

MDCS Board Meeting, Jun 22, 2023

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, Gabby, Dan

6:01 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from May. Gabby motioned to approve, Dan seconded. Unanimous approval.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report

Billie - Had a nice closing Community Circle w. faculty cookout, conversation, and farewells to departing colleagues.

Crim - 8th-grade beach trip went well, with many of those kids having been together at MDCS since kindergarten. Students were engaged and enthusiastic. Enrollment is strong, with 10 spots still open in middle school... expect more applicants as there have been lots of inquiries.

Tracy - The summer program wraps up next week. It's been one of our smoothest to date

Michael gave an update on the grant application from EBCI for the 15-passenger van acquisition

Vote on Grant Application - Carter requested authorization to submit an application for the 2023-24 Federal Consolidated Grant. Gabby made a motion to approve authorization, and Chris seconded. Unanimous approval.

Budget

Gabby motioned to approve the 2023-24 budget as submitted. Chris seconded. Unanimous approval.

Tracy gave an updated board on the progress for the new modular classroom with a minor delay ref: utility pole to be moved. Septic report pending, at which point we'll get back with Harold to complete grading work. 5th grade will occupy the new classroom. Kindergarten moving back into the former classroom.

Billie relayed David's report of a glitch with the playground project - The company came back \$17K over budget *after* we paid a \$1K deposit. The committee seeking greater company transparency is working to downscale the project to stay within the budget. Reviews of this company are positive. Removal of old equipment is complete.

Strategic Plan

Tracy presented slides showing key elements of the revised strategic plan. Most unmet goals will need to follow improved fundraising efforts. Crim highlighted aging infrastructure. A general conversation ensued regarding the school community's vision for expanding/updating classroom space. Additional middle school space may be located near the gym. Carter raised concerns about USDA loan guidelines for building standards; he will make inquiries. Roof repair on several classroom trailers is estimated to be about \$3200 per structure. Jen asked about informal exit interviews with departing families. Middle school retention issues seem to center on the lack of sports, with others mentioning the lack of bus and meal services as factors.

Next meeting date: July 13, 2023.

Chris made a motion to enter a **closed session** to discuss possible new hires. Gabby seconded. Dan motioned to leave closed session, and Chris seconded.

Chris motioned to approve hiring three applicants: Jennifer Cutler, Bryson Key, and Jaqueline Tarver. Gabby seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

MDCS Board Meeting, May 18, 2023

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, ..

6:01 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from April.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report

Crim - Kindergarten has a big waiting list. Several spots are available in middle school: 4th (2), 7th, and 8th. We have a total of 32 kids on the waitlist. Kindergarten graduation was today; parents affirmed that the school is doing a good job.

Billie - We're still trying to fill teacher vacancies in 2nd, 4th, and EC. Curriculum changes in middle school include study hall (but this won't take away from electives). David D. and Matthew S. are getting certified to teach indoor archery. Opportunity in future years for this to become a competitive group. Adding required outdoor studies. All sixth graders will be required to take an outdoor skills class; 7th graders will take a map-reading class; 8th graders will take a first aid course. Math fluency continuing. Cherokee language was introduced to first graders; Ms. Songbird will follow up with those students in second grade next year as well as starting with a new group of first graders. Earth and Environmental Science being offered at freshman H.S. level. Coupled with the existing Math 1 course/exam, MDCS graduates will be able to test out of two high school classes.

Tracy: Middle school testing is almost done. The scores are looking pretty good; with strong growth in reading. Math scores are also solid with higher performance all-around including the notoriously tough 7th grade EOG exam. More testing for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders next week.

Budget

Carter: 2023-24 budget is in flux. Tracy has some suggestions which are still playing out. We'll need to approve next year's budget at the next meeting so ask clarifying questions beforehand. Local invoicing is helping to paint a somewhat rosier picture.

New Building

Tracy: Sales rep keeping us on track for 44' modular ETA 6/19. The manufacturer will help us connect with local trade contractors to finish the installation. One utility pole will need to be moved before delivery.

