

Journey School
A California Public Charter School

October 22, 2020

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Approved December 9, 2020

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

NOTE: Board members conducted the meeting via Zoom and Zoom teleconference. Members of the public who wished to participate did so by calling in to the Zoom teleconference number provided in accordance with the guidelines for public comment opportunities.

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 (to be sworn in for this meeting): Present

ADVISORY POSITIONS: Alanna Hayde, Faculty Advisor and Vivienne Benjamin, PC Advisor were both present

Administrative staff members and consultants were present: Gavin Keller, Shelley Kelley, Amanda Simmons, Franci Sassin and, Larry Tamayo (for his item)

	AGENDA ITEM
1	Call to Order and Roll Call and Oath of Office for new Board member The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

	Melissa Dahlin acknowledged her Oath of Office and has signed and submitted it.
2	<p><i>Inspirational Passage</i></p> <p>Richard Martin read a poem entitled De-Bait</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 by a roll call vote.</p>
4	<p>PUBLIC COMMENT: The following members of the public were able to contribute public comment via Zoom teleconference in accordance with the time guidelines of the Board policy.</p> <p>Bethany Nelms is a K parent. She wants to return to in person learning. Journey is offering LESS than other schools in the area, and students still needs screens. Multiple precautions can help be sure students can return safely. She believes there is no elevated risk to child care workers, but there is a negative to delaying in person return. The school should give more opportunity for children to flourish. Many families may leave if the in person return does not happen. It is important to maintain the Journey reputation. She wants to be sure parents are included in the reopening committee.</p> <p>Erica Beasley is K and 7 parent. She is grateful for the program because it is so unique but needs to have the in person and is therefore now looking at other options. She waited a long time to get the space at Journey and was disappointed that she needed to have her K student in front of a screen in order to attend Journey this year. Student needs to be physically present with the teacher, so the school must find a way to do this. She respects the difficulty of navigating and coming up with solutions, but the school must find a solution to lay out the foundation for return with the teacher. She would not come back to the classroom if the teacher is not there. She understands the hybrid idea for the older students, but her older student is experiencing the stress of the expectations for the online teaching. The overall well being of children must be considered—the whole child.</p> <p>Jiuntow Lin is a parent and wants to see the data on how many parent have chosen the different options. She reported that other schools have been sharing this type of data. She has a student in one of the different options offered by CUSD. Some believes a rearrangement of the classes might accommodate this as an option.</p> <p>Kim Bucklin is a parent and they are trying to run their business from home and the remote learning is working for them. Even though she does not like the students having to be on Zoom, it helps to have the support from the teachers all day long. She understands that it might not be full Waldorf, but keeping students safe is more important. A partial day is not really a solution. She wants to keep the rhythm, and if students go back they should be able to see their friends. The school needs to do what is best for the children.</p> <p>Guillermo Pedroni is a parent in 3 and 5 and understands all the complexity of the situation, there are no</p>

	<p>simple solutions, there will always be some who are not happy. Journey is doing a great job so far given the circumstances. He has direct experience with multiple situations with outbreaks in other places. He is a technologist and owns his own company, and it is hard to work remotely. Different students have different success with virtual. His child misses the physical part of her interactions, so wants to go “back to normal” but he understands that whatever the decision, it will be best for the majority. Parents have choices. If a parent has a student who has medical conditions and high risk, they would not send the student back to classroom until the risk is gone. He wishes the school the best in moving forward. If parents have choices it helps.</p> <p>Stacy Freedman is a parent and commented that the dance studios have been operating, using safety protocols. It has been effective and no students are sick. Some plan where students can return to get a little normalcy would be helpful.</p>
5	<p>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.</p> <p>A. Approval of Minutes*: Minutes from August 24 and September 24, 2020.</p> <p>B. School Staffing Plan 2020-21*: Updates for the Staffing Plan.</p> <p>There was a motion to approve the consent agenda items, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.</p>
6	<p>INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports</p> <p>A. Faculty Update: Update on Faculty activities.</p> <p>Advisor Alanna Hayde shared that Miss Hellene submitted photos, poems and descriptions of activities in Kindy. Collaborative working and planning is taking place within the Early Childhood Dept. See also the written documents. One of the classrooms is being treated for rodent issues.</p> <p>Alanna has been feeling grateful for the mindfulness of faculty. There are some who would be willing to come back in person but others who want to stay home, but all appreciate the planning and collaborative decision making.</p> <p>B. Parent Cabinet Update: Update on Parent Cabinet activities, including parent survey results regarding reopening</p> <p>Advisor Vivienne Benjamin reported that PC has found a leader, Andrea Miller, who has a production company, and is ready to take the next event virtual. It will involve take home kits, and the Fairy Café, and will be a fundraiser, and they will try to keep the “heart” of the Harvest Faire. Someone else has volunteered to lead Fairy Market.</p> <p>There was \$2500 raised in sales for the Book Faire, with more restaurant fundraisers coming up. PC is also participating in the Race and Culture Committee’s work. PC discussed the parent</p>

