

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

***September 24, 2020  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Approved October 22, 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.*

***NOTE: Board members conducted the meeting via Zoom and Zoom teleconference. Members of the public participated in the Zoom meeting by calling in to the Zoom teleconference number.***

***BOARD MEMBERS:***

*Julie Chiaverini, Council President: Present  
Amy Capelle, Council Treasurer: Present  
Richard Martin, Council Secretary: Present  
Jeannie Lee, Board Member: Present*

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

<b><i>AGENDA ITEM</i></b>	
<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>Call to Order and Roll Call</i></b>  The meeting was called to order at 6:21 pm. The norms for the Zoom meeting were reviewed.
<b><i>2</i></b>	<b><i>Inspirational Passage</i></b>  Jeanne Lee read the Steiner poem for the week for the school. It is the verse for this week of the school year, teachers always read this before school starts.

3	<p><b>Approval of Agenda*</b></p> <p><b>NOTE: The order of the agenda may be changed without prior notice to the public.</b></p> <p>There was a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote.</p>
4	<p><b>PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public may contribute public comment via Zoom teleconference.</b>  <i>Reminder: See policy above for time guidelines.</i></p> <p>Due to the large number of community members who wanted to submit public comment the board proposed limiting the time to 2 minutes per person. There was a motion to modify the public comment policy to allow 2 minutes per person, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.</p> <p><i>Public comment was submitted as follows:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Dennis Kephart, teacher, commented that the symptoms and long term effects of COVID in children is still largely unknown, but it is known that children can be affected and spread it and be asymptomatic.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Michelle Chan, parent, noted that many parents are not aware of the board meetings and it would be helpful if it was put onto Parent Square.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Paul Breazeale, teacher, reported that distance learning is challenging and can't replace in person learning, but since COVID is so devastating, opening too early could cause spread and he advised a cautious approach.</i></li> <li>4. <i>Laura Bujjoni, teacher, commented that while the teachers really miss their students, and it is difficult in the new environment, it is too early to reopen to in person learning</i></li> <li>5. <i>Bethany Nelms, parent, noted that the Journey campus is unique and had a lot of outdoor spaces that could be used in creative ways. If other schools are going back, why not go back now, especially if the child care partner can assist.</i></li> <li>6. <i>Jennifer Aslan, parent, reported that the amount of screen time being asked of the students exceeds CDC guidelines as well as Journey's own guidelines. She thinks the online time should be academic classes only and noted that there has been a 60% attendance rate for the online classes.</i></li> <li>7. <i>Nikki Katz, parent, asked the board to consider a 50-50 schedule where the academic subjects would be on Zoom and the other subjects would be "on your own", and that specialty classes should be optional.</i></li> <li>8. <i>Negar Omidakhsh, parent, is an epidemiologist. She reported the children usually have mild symptoms but can spread it including when they do not have symptoms. There are also potential sever long term effects for children but there are also long term effects on children of isolation, so the school must be cautious in the timing of reopening.</i></li> <li>9. <i>Natasja Angenent, parent, asked that the school follows the CDC guidelines of no more than 2</i></li> </ol>

hours of screen time a day, and that the specialty subjects be optional. She also would like to allow families who are comfortable with in person learning to have the option to return to campus.

10. Joy Halverson, teacher, also was commenting on behalf of Anastasia, an assistant. She noted that because we don't know the long term effects and that children are not very cautious, that she is concerned because they have a family member with medical issues who is at higher risk.

11. Brittany Cicon, parent, let the board know that she also supports decreasing the screen time to a lower amount and that if the school continues the remote learning model there should be a long term plan laid out for the parents, they need to know so they can plan.

12. Lindsey Ponzo, specialty teacher and parent, believes that since schools are reopening, if Journey does not reopen soon, it will put the school in jeopardy. She recommends the school opens following CDC and other health guidelines.

5 **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.**

A. **Approval of Minutes\***: Minutes from August 24, 2020.

B. **School Staffing Plan 2020-21\***: Updates for the Staffing Plan.

C. **Job Descriptions\***: Update to various school staff job descriptions.

Item A was tabled.

There was a motion to approve items B and C, which was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

6 **INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports**

A. **Faculty Update**: Update on Faculty activities.

Alanna Hayde was in attendance to present the faculty report. She reported that faculty has a mixed experience, but overall, the online instruction is going well, and everyone is working together even though the classes are missing each other. They have had some guest speakers to help out. Many faculty members are worried about reopening and not sure if the hybrid model would work. The flipped model idea being presented is new for most faculty and there are mixed reviews so far.