Crim: Harold will finish grading the new parking lot and add a split-rail fence wrapping to the lower lot. Gardening and Campus Improvement elective groups will help.

SIT Report - Valerie: Getting some bags and t-shirts imprinted. Quotes pending. Bus conversion moving along. The floor is done and bus will be moved in time for the start of school in August. Lunch/snack guidelines are being developed to help parents avoid sugary/salty snacks. Also urging teachers to add stay-at-school water bottles to the required supply list.

New Van

Tracy: Need for a 15-passenger van has been identified as far back as the last strategic plan. Would not need drivers to have CDL. We've verified that we could use a van for an additional bus route (with parking lot drop-off/pick-up... not street/road) as well as for field trips. \$50-60K for a brand new van with warranty but this option wouldn't be available for immediate delivery. We're also considering a ~2019 model though they have higher mileage and are priced somewhat higher than MSRP. Warranties for used vans tend to be very limited or nonexistent. Carter asked Michael to investigate a short/white (vs. yellow) bus with S-class and C-class training/licensing. Carter will look into financing; he suspects the total might be \$100K. May conduct a straw poll to see how many teachers would be willing to obtain CDL.

Playground

Billie (per David): We need to cut a \$1K check to get final design. 3-4 weeks to receive that design. Cost of locust posts have gone up since we started discussions. Old play structures will be removed this weekend. Planning to begin construction in July so the new playground will be ready to use when school starts.

Strategic Plan

Billie: Suggest a dedicated board session in July or August for discussion of a modified strategic plan. Crumbling infrastructure dictates new needs assessment. Jen proposed starting these talks in conjunction with budget planning next month.

Next meeting date: June 22, 2023.

MDCS Board Meeting, Apr 13, 2023

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, Gabby, Dan

6:01 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from Mar.9 Amended to reflect: no booth at Greening Up the Mountains ref. festival filled up prior to the deadline.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report

Crim - Lottery is tomorrow for spots in K-3 & 5. 6th is full. Only have openings in grades 7 & 8. 12 spots in Kindergarten, 2 each in first and second, and 3 spots available in third grade. 10 siblings enrolling.

Billie - The poetry event last month was outstanding. Envirothon teams placed well in the district and is moving on to the state competition. MDCS kids also did well at the SmartTank event. Nolan Creek trip with 7th graders is coming up next week. 14 students planning to attend the STEM-E convention in Cherokee in ~ two weeks.

Tracy - Directors' Letter should be out soon.

SIT Report - Valerie: Using the many colors from the mural to print swag is presenting some challenges to local printers.

David updated playground plans: Asheville Playground is the only contractor willing to build within the Circle. Evelyn with that company has been great to work with. It will be a crunch to complete work by the end of the summer. We are tentatively slated for work to begin in late July and conclude early in the school year. They are optimistic that work can stay within \$60-65K. Mulch is not in the scope of work for the contractor, but they can advise us on how deeply to pile the cushioning mulch. Billie asked about insurance implications. Jen asked about warranty coverage and ADA compliance. Bi-annual inspections by the contractor are likely to incur additional charges. Committee operating under the assumption that the playground needn't be ADA-compliant. Gabby asked about creating a small part of the design to be wheelchair accessible. Tracy encouraged the committee to consider planning for partial accessibility, both for compliance reasons as well as our vision of inclusivity. Crim asked whether dismantling and disposing of the old equipment would be handled by the contractor. The school will be responsible for locating utilities, drains, etc. Carter suggested hiring Harold _ to do the demolition work.

Budget

Carter: Confident we'll have a surplus in this year's budget. Surprised to note an \$18K surplus in our main State account. Additional \$30K in the share of local revenue. Dollar/child increased. Impact Aid got an extra \$15K. Staff benefits had been overstated.

