

**Journey School**  
**A California Public Charter School**

**January 28, 2021**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Approved February 25, 2021**

**6:00 p.m.**

*Via Zoom Webinar*

*This meeting was noticed and 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](http://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 were able to participate 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*

*Administrators present were: Gavin Keller, Amanda Simmons, Shelley Kelley, and administrative consultants Franci Sassin and Larry Tamayo (for his items).*

	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Call to Order and Roll Call and review of Webinar processes</b>

	The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm.
2	<p><b><i>Inspirational Passage</i></b></p> <p>Amy Capelle shared that she went to the Alliance for Public Waldorf conference, held in January, and it was inspiring to realize Journey School is one of a few hundred schools in the US doing this work: Waldorf in the public sector. She also found it interesting that during the time that Waldorf schools were originated, around a 100 years ago, there were many social and health circumstances that are similar to current. It was a revolutionary educational model at that time, democratizing education and bring different classes and genders together. Now, there are so many trying to make it a success 100 years later in the public sector. Amy also shared a quote by Amanda Gorman about being brave enough to “be the light” and help the children to be as well.</p>
3	<p><b><i>Approval of Agenda*</i></b></p> <p><b><i>NOTE: The order of the agenda may be changed without prior notice to the public.</i></b></p> <p>There was a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.</p>
4	<p><b><i>PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public may contribute public comment via Zoom Webinar. 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></b></p> <p>There was no public comment.</p>
5	<p><b><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></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>A. Approval of Minutes*:</i></b> Minutes from December 9, 2020.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>B. School Accountability Report Card*:</i></b> Approval of annual SARC which will be publicly posted</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>C. School Calendar*:</i></b> Ratification of changes to 2020-21 school calendar</p> <p>There was a motion to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.</p>

**INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports****A. Faculty Update: Update on Faculty activities.**

Alanna Hayde reported that report cards are complete and she shared that teachers gain many insights through that process. She would like to see more consistency with how all teachers use the grading rubrics, especially the specialty teachers. She commented on some inconsistencies and technological challenges when handing off a group of students from one teacher to another. There was a weekend faculty and staff training from the Alliance conference made available virtually, which was appreciated, and was restorative. There is a lot of good communication, including through Parent Square, but despite this there is a lot of questions around the community in particular about the reopening, state testing, etc. In middle school the teachers are rotating and taking on a new group, which is much more challenging online than it is normally. The new school counselor has been very helpful, especially for middle school students and for mental health support for all students. There was a discussion about the relationships between faculty and their designated site support instructor.

**B. Parent Cabinet Update: Update on Parent Cabinet activities**

Vivienne Benjamin reported that the Race and Culture Committee is very enthusiastic and some progress is being made. There was a slight loss with the Fairy Market but the goal of good will and community building was met. Harvest Faire did make around \$3000. This year the collection for staff contributions was higher than usual, showing a high teacher and staff appreciation this year. The school is going use Journey School tie dye socks as an incentive for the student read-a-thon. Parent Cabinet is also considering additional spirit wear opportunities. The auction will be virtual in April, and the goal is to also build community and have fun. She also expressed appreciation for the work being done by the new school counselor. There are still many questions in the community about what the coming months will hold. Upcoming is a Journey School birthday family virtual dance jam on February 8. Parents will pick up some items that day from the school for birthday games. There is a professional DJ hosting.

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

Gavin Keller provided a verbal report to the board. He recognized the administration and administrative support staff who have been working so hard. So many have been taking on many "other duties" than their normal job responsibilities. He will talk more about school reopening later in the meeting, but the grades K-2 on site instruction is going very well. There were some tech challenges as the school was going through an infrastructure upgrade in the past months. The project was started during winter break but was not able to be completed, so is still ongoing, but is expected to be complete next week. In those areas where the new fiber cable is installed the improved bandwidth has been very noticeable. Strategic Kids and their site instructors and site supervision staff have been very active and it is positive partnership. Gavin and Adam of Strategic Kids meet weekly to adjust the program and help staff to make the best use of the support staff available.