community surveys. There is a big range of opinions from parents. All appreciate what school is doing. The parents of the younger students want shorter days if they stay online. Parents want to know who will be in the classroom and want as much outdoors time as possible.

C. Administrative Update: Report from School Director, including update on facilities, Race and Culture Committee, PPP loan, immunization reporting, enrollment, etc.

Gavin Keller reported verbally on school activities. School reopening will be discussed later but has been a huge amount of the time for administration in planning. Regarding the facilities, CUSD is helping with remediating one classroom due to rodent activity. They are replacing all the insulation and drywall. PC funded a mobile shade structure which is in place now. It will be used for pick up time. Outdoor canopies, approximately 40, are being assembled to create the outdoor learning areas. Based on the number of students planning to return in person, all of them will be used. Handwashing stations are now installed. They are still working on the locations for 2 of the units because the initial locations did not work for drainage, etc. A fence installation quote for front of school was received and the school will be moving forward with it to support better campus security. Race and Culture Committee is meeting and Miss Hellene has taken over the leadership of it. It is now a “working group” and they are working on a new name for the group, plus defining a mission, purpose statement and goals for the group. There is a training in January by SunBridge focused on articulating how classic Waldorf curriculum is centered on “whiteness” and tools and success stories will be shared. Eight people from the Journey group will be attending it virtually. Regarding the PPP loan program the plan is to continue to monitor changes to the program. The forgiveness application is not yet available, and no payments are due yet. The school is ready to apply as soon as it is available and expects 100% to be forgiven. Immunization reporting for fall was submitted and the school was in compliance in 4 categories, with all students falling into one of these categories. Regarding enrollment, the classes are closed even though some are under enrolled, because funding does not demand increasing enrollment and once pandemic resolves the school will still have long wait lists, and has inquiries daily about how to enroll. Administration had decided that adding students while distance learning was taking place would be too difficult to establish the relationships needed for success.

The Board expressed gratitude for the hard work of administration and holding the organization’s values through a difficult time.

D. Financial Update*: Report on September financials and LLMF/CARES Act funding

Larry Tamayo presented the monthly financials for September. The forecast won’t be changing much because of the way funding is working this year, with most funding frozen at 19-20 funding. 556.28 was last year’s P2 ADA. Enrollment is actually LESS than ADA right now. This is the main reason the

state made this decision and it has helped the school. Enrollment is lower than what was in the budget but that will NOT have an impact. The ending fund balance is projected to be positive, even more so than the original budget, due to additional revenue sources since the original budget was adopted. This includes the Corona pandemic revenue (mostly federal) in particular, and most has to be used by Dec. 30, and is one time. The school is working on spending these funds on one time costs, such as computers, hot spots, distance learning supplies, and so far has spent about \$112K, still need to spend a lot by Dec 20; there is about \$60K more to spend by then. In the forecast, administration is being more conservative about revenue, such as from fundraising, assuming the amounts brought in will be lower. Expenses for the COVID funds are included in the forecast, such as supplies, PPE, health supplies, sinks, foggers, etc. The cash balance is healthy, it should help the school to absorb the state's significant cash deferrals.