Tracy: 2023-24 budget likely to run a deficit ref: increased staffing needs in E.C. etc. Still have some openings. The projected deficit currently looks smaller than previously presented but is dependent on whether new hires will be early- vs. mid-career. We may be closer to breaking even if we realize full enrollment. Introduced the likely need for a new modular building to house (at least temporarily) the growing E.C. class. This should be considered in the new strategic plan. Dan asked about where this building would be located and how financing for this building would be impacted by enrollment. Planning to put the new building on the edge of the regraded lower parking area. If the Atlanta-area company gets our go-ahead by May, they could have it ready to use by the start of the new school year. Cost projected at \$200K, to which Carter suggested adding ~\$32K as a cushion for the deck roof, etc. Adequate cash on hand to avoid financing this project despite the need to make a conservative approach to the next couple of fiscal years. Dan motioned to approve \$210K; Chris seconded.

CLOSED SESSION - personnel matter. Gabby motioned to leave closed session and adjourn; Chris seconded.

Next meeting date: May 18, 2023.

OSCEF Meeting 6:05

MDCS Board Meeting

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, Dan, Gabrielle (Gabby)

6:24 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from Feb.: Gabby motioned to approve, and Dan seconded. Unanimous approval

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report

Crim - 4th grade held an excellent poetry slam this evening. Enrollment is looking good. Open enrollment closes tomorrow at the close of business. Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 will all go into a lottery as they're overenrolled. Grades 4, 7, and 8 each have a few spots. School tours are available now. The parking lot project will be completed pro bono by the grandfather of an MDCS student. He has a long-established excavating business; all the school has to cover will be the cost of the road bond stone.

*Dan made a motion to approve, and Gabby seconded. Unanimously approved the motion.

Billie - Survey re Co-Director model guided some changes, e.g., monthly faculty meetings and clarification on SIT's process. Also clarified with faculty how communications with Directors can be improved; encouraged to cc: admin team and not worry about areas of specialization. A new letter describing the model should be posted to the website in April—other ideas, book study, picnic, etc., for casual, positive interaction. Co-Directors' titles are Crim: Operations and Human Relations Tracy Student Services and Accountability - Billie: Director of Teaching and Learning - Carter: CFO. Surveying faculty yielded many creative ideas for continued improvement, e.g., service learning, facilities upkeep, outdoor education, and student bill of rights. The respondents also identified several issues to address, such as staff absences and a few faculty members "sewing discontent",...

Tracy - Staff voted for a schedule incorporating work days adjacent to breaks. Like Swain, we'll keep a 175-day calendar.

*Gabby motioned to approve the 2023-24 schedule, and Chris seconded. Unanimous approval Summer/reading program shaping up well with about 25.5 hours of math and 72.5 hours of reading, or about 5 hours/day.

*Chris motioned to approve the summer catch-up program, and Gabby seconded. Unanimously approved.

SIT Report - Tracy: Shirt design finalized. Distributed a quick poll on the location for the new playground: 83% wanted to keep the playground within the circle. A committee has been formed to guide the project. Student videographer will capture footage for 2 clips to go on our website. Planning for a whole-school photo via drone flown by Val's husband. Debrief on conference day; SIT team will prepare a report to inform plans for next year. Turn out for the last SIT meeting was strong. The bus refurb project is taking a bit longer than expected due to issues with bolts in the floor; Matthew says the team will need some more money to finish the floor.

Billie - SIT discussion of the marketing committee. The now-defunct PEP (parents group) had ~\$5K in the account. Since there is parent representation on SIT now, that money is rolling over to SIT's funds.

Dan made a motion to enter a closed session, and Chris seconded. Unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION - personnel matter. Gabby made a motion to leave the closed session, and Dan seconded.

Next meeting date: Apr. 13, 2023.

Chris made a motion to adjourn; Gabby seconded. Unanimous approval. Adjourned

SCEF meeting at 6 p.m.

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OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, Dan, Gabrielle

6:29 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from Jan.: Gabby motioned to approve, and Dan seconded. Unanimous approval

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report - Crim said re-enrollment all but 2 (most grades are over-enrolled or full except for 4th (5 open spots), 7th (4 spots), 8th (4 spots)).