Gavin reported on the PPP loan. The portal to apply for loan forgiveness is not open yet but all the background documents are prepared. There is a second round available but Journey School is not eligible because revenue loss is a requirement.

The California School Dashboard will not be released this year. SB 98 discontinued the Dashboard for 2020. The CDE is publishing some data sources that are considered “reliable” based on last year and which would normally be included in the Dashboard, however, so far the only reports being published are for secondary schools. Suspension rates will be published. The testing for this year is planned, but there is limited guidance, other than 3 options given to administer the test—remotely, hybrid or in person. The test will also be shorter and the test window will be long. The increased technology and connectivity on campus will assist with test administration.

The Race and Culture working group has partnered with the OC Human Relations and the work is going well. There are three surveys “live” now: parents, staff and middle school students. Next steps are to evaluate school climate data from the surveys, and to work on longer term goals. There are regular meetings and also an all school “town hall” to inform the community. There is an Equity Summit put on by CDE this week, one of the focuses will be on the use of interventions. At the annual Alliance conference this year these topics were also addressed. There are recordings available from the conference for the keynote sessions in case Board members are interested.

Enrollment for this year has gone down but the administration anticipates that enrollment will increase back to normal once normal school operations resume. There are currently 86 applications, with 20 of those for the independent study program. Virtual school tours are being held. The school is reaching out to families who left this year due to remote learning and asking if they are interested, and if so, to get them to participate in the lottery process. There is an intent to return form for returning students. There are 154 students currently in the regular program and 56 IS students on the wait list. Administration is looking at possibly allowing additional students to be released from the wait list soon so that they are considered returning students for next year, rather than having to go back into the lottery process again.

There was some discussion related to how students are performing academically based on the school’s internal indicators, such as report cards and formative assessments. The school may use the state’s interim assessment if the regular state standardized testing is cancelled. There was a discussion about additional academic assessments that may be used for charter renewal. There was also a discussion about the various support opportunities such as the SST process and the “care streams” to identify and support students who may be struggling academically.

**D. *Financial Update\**: Report on November and December financials and Governor’s January state budget proposal**

*NOTE: This item was heard before Item C.*

Larry Tamayo presented the financial info. He noted that enrollment is lower than last year but since there is “hold harmless” funding the school won’t be negatively affected. The auditors recommended reclassifying the PPP loan. This led to some shifts in what the “bottom line” will be. The unduplicated student count was lower

than past years but the overall effect should not be too significant if that goes back up next fall. The cash deferrals imposed by the state will have a significant impact but the cash reserves are sufficient to handle it.

There was a discussion related to the lower ADA this year and that the only negative impact would be if the enrollment does not go back up again next fall.

Larry reviewed the activity over the past months at the state and federal level. The Safe Schools Plan was introduced which would fund a per pupil amount for school reopening. This is affected by many factors including the local COVID case counts. The federal package is bringing in a significant amount of funds which will be distributed via Title I, the school may get about \$100K additional, most likely for the 21-22 school year. Facility upgrades, for example, for ventilation, are possible areas allowable for expenditures.

The Governor released the budget proposal, there is state revenue growth which has been higher than expected, especially due to personal income tax revenue. There is an increase in base funding that would cover 2 years COLA increase. This info will be used to plan for the 21-22 budget draft. All other programs will also see a lower COLA and there will also be a number of "one time" funds. The funding deferrals are expected to be reduced next year, so most of them will disappear.

In April there will be more detailed budget drafts brought to the board.

7 **SCHOOL OPERATIONS (Discussion/Action):**

A. **AUDIT report\*:** Review and acceptance of annual report from independent auditors for fiscal year 2019-20.

Larry Tamayo reviewed the audit report with the board. The audit does not have any findings or issues, which is a result of a lot of hard work throughout the year. There was only one very minor audit adjustment. The board commented on their appreciation of the work of Larry, ExED and the Journey business office staff.