There was a question about the amounts of cash reserve needed. There is much uncertainty and so it is recommended that the school having a lot of money in the reserve for the future years, both to offset potential decreases in revenue and for cash flow. The board would need to decide if additional expenditures would be worth reducing the cash reserves that are for the future unexpected events.

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

A. **Budget Revision 2020-21*:** Review budget updates, including revisions to revenue and expenses

Larry Tamayo presented the updated budget projections. He said that this is a first draft and recommends that the board adopt it at the next meeting. The budget overview for parents will also need to be approved at December. If the board adopts this version of the revised budget today, there will be smaller variances in the forecasting in future months.

There was a motion to approve the revised budget as presented, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

B. **School Re-opening*:** Update on school reopening and additional plans for Fall 2020, including additional input from community stakeholders.

Gavin Keller presented the school's reopening plan. He first commented that administration is in agreement that the school wants to bring students back, however the complexity of the situation is significant. He noted that the schools which have reopened for in person cohorts are mostly doing short times with the teacher and many hours of extended learning, and some have accelerated schedules that are challenging. It may not be that obvious how those challenges are playing out. The proposed reopening plan is in alignment with state and local public health guidelines. It can be flexible if there is an outbreak and a need to close a cohort or more. It meets child care needs and parent comfort levels with being on campus, and also includes a remote learning option that is robust and not just an online independent learning option. In the earlier spring/summer parent survey results the parents were asked for reasons for their selection. The more recent survey also asked how the remote learning option would

be received. The following data was found from the survey:

20% would attend 4 days

20% would attend 2 days

60% would do all remote learning

There has not been enough demand to have more than one cohort per grade, and some classes may be combined. Families in the Independent Study program only had a small number interested in any on campus time. The school will need 12-14 "site instructors" in addition to the Journey staff who can do this job. Those who want to return to campus have chosen to do so primarily for social reasons as well as because of too much screen time. Some also report that remote learning is not engaging their child effectively. However, over 50% are satisfied or highly satisfied with current remote learning, while are 25% neutral and 10% are "not satisfied". Most parents appreciate the daily connection and the rhythm. 40% appreciate daily access to teachers. 55% of students are struggling with screen time and over 60% feel disconnected from their classmates.

PC also sent survey about the reopening plan. All comments were shared in a document with the board. The most common concern was the asynchronous days when parents cannot manage students at home on those days. Other input included questions about how the full year of study would be managed in the plan. Parents also expressed appreciation to teachers for how hard they are working. Journey's remote learning program is one of the best around right now based on comparisons from parents doing other programs.

Gavin reported that the Instructional models have been adjusted to remove the asynchronous learning and remain in a daily synchronous rhythm. Because of the lower numbers interested in on campus, this allowed tech needs to be lower. This may lead to more screen time but the solution would be specialty programming in two different formats, especially for younger students. Independent projects would be designed and the specialty teachers would assess the time value of those. For those needing the "face time" they would continue the live instruction with specialty teachers available to anyone. The campus and other preparations for all of this is expected to be complete in 2 weeks ,with last facility and tech pieces in place.

The Reopening Committee will meet to discuss Phase 2, which is not in the plan yet, but is still in preliminary stages. That phase would include return of Main Class Teachers to campus, in accordance with the JTA MOU. In that scenario the plan would need to implement the alternative where some asynchronous days or independent work would take place. There is a need to move through the entire year of the curriculum while balancing the synchronous vs. asynchronous time. This might require some shifting of teacher assignments, but that may not work out logistically unless the numbers work out to

support that idea. The parents would be surveyed again once the plan is more detailed.

There was a discussion with the board about the plan. Gavin clarified that the proposed plan is remote learning, with Hybrid 1 option with access to campus 2 days a week, and the Hybrid 2 option with access 4 days a week. Students on campus will connect with teachers via remote access multiple times a day to support continuity and connection, while students are able to connect with peers.