Billie - Playground update. We got the Glass Grant for \$35K matched by the board. We have a proposal submitted to Rep. Mike Clampitt for other possible grants. Considering options for other locations. Also need to revamp the lower parking lot. Dan reminded us that accessibility needs to be considered in the design of the new playground. Jen asked about the status of repairs mentioned at the previous meeting. Billie said that progress was stalled in that quarter.

Tracy - We are anticipating high needs in EC and other instructional areas. Thus staffing needs for the foreseeable future may stretch the budget. Good news: new families. Bad news: the influx of high-needs kids requires a new EC hire. Better to hire proactively when the candidate pool is larger. Jen inquired about grants. Tracy replied that she had made inquiries with mixed prognoses for future funding.

Budget Report - Carter - plan for deficit... see above. Approve Letter of Engagement for FY23 Audit - Fee increase from \$6800 to 7100 - She will also complete our 990 form. Gabby motioned to approve. Jen seconded. Unanimous approval

SIT Report - Val: Excited for Conference Day. Next year's calendar will be reviewed with proposed changes for faculty to consider; voting closes tomorrow. Brook met with the playground designer ~2/6/23. The designer liked the idea of keeping the new playground within the Circle.

Jen made a motion to enter a closed session. Chris seconded.

CLOSED SESSION - personnel matter. Dan made a motion to leave the closed session, and Chris seconded.

Next meeting date: Mar. 9, 2023.

Jen made a motion to adjourn; Gabby seconded. Unanimous approval. Adjourned
No quorum for SCEF, but Carter gave some background regarding encroachment on our easement for the road approaching the gym. Next SCEF meeting at 6 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Chris, Dan

18:10 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from Dec.: Jen motioned to approve, and Chris seconded.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report - Billie talked about parent/teacher conferences on 3/17. Emily got a grant for improving outreach efforts; the plan is to contract with local businesses (Honey Bear a.m. & Four Queens p.m. will provide food), and child care will be available during conferences. Middle school will have student-led conferences again. Teams hope to expand this model...

Crim said the initial response for early enrollment has been very strong.

Tracy detailed assessments (a few reading/math results still pending - 2nd & 4th grade), with many classes seeing double-digit improvement. Students transferring in from other schools are demonstrating great improvement. Despite progress, we're still catching up from COVID-era deficits and expect to see some shortfalls with EOG testing. Planning with teachers to address this in the coming year.

Billie - Teachers will need 100 hours of continuing education for reading. Trailers will need upgrades e.g., new underpinning, HVAC upgrades, sinks, toilets, vapor barriers, etc. Only one burst pipe in the recent cold snap, but money should be allocated to address the obvious jobs. Crim said several different "subs" we've worked with in the past could come in to assess needs and submit bids for the work.

Budget Report - Carter says impact aid money should be finalized in February. We'll have a better idea of revenues after that.

SIT Report - Val: SIT also working on plans for Conference Day. Fleshing out details on catering, etc. Honey Bear will provide a few hundred donuts/coffees for ~\$250, while Four Queens will provide a tortilla buffet for about \$1800. Jen offered the use of her chaffing trays (unless MDCS wants to purchase them for future use). Also talked about expanding the student-led conference model to elementary grades.

Board recruitment - Dylan Lossiah introduced himself. After he starts his two new jobs in March (and resigns from his current employment with Jen), he will be eligible to join the MDCS board. Alumna, Rowan __, turned down Carter's invitation to join the board.

Chris made a motion to enter closed session. Jen seconded.

CLOSED SESSION - personnel matter. Dan made a motion to leave closed session, Chris seconded.

Jen made a motion to move Tracy to full-time effective immediately. Dan seconded. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting date: Feb. 16, 2023

Adjourned

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Dan, Chris

18:03 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

Approve Minutes from Nov.: Gabby motioned to approve; Dan seconded.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report - Tracy reported that test results showed across-the-board growth. Billie mentioned that 4 kids moved into the “red group” and outlined some restructured core curricula which should add rigor and improve learning. Afternoon electives will drop from three to two. Songbird will push into several elementary classrooms with Cherokee culture lessons.

