

Journey School
A California Public Charter School

Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Approved December 18, 2023

Held at Journey School, 27102 Foxborough, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656
(949) 448-7232 www.journeyschool.net

AGENDA ITEM	
1	<p>Call to Order and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.</p> <p><i>Amy Capelle, Council President - Present</i> <i>Melissa Dahlin, Council Vice President - Present</i> <i>Margaret Moodian, Council Secretary - Present</i> <i>Jeannie Lee, Board Member - Present</i> <i>Michael Allbee, Board Treasurer - Present</i></p> <p>ADVISORY POSITIONS: <i>Cassie Kawling, Parent Cabinet Advisor - Present</i></p> <p><i>Also present: Gavin Keller, Shelley Kelley, Gaylen Corbett</i></p>
2	<p>Inspirational Passage: Mike shared an inspirational passage: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." -Maya Angelou</p>
3	<p>Approval of Agenda*: Margaret made a motion to approve the agenda, with Public Comment moved prior to Board Development and Oversight, and with the financial update moved according to Larry's schedule. Melissa seconded the motion and it was approved by all.</p>
5	<p>PUBLIC COMMENT: Journey School parent Alicia Cordova spoke during public comment. She thanked the board for allowing her to attend the meeting telephonically. This concluded her comments at this time. Gavin invited her to use the chat feature to submit questions regarding any items on the agenda.</p>
4	<p>BOARD DEVELOPMENT and OVERSIGHT (Discussion/Action):</p> <p>A. Board Strategic Planning*: Melissa presented her summaries of the alumni survey results from former students and their parents. The board reviewed and discussed the results. Melissa noted that having this type of survey information every year would be helpful in order to keep the results reflective of the school's current programming. The board discussed how to gather student email addresses after they leave the school. Cassie suggested communicating with 8th grade students and their parents just prior to their graduation. Amy also suggested regular communication with graduates, such as an annual message. Shelley suggested sharing the survey in the school's monthly newsletter. Next steps for the survey should be to share the results with staff members Kris Reynolds and Vivienne Benjamin so that they can use excerpts in the school's outreach efforts. It was agreed that the detailed results could be shared since they do not include names. Shelley suggested bringing the results to faculty, as well. Melissa said she could Zoom into a faculty meeting to help explain the</p>

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	<p><i>results. The board shared their gratitude to Melissa for her work on this project. Gavin asked her to please share the results with him as a Word document.</i></p> <p><i>Amy shared that Mike Matsuda, Superintendent of Anaheim Union High School District, a district focused on whole-child education, is willing to offer a presentation for Journey parents and/or faculty. It would be great to have him speak to corroborate the importance of whole-child education at the high school level and to share why they decided to move in that direction years ago.</i></p>
6	<p>CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: <i>Jeannie made a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda. Margaret seconded the motion and it was approved by all.</i></p> <p>A. Approval of Minutes*: <i>Minutes from Special Meeting held September 28, 2023.</i></p> <p>B. Recurring Expenses*: <i>Updates to 2023-24 expenses</i></p>
7	<p>INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports</p> <p>A. Financial Update*: <i>Larry reported on the September financials. ADA came in at 95%, which is more than what we had budgeted for, so the year is off to a good start. Mental health funds will be coming in higher than expected and will come directly to Journey instead of through the SELPA. We still have unused funds that could be used this year if necessary. The school has \$2.8 million as of 9/30/23, which is 130 days of cash on hand. The employee retention tax credit has been received, but has been counted as a liability instead of revenue since there's a possibility that the IRS could claw those funds back. There is still a deficit projected by 2024-25. For the current year, the state's forecast remains uncertain. It will be more clear in January when the governor's budget is proposed. At this time, the state predicts a deficit of \$15 billion.</i></p> <p><i>Amy asked Larry which monies could be considered for use in investments. Larry stated that the majority of the school's funds are unrestricted. He said to be sure to leave enough funds in the bank to pay for 2-3 months of expenses, or around \$1.2 million. He said that he's seen other schools utilize staggered CD's that mature in six months or at different intervals. Michael stated that his firm would recommend the same approach. Cassie asked if our cash needs are consistent and easy to predict. Larry stated that yes, it is consistent as our biggest expenditure is payroll.</i></p> <p>B. Faculty Update: <i>Shelley shared an update on Faculty activities. Jeannie shared that staff has been continuing their study of Conscious Discipline. The Community Social had a small turnout, but was very nice. Third grade camped out overnight on campus. PEDCO has been working on field trip guidelines for each grade. Jeannie noted some teachers are dealing with health challenges. A baby shower was held for Ms. Fiona and Mr. Kephart, whose baby was born this week. Next week is parent-teacher conferences, so it will be all minimum days. November 1st is a student-free day. The Halloween parade will happen on Tuesday, with students dressing up according to their grade's curriculum.</i></p> <p>C. Parent Cabinet Update: <i>Cassie shared an update on Parent Cabinet activities. PC's executive team is working really well together, and new members are making great contributions. For example, one person on the executive team created individual mess kits that will be sold at Harvest Faire. Parents are excited about eco-literacy and wanting to get involved in many areas. Pumpkin City was a success. Harvest Faire is the main</i></p>

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focus right now, with a need for last-minute volunteers. Cassie noted that PC will provide a way for parents to create their own parent-led interest groups that other Journey parents can join. These groups will not be school-sponsored. There will be certain parameters that the groups will abide by.