Clarifications were made based on board questions:

1. Will synchronous live instruction will take place DAILY? Yes, based on the input from community, regardless of where the student is physically located.
2. Will specialty content be offered in 2 ways for lower grades? Yes for grades 1-5. Kindy is balancing well. Some students in 6-8 do need this as well but those will be case by case. There was a question on how the teachers would factor in the time for students to complete projects, and Gavin clarified that it would be individualized and would be based on the engagement so students could work at different paces. Attendance would be based on logs and interaction rather than project completion necessarily. Gavin reported that the requirement for the documentation of engagement can be flexible as long engagement can be documented in some way.
3. When would this start? Have not decided on that yet but from the administration's preparation, they would be able to start in 2 weeks, but the Board will discuss and decide.
4. What is timing of the MOU with JTA? Approaching agreement in next month hopefully. Ideally it will be ready for a December board meeting approval.
5. Who is outside? How the facilities are used can be more flexible because the cohort numbers are smaller than expected. Possibly in K may need to have small cohorts which combine into one cohort because parents are asking for it due to social interactions.

The following public comment was heard from the following parents:

Erica Beasley—wants to better understand the specialty arrangements in the plan

Jenn Moffit—works in a school and the students are doing very well with 4 days a week. She did not hear a lot about the social emotional needs of the students in the most recent parent meeting. What is being done proactively to address this?

Jennifer Metz—concerned about the reopening schedule being delayed, her student really needs to be back on campus and has high social emotional needs. She is a nurse and aware of the risks but want to work through a solution and agreement soon.

Roy Freeman—helpful to know the timeline so parents need this to be approved OR to know the reopening considerations so parents understand when it would happen.

Kristen Glasscock—all info being shared is helpful but hard to keep up with the changes, she would like a timeline on what to look out for, what is coming, what changes are happening to the plan, parents feel they have to piece it together and are looking for more communication

Shelley Kelley reported that at the faculty meeting this week the updated plan was presented. The screen time and connections were voiced as parent concerns and so new strategies are being implemented and developed. Faculty is participating in working on those solutions.

Gavin reminded the board about the 3 care streams which support the social emotional well being, another for academics, and the 3rd for behavior. There are ongoing interventions as students are struggling in any area. Shelley has been leading that. These resources are available to all students in any format this year. Shelley will remind parents again about these resources for students, many are taking advantage of this.

There was a lengthy Board discussion about the reopening plan.

There was a question on program selection by parents, and how much switching would be allowed? Gavin responded that they will not have another registration for the program but there will be “trial” weeks and then there may be some switching. If there is more demand for on campus, there may be a waiting list until the school can find staffing or work out logistics.

Julie Chiaverini presented the framework to consider during discussion to be sure the values of the organization are being the most important.

Relationships are one of the most important. **Trust** is another value to keep in mind. This means considering all stakeholders so they know that all input is being considered even if the decision is not what any individual stakeholder wants. The school will not stop trying to “get it right” and everyone shares the value that they are all striving for the same thing. Trustworthy sources and guidance are being sought. **Respect** is another very important, everyone cares for each other a lot and is really listening to each other.

The plan appears to be meeting the needs of the community as expressed. The flexibility in the plan appears to be able to accommodate the different needs even within one family very well. It is understood that any reopening will be with all safety precautions in place.

Advisors Vivienne and Alanna are both very supportive of the plan.

The Board discussed the need to mitigate any negative effects. Some solutions have already been developed as problems have arisen, and there is a need to continue that.

Gavin noted that only in Phase 2 will the MOU with JTA be involved, so union concerns are not an issue for this current plan.

One big part of the decision is the TIMING. Most schools who have reopened have staggered the reopening over a week or two. There was a discussion about whether there is any reason to wait LONGER to two weeks to implement reopening. The only down side is to have enough time to staff the "site instructors". The school currently Has 5 and needs 12-14 more. Also, the classrooms will need to be readied. Staggering would help. Younger students should be prioritized, either K-2 or K-3.

The Calif. Dept of Health and the OC Dept of Health will be the agencies guiding the health and safety protocols. Gavin reported on the industry based guidance released and the school reopening checklist and how the school will address the specific requirements. There are few checkmarks that are still needed but those items will be able to be accomplished when further along in the reopening process.