Finance Committee

Budget Report - Carter reported funding formula improved: \$7,864/child (+5.64% over last year). Good chance we'll stay “in the black”

Funding for bonuses: more in the 071 fund, none in the 203 / 141 funds. Admin team proposes the following for this year and future years: 93% distribution to staff (excluding co-directors), 7% to assistants. Should assistants fall short of \$200/person with this percentage, MDCS will make up the difference from our budget. \$4K for full-time teachers who start the year with us. Dan made motion to approve, Chris seconded, unanimous approval.

Open-enrollment will begin on Jan. 30th with the deadline set for noon on Friday, March 10th (just before spring break). Chris made a motion to approve, Jen seconded, unanimous approval.

SIT Report - Val: 12/13 mtg. Interrelated topics. Emily was awarded IABS(?) grant for student support. Team hoping to use funds to improve parent involvement. Conference day for K-8 would be set for 2/17/23 with grant funds covering food for visiting parents. After MAT so there will be plenty of data to inform. Conferences will be in lieu of classes; childcare will be provided. Jen asked about the possibility that some families might see the opportunity to make a four-day weekend since 2/17 lines up with a three-day break. Billie underscored the importance of aiming for face-to-face meetings vs. zoom conferences.

Looked into crisis intervention training, but full CPI program is too expensive. Tracy will reach out to Jackson and Swain counties to see about piggybacking on their training. Also considering teaming up with other charter schools in the region to do a joint training session.

Swain County Education Foundation was set up to own the buildings/land used by MDCS. Carter reminded us that SCEF will need to meet soon to discuss the easement near the gymnasium.

Board recruitment discussion. Jen has several prospects in mind. Discussion of alumni candidates and one prospect who is currently employed by Jen. Carter will reach out to our attorney for an opinion on the propriety of an employer/employee relationship within the board.

Jennifer Kafsky has tendered her resignation from the board with thanks.

Dan motioned to move to Closed Session, Chris seconded.

CLOSED SESSION - personnel matter

Left closed session

Next meeting date: Jan. 19, 2023

Adjourned 20:10

OPEN SESSION

Board Members Present: Jen, Dan, Gabby, Chris

18:03 - Welcome and Reading of the Mission:

Public Comment: none

18:05 Approve Minutes from 10-13-22: Gabby made a motion to approve; Dan seconded.

Executive Committee

Co-Director Report - Crim gave an update on enrollment. Started the year at 177, with 12 new students added since August. Still have some room in middle school. - Billie spoke about our Exhibition Night which served to get parents back on campus. ~30-40% of our families were represented. Parents seemed pleased but only four signed up for volunteer involvement. Crim added that it will take time to rebuild the pre-Covid level of participation. Tracy updated us on EC hiring process and announced additional pull-outs to meet EC needs.

Finance Committee

Budget Report - Carter let us know that the new funding formula is still pending so revenue side of budget remains unclear. He will circulate the new budget as soon as it's available.

Approve hire of Chloe Plesset and Brittany Duell for EC staff. Gabby made a motion to approve these two hires. Dan seconded the motion.

SIT Report - Emily reiterated that Exhibition Night was a big success. Next SIT meeting (11/29 @ 4pm) topics will include: planning another pizza night in December; and scheduling a time for parent/teacher conferences.

General Discussion of continuing the Co-Director model. Jen summarized cost comparisons and efforts to gather staff feedback. Jen and Gabby both spoke in favor of continuing the team model for the coming school year. Dan said he's concerned about lack of continuity in leadership models.

CLOSED SESSION -

Personnel Issue- continuation of co-director discussion

OPEN SESSION

Vote on continuing co-director model for 2023-24 school year* - Chris made a motion to continue the model for the coming year; Gabby seconded. Unanimous approval.

Authorize Tracy Wharton to make contractual engagements on behalf of MDCS - Chris made a motion to approve, Dan seconded.

CLOSED SESSION for two personnel issue - Dan made a motion to enter closed session, Gabby seconded the motion. Discussion of issues to prepare for further discussion at December meeting. Chris made a motion to leave closed session; Dan seconded.