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

Amy Capelle presented an update. Parent Cabinet met this month and the meeting was well attended. Cassie Cowling is President this year and Renee Eide is the Secretary, Amy Capelle is the communication officer, with Kim Welsh as co-lead. They still have an opening for VP. They have a strong candidate for the Board Advisory position but are still working through this new process. The Vvrtual Book Fair started and they are promoting/recommending books with diverse protagonists and stories. There was Wahoo restaurant fundraiser. PC is trying to do fall Fairs remotely, and is looking for help with these and creative ideas. All classes have PC reps, and PC has reached out for more recommendations from teachers for interested parents.

**C. *Administrative Update:*** *Report from School Director, including update on school reopening online, facilities, Race and Culture Committee, etc.*

Gavin Keller provided an administrative update. School opened on September 1 using a remote learning model. Teachers are working very hard to deliver meaningful education and support learning gaps while using Waldorf. Inclusion and engagement is emphasized. Monday the faculty have online meetings with all support staff. There is a supply pick up for school supplies needed for the next few weeks, which is arranged for tomorrow. Zoom security and norms have been working with teachers following all procedures. The school will be moving to add further security by using school email authentication. There were a few unexpected resignations the first few weeks of school, however, administration has found replacements already. Gavin gave a facility update. There is a new barrier to keep cars from the classroom "alley". There is an increased use of the facilities by the public even during school hours. Gavin is considering installation of a fence like the front playground has, which could be locked after school hours. This will help deter visitors. They have installed the handwashing stations but more are still being installed, with a total of 26 new sinks in outdoor areas. Gavin ordered the outdoor tents per the direction given at the last board meeting, but they have not been delivered yet. The Race and Culture Committee is meeting online, the next meeting is Sept. 29. There is an upcoming Waldorf training with Betty Staley as the trainer. Immunization records have been collected because reporting will be coming up, and there are no changes to the law even with the difference in how school is operating now. Gavin reported on the current enrollment numbers: 470 in seat program, plus 75 Students in Independent Study program. There are healthy wait lists for both programs, however administration is not adding new students while remote learning is taking place. There has been a decline in enrollment from the total of 600 when school opened. When students have left the families have indicated a variety of different reasons, such as moving out of state, transferring to private school and wanting a homeschool option. Not surprisingly, a common theme is the desire not to have children on technology so much. The PPP loan application for forgiveness has not been released yet.

**D. *Financial Update\*:*** *Report on July and August financials and Learning Loss Mitigation Funding.*

Larry Tamayo reported on the August financials. Funded ADA is frozen from last year, so even though students have withdrawn, the school will still be funded at the same level as last year. In addition, taking attendance is a challenge with remote learning. The amount funded for last

year is currently slightly higher than was originally budgeted. The school is slated to get additional \$250K from CARES Act under LLMF portion. Additional funding is available compared to the original preliminary budget, because that budget was written to be very conservative. Expenses are different from usual due to the increased expenses of distance learning and the need to purchase COVID related items. Additional revenue is helping to offset these extra expenses. The cash balance is approximately \$1.5M. The PPP funds are shown as a LOAN but the school is hoping to get it “forgiven” so it will convert to grant type funding. There will be a drop in the cash balance due to the additional cash deferrals from state. The property tax passed through from CUSD helps the cash flow a lot because those funds must be paid without deferrals. There is a mechanism in the state budget to possibly get funding for growing schools so the enrollment will be watched carefully to see if it reaches the numbers originally projected for this year. Caution will be needed for budgets in following years due to the recession and the fact that the state has already used its reserves. This year is secure due to the one time fiscal situation adopted in the state budget for 2020-21.

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**COMPLIANCE ITEMS**

***A. Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP)\*: Consideration and approval of the LCP***

Gavin Keller reported that there were some changes based on stakeholder input from many groups since the last draft presented to the board. A lot of what is in the LCP is from the school reopening plan. There are attendance and engagement challenges, and social emotional support is needed, so Journey is going to use tiered supports. Everything in the plan is budgeted and costs for different items includes some estimates and some exact costs. There were questions from the board on how often and how there would be updates on the items in the LCP. Gavin noted that there is no required annual update like there is with the LCAP. Gavin plans to report on attendance and engagement rates at each board meeting in his administrative update. The supports for students with unique needs is also something he will be updating the board on at certain key times during the year. There is interest in having a more clear indication of the metrics that can be looked at regularly, such as how to measure the success of the social-emotional supports. There was a discussion of how well the distance learning program is serving Special Education students. Administrative is keeping track of student and staff feedback so board can have indication of the success of the plan. The three ‘care streams’ are very active to support staff and students in the distance learning environment. Staff is taking very rapid action with “support circles” as issues are being identified for individual students. Shelley Kelley will report on this at board meetings in the coming months.