D. Administrative Update:

We are nearly half way through the Conscious Discipline training with faculty and staff. Information will be shared with parents. Lou Harvey Zahra will be leading several parent education opportunities with two Zoom events and one in person offering. Journey will be submitting an application for the Green Ribbon award. Farmer Brandon has students working to maintain the composting process regularly. Journey students will be working with Earthroots and the Laguna Canyon Foundation to restore local watersheds. The school's rain catchment and groundwater recharging basin will be restored this year. Gavin is working with Moulton Niguel Water to install low flow plumbing to reduce water usage. Our 6th and 7th graders attended the Sustainability Decathlon at OC Fairgrounds, thanks to Margaret's invitation to this event. Sustainable Housing Kits will be delivered for students to assemble and learn about elements of sustainable housing. The kits are made of reclaimed materials.

Gavin stated that PEDCO is reviewing field trips in regards pedagogy, as well as considering fiscal implications for the school and for families. October saw many absences amongst students and staff, mostly due to illness. We are seeking additional substitute teachers to meet staffing challenges. Margaret suggested reaching out to the Retired Teachers Union. Our independent study program for planned absences has been going well and has allowed the school to recoup some ADA. CAASPP scores were made available this week and will be presented at the December meeting.

Shelley shared that Journey School is considering hosting the Waldorf Alliance's "Art of Teaching" conference in the summer of 2024. Members of the Alliance will be visiting the Journey School campus in March 2024 as part of our accreditation process.

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SCHOOL OPERATIONS: Discussion/Action

- A. **Schedule of Meetings*:** Board members discussed the schedule of regular meetings. The February 29th meeting will be moved to February 27th. The December meeting will be moved to December 18th. Jeannie made a motion to change the schedule of meetings as noted above. Melissa seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

- B. **Investment Policy*:** Board members discussed the Journey School Investment Policy. Gavin noted that there has been no change to this draft of the policy that was presented at the last meeting. He clarified that Journey currently does not have any funds invested. Michael noted that there is no need to purchase tax free debt or municipal debt, since we do not need that tax advantage, and most government securities would have a higher rating than municipal debt. Gavin noted to remove that option from the proposal. Michael noted that the purchase of Prime money market funds should be prohibited because those funds could include foreign debt and other undesirable financial instruments.

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Margaret made a motion to approve the investment policy with the option for municipal debt stricken from the policy, and prohibiting the purchase of Prime money market funds. Melissa seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

- C. Financial Services Engagement Agreement *:** *The board reviewed the engagement agreement with E&E Financial Services. Amy noted that there is an item on the firm's owner's record that the board should inquire about. The record shows that the defendant pleaded not guilty and the charges were dropped. The board would like more information before proceeding with the agreement. Eric Sams from E&E Financial joined the meeting via speaker phone. In regards to the incident mentioned above, Eric stated that he was mistakenly charged on something that he did not do, and the judge dismissed the case based on those grounds. He did not stand trial and was not convicted. The incident was not related to a customer or the financial services industry.*

Michael inquired about the firm's experience with other school investment accounts. Eric clarified that E&E would manage the portfolio and not use an outside manager. Michael inquired about how to manage yields if rates go down. Eric stated that he would defer to the school's investment policy and understands that if rates continue to go down, the school may decide to cease investments. He noted that a portion of the portfolio could remain liquid so that the school could access it if necessary. Michael requested a proposal of how the school's funds would be invested. Eric explained that if the investment plan moved forward, the school would wire funds to a Charles Schwab account, and that account would be linked to the school's bank account. Gavin asked if Eric would be willing to attend board meetings on occasion. Eric said he would be presenting regular reports and could attend upon request.

Michael noted that the school may be able to negotiate the fee down to 15 basis points. Michael notes that Eric Sams is required to act as a fiduciary. Gavin pointed out that Eric has a long term professional relationship with Journey School and with Larry Tamayo of ExED, and that he specializes in work with charter schools.

Margaret made a motion to approve the Financial Services Engagement Agreement with E&E Financial with a maximum fee of 25 basis points. Jeannie seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

- D. Volunteer Policy*:** *The board reviewed and discussed changes to the Volunteer Policy. Gavin stated that our attorney has reviewed the policy and that it meets all legal requirements and complies with ed code. He notes that we have removed the word "direct" from the sentence regarding student contact. The policy still requires fingerprinting of chaperones and drivers. The policy does not include fingerprinting of classroom volunteers as they will be under the supervision of classroom teachers. Jeannie suggested that the policy could be worded in a way that is less specific to COVID-19 so that rewording would not be necessary in the case of other health emergencies.*

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	<p><i>Cassie suggested moving the line item about playground supervision to the bottom of the list of volunteer opportunities. Amy suggested including a definition of "supervised."</i></p> <p><i>Margaret made a motion to approve the Volunteer Policy with the three changes suggested above.</i></p> <p><i>Jeannie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.</i></p>
9	<p><i>Adjournment:</i> <i>Melissa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeannie seconded and the motion was approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.</i></p>

*Agenda publicly posted at Journey School on October 23, 2023.
And on the school website at www.journeyschool.net*

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