One option for staggered opening would start with the youngest students. The board did a review of the calendar and school holidays. It was noted that in this version of the plan, for most learners, the academic issues are not as much of a concern. The current programming has more time in Math and ELA than the regular Journey program to be sure this is supported fully. One of the advantages of this plan is the ability to pivot to full remote or fully in person relatively quickly.

If the school uses a contracted vendor for instructional support they would be exclusive to Journey and would focus on building the stable relationships. There was a discussion about the logistics of hiring a third party vendor vs. Journey hiring temporary employees. Training was discussed and would be prepared by Journey.

The Board took a 5 minute break at 9:15 pm.

There was a discussion about further monitoring of students' emotional well being. Shelley addressed some ways to bring back some previous Compassionate Campus protocols that could help, as well as some additional ideas such as student small group meetings.

There was a motion to approve the reopening plan, with minor modifications to the written document as discussed, and with the direction that administration has authorization to make minor modifications as needed. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

Board moved to item D next in order to address staffing needs for reopening plans.

After item D the board considered the timeline for a staggered reopening.

The idea of the specialty classes starting to provide independent learning as soon as possible was discussed.

Various proposals for stagger were considered with start dates as early as November 12 and finishing as

late as December 8. Ultimately the board wanted a plan that would have all students back prior to Thanksgiving.

There was a motion to approve the return of K-2 students on November 12th, then on the 18th all other grades plus any independent study students, and that the daily rhythm of the plan would be used in the reopening schedule. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

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

This item was tabled as nothing was needed for this month.

D. *Strategic Kids Contract and Journey payments for child care : Discussion of and update regarding after school care and/or child care partnership.**

Adam (Coach Adam) of Strategic Kids presented a proposal to provide contracted staff for instructional support. They have been working all school year with other partners including CUSD. 80% of the Journey students are on a full or partial scholarship who are using the program for child care. Their program has offered over \$17K in scholarships. He reviewed the numbers of full and partial scholarships. This has cost about \$10K over past few weeks, of which Journey provided \$8K, and that has been very helpful. He has calculated that the program would need approximately \$500 per week in scholarships estimated for the child care AFTER reopening. They 9:1 ratio will be maintained, having students from different grades with different schedules and needs.

For contracted staff the hourly cost would be \$33 per hour. This includes high quality staff with all employment compliance items all taken care of, plus they would be trained and their duties can be modified for school needs. The hours needed would be approx. 8:15 am to 3:15 pm. They would be able to provide subs because any staff experiencing ANY symptoms stays home.

This represents a cost savings for the school because employee costs are higher than this, plus there is a big benefit to the subbing being mostly handled, and there is a lowered liability for the school, and another benefit is the school would not need to hire temporary employees. If the school needs to go back to full remote learning they will be flexible.

There was a motion to approve a partnership with Strategic Kids to provide “shepherds” as site support staff, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.

There was a further discussion regarding the need to support families with child care during the day. The

	<p>LLMF revenue would be able to be used for the scholarships for child care for low income students.</p> <p>There was a motion to continue with the \$2K per week until reopening takes place, and upon full re-opening, up to \$500 per week until next board meeting when the issue will be considered again. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously via a roll call vote.</p>
8	<p>BOARD DEVELOPMENT and OVERSIGHT (Discussion/Action):</p> <p><i>A. Board Composition and Nominating Committee: Update on Parent Cabinet Advisory Position and discussion of upcoming vacancy in January</i></p> <p>Amy Capelle reported to the Board about the process to bring forward a candidate for the new PC advisory position. The Nominating Committee met with the candidate, Viviene Benjamin, and is recommending her for the position. Amy reported on Viviene’s background and experience. She currently represents three grade levels.</p> <p>Regarding future open board positions, Anna Brown will continue to serve as a recruiter and Julie Chiaverini will authorize the ad hoc Nominating Committee to continue to work and interview candidates as needed, and then revisit the issue at the next board meeting.</p> <p>There was a motion to approve Viviene Benjamin as the PC advisory position to the board, which was seconded and approved unanimously.</p>
9	<p>Adjournment</p> <p>There was agreement that if a special board meeting is needed during the reopening process, that would be arranged, otherwise the next regular board meeting is scheduled for Dec 3.</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.*