There was a motion to approve the LCP, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

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

A. **School Re-opening\***: Update on school reopening and additional plans for Fall 2020.

**The Board took a 5 minute break at 8 pm.**

There were several public comments on this item, as well as a written comment submitted that was in favor of reopening in a creative and safe way.

Hellene Brodsky-Blake, teacher, commented that there are still not in person meetings for adults so it is too early for students to be together. She reminded the board that the school had an epidemiologist in the parent community to use as a resource. She is concerned about the ability to do social distancing with young students, and that they will need some physical contact. She is also concerned that more damage may be done by opening and then having to close again. She commented that the Alliance for Public Waldorf Schools met recently and acknowledged what a difficult time this is for parents and teachers.

Jill Murphy, teacher, recommended that the school move slowly to reopen, keeping health and safety as the most important consideration. She commented that the distance learning is getting better and that many are fine with continuing that through the end of 2020.

Kari Sutherland, parent, wanted the board to know that she approves of masks when students return, and to use the outdoor space as much as possible. She has observed that the kindergarten students are not engaging as much with the online option. She appreciates that the board is taking all the factors into account and wants to be sure everyone is comfortable with the options offered.

Wendy Lowrie, parent, wanted the board to remember how essential education is to life and that there is more of a risk in driving a child to school than in the child catching COVID at school. She is not sure she will continue with the school much longer if there is not a return to in person options.

Aly Smith, teacher, commented on how well outdoor instruction works in all types of weather, and that long term, distance learning will have a negative impact. There is a low transmission rate in children especially when precautions are taken, but it is also a problem if there is a fearful atmosphere on campus, so she does not want to rush the decision.

Gavin Keller reported that the board received the same document as previously, but it is an updated version that has been worked on extensively. All the changes since the Aug board meeting can be seen in redline on the documents. The in-person hybrid program has changed the most. Gavin gave a summary of the remote learning that is currently in place, starting Sept. 1, so they are 17 days in. There is a prescribed daily schedule and rhythm, and they have a Kindy rhythm of the play based activities for that group. Grades 1-8 have 5 periods daily. This includes a balance of academic and specialty classes. There is a Zoom portion online while the teacher is there, plus offline work with

the teacher available, then each lesson closes with a synchronous session and handing off to the next period. The school schedule is 9 am to 2:30 pm with 1 ½ hours of breaks during the day. The teachers are moving through state standards and Waldorf standards well. Students are at 96% attendance and engaged in all lessons. Observation and participation and work completion is being used to monitor student engagement. Feedback so far from stakeholders is focused on too much synchronous time, so they are looking to move to an “instructional day” and “assignment days” where students would be off screen for an entire day with teachers available to support only. This is similar to the hybrid model which will come later, so it is feasible to switch to this even while still in 100% remote learning. It has proven challenging to meet the ideal of the way the synchronous lessons work. To implement the hybrid program they will need to determine stable cohorts, and the public health recommendation are to keep one adult with each cohort, so students may not have the same access to their own main class teacher. Specialty rotations are also a huge challenge because of the cohort model. Students will not be able to get the same live specialty offerings in the hybrid model. It will also be very challenging to support those students who want to stay only online once the hybrid model starts. The livestream option has been found to not be technically feasible due to the limits of the school’s network. Also, confidentiality would be an issue potentially with a livestream. There are concerns that all staff actions would be on camera. The instructional support staff have also expressed concerns about return to in person school. Gavin noted for the board that the staff survey results are in the reopening plan. The survey used a scale of 5 to rate the comfort level to return to in person learning. There were 48 respondents overall. 19 will not be comfortable at all with return , even with hybrid, and 11 are ‘on the fence” regarding reopening. Negotiations are still going on with JTA for a return to work MOU. The Reopening Committee is recommending the program outlined in the document. This would have each class divided in cohorts, 3 per main class. Each is assigned to a paraprofessional who is trained to support students. It would be a stable cohort as recommended. There would be a shift to content heavy instruction in the synchronous lessons, and to then have an asynchronous day where students work more independently. The instruction in person might be Monday and Wednesday, with Tuesday and Thursday at home, and then the other cohort will be opposite. Remote learning for all students would be on Friday and this would also be a day to do deep cleaning on site. That would also be the day all students in a class can interact together. Teachers would therefore teach remotely, including specialty teachers, and the teacher will deliver instruction “live” online to all students getting it that day, with a remote access into the classroom. Gavin noted that it is not possible to return to a full in person option yet. This hybrid model also can create an easy transition to fully online when and if needed. The main question would be how many students will actually return to campus, with all standards of care from the public health guidelines. Parents will have the opportunity to adjust their selection. This will then determine how many cohorts and how many staff members will be needed. Currently the school has adequate funding to support the paraprofessionals needed for this model.