There was a motion to accept the audit, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

*The board took a 10 minute break at 7:20 pm*

B. **School Re-opening\*:** Update on school reopening and additional plans for the 2020-21

Gavin Keller presented three key areas on this topic.

The state's reopening plan has clear guidance regarding reopening any school partially reopened already. When the criteria changed in November, grades 3-8 and the wildflower K were not able to reopen. The new state plan presented has a path and process to submit information to the state for review and approval to re-open those additional grade levels. Because the wildflower K is a grade level already open (K-2 is open) Gavin submitted a request to open that class and it was approved by the county as an existing grade level. They will be able to re-

open next week!

Next steps are to submit the COVID Safety Plan, which is a plan made up of various other pieces of various plans, in a new format, to the state and other agencies. The school's version of the CSP is being presented for board approval. The state will then review within 7 days after submission. Part of the process is to gather stakeholder input, which is being done now, including this discussion at the board meeting. If deficiencies are found the school can correct and resubmit. Once approved the plan is posted on the school website. There are public health indicators to be able to reopen, such as the daily case rate in the county. If the case rates continue to trend down the adjusted case rate might be low enough to re-open 3-6. To re-open grades 7 and 8, the case rate must drop down to the red tier in Orange County. Once re-open the school can stay open, using testing and quarantine procedures if there is an outbreak.

Gavin reviewed the CSP with the board and asked for input from all in attendance. The majority of the CSP contains materials that has already been reviewed, approved and in place over the past several months. The plan does not include student COVID testing protocols, so that may be added, but it does include a COVID testing protocol for staff.

There was a discussion regarding the disinfection protocols on campus and the options staff have for paid leave related to COVID. There was also a discussion regarding providing high quality masks to staff.

There was a discussion regarding whether the plan should have legal review prior to submission.

Gavin provided an update on the reopening plan and the model with teachers returning to campus (model 4) and using the livestream option for those students doing distance learning. There was a discussion about the 2 week teacher notice for return to campus. Gavin noted that if the state and county allow reopening quickly, the model would stay the same as it is currently, with teachers remote, until such time as the notification and preparation took place. There would be a need for classroom prep, but most of the other operational issues are already addressed so that the school can respond quickly if the conditions are right. The site instructor support staff are ready to assist to keep the student groups small. Gavin reviewed multiple reasons to move forward with model 4, and stated that the school can support the staff that may need to continue with remote work options due to medical needs. This model will also need to interact with the ability for staff to receive vaccinations. In addition, he proposes the staff returning to campus could be on a staggered model. Administration is considering having the teachers for K-2 be in person first. Kindergarten would likely be the easiest grade level to address logistically, but would also have a different approach to the way the hybrid would work. There was a discussion about how the faculty will respond to the plan. There was a discussion regarding the difference between having all teachers required to return, with exceptions for medical conditions in accordance with usual employee practices, vs. allowing teachers to select the option that they are comfortable with. Administration strongly recommends that a proposed timeline for return of teachers is adopted now so that the community knows what to expect and admin can work on preparing the campus and getting sign ups from families for which option they will select. A timeline of 4-6 weeks seems like it would take into account the case rate as well as the vaccine roll out. Gavin confirmed that the site instructor support staff would continue to be utilized throughout this

progression and implementation. Dates set or windows would be target dates and would need to be flexible. Gavin reiterated that parents would be allowed to have a student come back to the on campus option at any time.

There was a public comment from parent Lindsey Ponzo stating that the current scientific evidence for having students back in school outweighs NOT having students back in person.

There was a motion to approve the COVID Safety Plan, to include any additional input from other stakeholder groups, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

There was a motion for approval of grades 3-8 to have the option to return to campus as soon as is allowable, based on the CSP and public health considerations, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Based on public health guidelines, and with the assumption of a return to campus for students in grades 3-8, based on the public health considerations, there was a motion to target a window for K-2 teachers to return between Feb 23 and no later than March 15, and for a target date for the remainder of the main class teachers to return to campus no later than April 12, using a staggered return for teachers based on priority for younger students. There was a second and the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

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

*NOTE: This item was discussed prior to Item B.*

Gavin Keller reported that the core administrative team is on a rotation between office and home to reduce risk of COVID exposure. The school health staff has already received a vaccine, otherwise the staff is waiting for the county roll out of the Phase 1B Tier 1 for educators. SOKA university is near Journey and is one of the county's points of distribution. There was a discussion regarding access to vaccines in Orange County.

