm</p>

**Items that are expected to have back up materials provided prior to or at the meeting are indicate with an asterisk. Other items may also have back up materials provided.*