OPEN SESSION

Next meeting date: Dec. 15th

Adjourned 19:45

Minutes for Board Meeting 10/22

Board members present: Jen, Chris, Gabby. Jen called the meeting to order at 6:01 and read the mission of MDCS

- Discussion of amendments to August and September minutes. Changes recorded and distributed via email.
- Tracy - **Director report** - Math and Reading scores are in. Reading: 58.3, which is > state level. Met growth goal but a grade of "C" - Math: 49 achievement score below the state average of 57. Read to Achieve / MAP, EOG & EOG retake - 10 of 19 students passed in grade 3-4 classroom. EC caseload was 16% in 2019, projecting 36 or 20% for December of this year. 1/3 of Middle School students will need an IEP. DPI is reminding us that we need licenced EC teacher to meet the load, or we'll have to provide compensatory service, e.g., extra summer sessions. Jen asked for clarification on the implications of IEP and the ability of these students to get back to grade level.
- Billie - **Director report** - We have a moral and legal obligation to help these kids grow. Federal law is quite specific in the area of EC learning. "Push in" by Betty et al. is ultimately less disruptive. 3-4 classroom: Londa is seeing nice growth with the class doing mostly 4th-grade work. We hope to see this work for a 4-5 class too. Tracy got a Math/PD grant which is helping ensure teaching is aligning with standards. Billie and Tracy working with teachers on differentiation. Student teachers will shadow a cooperating teacher in the fall and then teach in the spring. We are losing one of our interns. Admin. team will be requested at least one additional EC position. Jen asked for clarification as to whether 4-5 classroom would qualify as EC instruction. Tracy replies that it does not unless an EC-certified teacher has that class.
- Carter - **Financial report** - This report is based on last year's \$/child. A \$32K deficit is projected which is not too bad for this time of year. Add teacher for 6/10 of the year and add intern ASAP. Given the low level of experience that's likely in a December hire, salary and benefits will push the deficit up to \$87K
- Chris made a motion to approve prompt hire as proposed; Gabby seconded. Unanimous passage.
- Co-director Model survey found generally positive response. Carter will continue to mentor Tracy on the financial management details. We will vote at the next meeting as to whether to commit to this model for next year.
- Val - **SIT report** - New logo on bags, shirts, and hats... also on the mural. Tracy reports that Daisy will take high-resolution photos of the mural when it's completed. Science presentation for 3-5 grade block. An Arctic scientist will present. Grading the road to the gymnasium. A 3-minute promotional video will be completed to be uploaded to the website + 30-second video for Facebook. In touch with *The One Feather* about running our press releases. Mr. Mackey (?) would like to convert one of our buses as an elective shop class project at a projected cost of \$1K. SIT may establish an internal fund for this and other projects. Exhibition night planning. The pizza fundraiser looks like it will clear >\$500.
- Brooke - Fun Run raised >\$13K. Crim mentioned another \$600 donation for middle school.
- Gabby made a motion to go into closed session to discuss a personnel issue. Chris seconded. Val and Brooke excused as the topic is salary-related.
- Jen made a motion to leave closed session. Chris seconded.
- The next meeting is on 11/15/22. Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

AMENDED

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Minutes for Board Meeting 9/22/22