There was significant board discussion. The recommendation is that the remote learning schedule would also change to a synchronous schedule that aligns. The past survey did not take into account

parents who are opposed to masks and other health practices. All grade levels must wear masks. Clear masks are a potential option for the adults. There was clarification on the Kindergarten schedule which would be half day from 9 am to 12:30 pm on campus, plus circle with a remote teacher, then creative play, chores, crafts, and walks with the paraprofessional. Everyone will do as much outdoors as possible. There will be a staggered arrival and dismissal for all grades. Instruction will be about 4 hours plus breaks. Recess and lunch will be outside with cohorts staying apart and scheduling to support that rotation and the assignments of outdoor areas. It was noted that even if some teachers are willing to be on campus it would likely be better to be consistent and the same across the board. There still may be some difficulty with the network speed in this model. Gavin offered to try to create a visual model so parents can understand what it looks like in order to better choose an option.

The board expressed gratitude to all the hard work from staff. There was a concern that it might be more difficult to interact with students in the classroom when the teacher is remote, although students will have the opportunity to interact and ask questions. If a student did choose 4 days a week on campus, then the student would be outdoors in a tent with a paraprofessional (referred to as a shepherd) for the independent learning portion of the day. The board questioned whether this hybrid model is preferable to fully remote learning. Administration believes that fully remote learning is the second most effective when looking at the academic considerations. But for social emotional the hybrid beats out the fully distance learning. There may be challenges of placing students in a compatible cohort with such a variety of opinion on the pandemic and safety issues. There was a discussion on how the specialty classes will look. Some may be recordings, some may be supporting in other ways. There was a discussion of the use of Strategic Kids to provide paraprofessionals. Some LLMF money can be used for child care for low income students. Partial subsidies have been provided so far, but there is a need to spread the funds out. The timing of when to go back to some in person is important especially for parents who are eager to have students back on campus as soon as possible. The Reopening Committee has a lot of staff members, and the plans were shared with all staff this past Monday, although time was limited to get feedback, but staff knows that they can provide feedback directly to Gavin. The board noted that they appreciate the creativity of the model and flexibility and the way it transitions. The reduction in student screen time was a benefit expressed by teachers. The board noted the spacial, logistical and technological constraints of outdoor learning.

The board expressed that this appears to be the best option because it solves as many of the issues as possible while meeting a lot of the community's needs. The want to be sure that the school makes it clear to parents exactly what each option looks like, especially the parents' role. Next step would be get input from parents on which option they would select. It was noted that it might take some time to get parents to understand the model before resurveying.

The board recommend that administration hold a town hall meeting to explain the options, and



then resurvey parents. They would like administration to include the proposed timeline for moving to the new cohort schedule for distance learning as part of that presentation to parents.

**B. *COVID 19 Response\**: Discussion and any necessary Actions related to response to COVID 19 public health situation, including relevant updates and/or purchases such as PPE, Chromebooks, screens/projectors, etc.**

Gavin reviewed the purchases he is proposing. Student masks should be provided, and it is estimated that the school will need 3-5 cloth masks per student for when students return in person. Gavin is recommending that this purchase be brought back to reconsider at next meeting so they can try out different mask samples. They will also work on surveying parents to see who will want to provide their own in order to get an accurate estimate.

The Chromebook purchase was discussed. There are still people on a waiting list to get Chromebooks. Gavin noted that 80 more are recommended. 60 will supply enough for testing for grades 3-8 in all classrooms. 20 will be used as pool for when repairs or replacements are needed. Previous cost comparison show that this vendor is the lowest cost and school has good relationship with them already. They are expected to arrive in November if the school makes the purchase now.