*The Council took a 5 minute break at 10:10 pm.*

- D. ***Strategic Kids Contract and Journey payments for child care\*:*** Update and discussion regarding after school care and/or child care partnership including any necessary actions regarding ongoing service agreement and scholarship funding for Journey students

Gavin Keller reported that the partnership has been extraordinary, the school would not be able to implement K-2 in person learning without their support, and the older grades have had significant support as well. Once teachers return to campus, each class will need two cohorts. Gavin and Larry have already incorporated the Strategic Kids staffing into the budget for the rest of the school year, and the budget can support that.

Adam Brody of Strategic Kids reported the staff are enthusiastic and have gotten to know the students

well, they are continually ready to help out in whatever way is most helpful. His staff would be more stable if they can have a commitment to keeping the position with Journey through the end of the school year.

He gave a scholarship program update. The on-campus program has been small, but those students who are there have really needed it because they were not as successful trying to do remote learning from home. He would like to be sure the entire community is aware of the options. There was a discussion about how to promote the program, possibly through a referral from staff, especially for struggling students. Some students who qualify based on income have full scholarships and most of the rest of the students have a 25% or 50% scholarship, based on family request.

There was a motion to continue contracting with the support staff through Strategic Kids through June 11, with authorization to meet Journey's support staffing needs based on the school reopening plan. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously via a roll call vote.

There was a motion to approve scholarship funding up to \$50,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year to be used for Strategic Kids to provide child care in coordination with the administration to meet school reopening plans. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously via a roll call vote.

**E. *Facility Inspection Tool report\**: Report on annual facilities inspection report and response to noted deficiencies.**

Gavin Keller reported that CUSD hires a third party to review the facilities annually and the report is included in the SARC with the ratings for the facility. This year some deficiencies were noted, but the overall rating of the facility is "good" on their rubric. All the comments included were already placed in the district work order system and some have already been corrected. There was a discussion about the playground equipment and the interior surfaces of the classrooms which were rated low, but other areas which seem worse had higher ratings. Gavin reported that this is likely based on the way the rubric is developed and implemented.

**8 BOARD DEVELOPMENT and OVERSIGHT (Discussion/Action):**

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

The Board discussed the search for potential candidates. There may be some interest from former board members who may be interested in while the board is meeting virtually. Gavin Keller was considering sending an email to alumni families to see if there is interest. Further research will be done with the Race, culture and inclusion working group and OC Human Relations to see if they can help with recruitment of diverse Board candidates.

**B. *Board training and priorities discussion*: Input on any training or topics of interest for Board Development for remainder of school year.**

The Board discussed the future options for holding board meetings, for example, a hybrid meeting with



	<p>social distancing protocol. This idea will be brought back for a future meeting.</p> <p>Upcoming charter school conference in mid March being held virtually, and some of the specialty sessions with the school's legal firm, Procopio, were discussed. There is interest in the CCSA conference so further information will be provided.</p>
9	<p><b>CLOSED SESSION:</b> <i>The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the matters described below:</i></p> <p>There was a motion to move into closed session, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote. Gavin Keller and Franci Sassin were invited to join closed session based on their work in the matter. The board went into closed session at 11:05 pm.</p> <p>1. <b>Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9 (1)(d): Existing Litigation:</b> <i>WCAB Case No ADJ13330775</i></p> <p><b>R RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION:</b> The meeting was reconvened to open session at: 11:15 p.m.</p> <p><b>PUBLIC REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION</b> <i>(includes the vote or abstention of every member present)</i></p> <p>There was no action taken in closed session.</p>
10	<p><b>Adjournment</b></p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 pm. , by a roll call vote</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.***