Jen called the meeting to order at 6:01 and read the mission of MDCS

- Tracy - Director report - classes going well; upcoming bus driver issue has temporary fix, but we need more teachers certified to drive the bus; middle school student attempted suicide, tried to contact parents (via “One-Call”) of middle school parents: talking points for discussing with kids, staff is aware, “if you see something” training extended to 6th graders, spoke with attorney, Google Chat... Jen mentioned that she hadn’t received the One-Call; Emily sent survey to staff asking for perceptions of how things are going in general and with the co-director model specifically.
- Carter - Will look at tweaking One-Call settings
- Valerie - SIT report - Visitor Badges being used - Signage in place - Survey went out - Dress code discussed, need for consistent language - Middle-school dance, student will take the lead in planning - Skance (social dance at skating rink) possible? - School pictures: many options - Playground/Library planning - Emily submitted a grant proposal
- Elect board officers. Jen made motion to appoint Chris as secretary, seconded by Dan, unanimously approved. Dan made motion to appoint Jen as **chair**, seconded by Gabby, unanimously approved. Possible board recruits and recruiting process discussed.
- Carter - 177-2=175 students will plug into our funding equation - Still unknown what \$/student. Retirement escrow account has to be established. We’ll put our required \$50K into a C.D. so we can earn some interest. No need to reimburse folks who take health insurance opt-out.
- Tracy - Need for Another EC Teacher due to increasing demand, particularly in middle school.
- Carter - Playground equip. estimate \$100K. Proposals for matching grants are going out now. Dan made motion to approve $\sim\frac{1}{3}$ (\$35K) contribution from MDCS budget. Gabby seconded. - Mural \$3500
- Chris

- **Dan made motion to go into closed session for personnel issue. Chris seconded.**
- **7:50 Chris made motion to adjourn, Chris seconded.**

MDCS 8/24/22 Board Meeting Minutes

6:03 - Board members present. Jen, Dan, Chris, Ken

6:04 - Jen started mtg. and reads the mission statement for MDCS

6:05 - Ken tendered his resignation from the board with the thanks of the board

6:07 - Co-director reports

1. Crim - 177 enrolled - 2nd & 4th grades full - 2-8 openings in other grades
2. Billie - K-5 lunches moved to gym - P.E. for those grades after lunch - kids are packing out the leftovers for now; this policy may change. Gym being well utilized - Day-8 of school and things are off to a good start. Bus service extended to two stops (Swain West BP and The Overlook) in the west part of Swain 17-26 kids riding this route; avg. 22, mostly from Whittier.
3. Tracy - Compliments Francine on running great P.E. sessions for K-5. Revisiting master schedule. Small learning groups have been established.
4. Carter - Emily elected chair of SIT; they're starting the School Improvement Plan. Val and Brooke are teacher board reps for this year. Meetings now at 4 o'clock; hoping for parent involvement.

6:24 - Roll call the vote to accept Ken's resignation. Unanimous approval (Jen, Dan, Chris)

6:26 - Six new hires listed. Dan made a motion to approve. Seconded by Chris. Unanimous

6:30 - Vote to allow Carter to seek...

6:31 - Financial report - \$25K surplus. Carter will look into

6:32 - Crim spoke about all the bus drivers do and suggested we increase their wage to \$18/hr. Unanimous approval to make this change to the budget.

6:34 - SIT priorities: playground structure in bad shape. Two 15-passenger vans would make field trips easier to plan. At last check, insurance was not cost-prohibitive. Roofs between classrooms were downgraded as a priority. Grant monies may be available.

6:43 - State retirement - Existing leave policy is generous. Carter recommends buying out accrued leave balances. Accrued leave for MDCS teachers is relatively high for NC. Billie explains sick vs. annual leave. Carter explains sick leave vs. "bankable leave for retirement".

Jen asks if someone whose contract is not renewed would be eligible for accrued leave buyout.

The generous leave policy started as an offset before MDCS paid the state rate for teachers.

The calendar is shorter at MDCS than.... Fractional buyout (up to a week) of non-vested employees who changed to a different in-state school. Going forward, need to bring our leave accounting more in line with the rest of NC. Jen asked about a provision for donating a day of leave to a co-worker. Eligibility for buyout depends on providing "adequate notice," defined as six weeks before the start of teacher work for the subsequent year. MDCS will need proof that

the former employee has cashed out from the state retirement system. Hardship exceptions will be considered. Paraphrasing Dan's summary, "we'll do right by you if you do right by us. " Document edited and approved. Dan made a motion to approve. Chris seconded. Unanimous approval.

7:30 - Discuss Policy for Health and/or Retirement Benefit Opt Out. We currently pay \$647/month for health benefits. Carter will find out what other systems in the area do for health insurance opt-outs. Tabled further discussion of this and Retirement

7:39 - Next meeting 9/22/22 - adjourned