There was a motion to approve the purchase of additional Chromebooks, which was seconded and approve unanimously by a roll call vote. ‘

Gavin reported that after considering the screens and projectors needed for the hybrid plan, the cost is lower than board fiscal policy threshold requirement for board approval. The purchase will be made.

**C. *COVID Workplace Safety Policies and Procedures\**: Review any updates available for policies and procedures related to safe return to work for school re-opening of classroom instruction.**

Gavin Keller updated the board regarding these policies. These are part of negotiations with JTA and since the school has not yet received any input from JTA, no changes are recommended now, but this item will be brought back. The school did expect the input from JTA by now. The item was tabled.

**D. *Strategic Kids Contract\**: Discussion of after school care and/or child care partnership.**

This item was moved ahead of items B and C.

Strategic Kids founder Adam Brody made a presentation to the board. Dr. Rafferty from Strategic Kids has been present earlier, but was not able to stay to present since the meeting is

longer than expected. Adam presented the history and the efforts over the years to align with Waldorf methods, and the partnerships with Journey, including many years of after school chess. They have many experienced staff members on furlough who would be able to come back and their company goal is to serve the community. They would follow Journey's training and guidance, and be the "hands" of the teacher in the classroom. They are able to take on more students for child care if able to get more fiscal support to offset costs and help keep students in the program. Scholarships are offered for low income students but the scholarship funds are running out soon. Strategic Kids puts in funds from its own fundraising efforts to help support low income students.

Gavin Keller reported that he will rely for Strategic Kids for the on campus students who are in the 5 day a week on campus. The number of paraprofessionals needed will depend on how many students come to the in person hybrid. Gavin feels that the cost is reasonable compared with hiring additional employees.

Gavin is interested in getting direction from the board on the choice between hiring additional staff vs. partnering with an agency like Strategic Kids for support. Approx. \$50K is currently in the budget that can be directed to supporting low income student child care in alignment with the Learning Continuity Plan. This has been approximately \$1500 per week when students are still requiring child care 5 days per week. When the students go back to hybrid model and in person, there would be a reduced cost to support the low income students.

The board expressed interest in further exploring the use of contracted paraprofessionals, but before making a decision, they need to get more details about the hybrid learning plan.

The board considered a proposal to provide \$1500 additional each week for the next four weeks and then revisit the situation at the next board meeting to continue the problem.

There was a motion to approve \$6000 additional funds for child care costs to be paid to Strategic Kids over the next month, with future payments to be revisited at the next board meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously through a roll call vote.

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

- A. **Board Composition and Nominating Committee:** Update on Advisory Positions, as well as report from Nominating Committee work and consideration of nominations for vacant Council position.

Jeannie Lee presented the results from the Nominating Committee regarding the faculty advisory position. The Nominating Committee is recommending that Alanna Hayde be approved. She has attended board meetings already. The Committee spoke with the candidate about what position is and what the expectations are. It was noted that Alanna has excellent

	<p>skills and experience for this role.</p> <p>There was a motion to approve Alanna Hayde as the faculty advisor to the board, which was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.</p> <p>Amy Capelle presented the results of the Nominating Committee consideration of from Melissa Dahlin, who was recommended by Julie Chiavernini. The Nominating Committee is recommending her for a position on the board. They believe she would be a strong addition and has an education background. She is currently studying early math learning as part of her dissertation. She is well connected to the research community in educational best practices, and so can be bridge for the board to current research and practice. Her proposed term will be through June 2022 and if approved, she could be sworn in at next meeting.</p> <p>There was a motion to approve Melissa Dahlin as a member of the board, which was seconded and approved unanimously by roll call vote.</p> <p>Next steps are that the Nominating Committee will meet with nominee from Parent Cabinet for the advisory position and the will also have that person attend a board meeting. The Nominating Committee plans to meet before next board meeting.</p> <p><b>B. <i>Board Resource Folder in Google Drive: Review of folders and documents in the new Google Drive resource folder, and discussion about additional items requested.</i></b></p> <p>Franci Sassin reported that the folder has been created in Google Drive to house resources for the board. If articles are to be shared, it is best for now to send those to Franci so she can notify the board and also include items in the board materials if relevant. This item will also be brought back at a future meeting for further input and discussion.</p>
10	<p><b><i>Adjournment</i></b></p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 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.***