

**Mulberry School Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
November 17, 2021**

This meeting of the Mulberry School Board of Trustees was called to order at 6:34 PM via Zoom.

**Voting Trustees Present**

Nicole Loventhal  
Fatosh Hacigumus  
Timothy Wood  
Cheri Goodman  
Gretchen Nakamura  
Bill Pfahnl  
Jack Christin  
Malika Adam  
Michelle Coddling  
Tiffany Coletti Kaiser

**Non-voting Trustee Present:**

Kara Riordan (Head of School)

**Guests:**

Deanna Haugaard  
Deepti Devanagondi

**OPEN MEETING**

The board approved the agenda for this meeting as amended.  
The board approved the minutes for the October 20, 2021 meeting.  
Bill Pfahni volunteered to be the meeting timekeeper.

**Middle School Information Night**

Kara gave an update on the recent virtual Middle School Information Night. She reported that 3-4 families that are new to Mulberry participated and expressed interest in the middle school, and several middle school alum families participated and offered positive testimonials about the positive impact of the smaller, nurturing environment that is offered. There was Q and A and overall good feedback from participants.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **Tuition and Operating Expenses Discussion**

Deepti presented information about the current tuition levels at Mulberry versus other similarly situated private schools in the region using data from the Independent Schools Business Officer Association (ISBOA). A discussion followed including the point that current tuition is not sufficient to cover the operating costs at Mulberry, and that we will have challenges attracting more students if we don't offer programs that other schools offer---programs that will require more tuition money coming in.

The Trustees discussed various approaches to adjusting tuition to cover expenses and secure the future of Mulberry School more effectively. A decision was made to have a separate meeting on this topic on 12/1/21, followed by consideration of specific options regarding tuition adjustments at the 12/16/21 Board meeting.

### **Administrative and HOS Reports**

Kara reviewed key topics in the reports sent to the Board. Her key points are:

- **Health and Safety update:** To date, there were 2 COVID cases on campus. We managed the positive COVID cases and are looking to bring antigen tests on campus for staff to run and support parents and eliminate or shorten need for remote learning program. Mulberry continues to manage OverSightMD, bi-weekly check-ins with the County Health Department and Department of Education and handling individual communications with parents, answering questions, and providing reassurance during COVID. Currently, there are no vaccination requirements. We will continue follow CAIS and local regulations around vaccinations.
- **Communications:** We started a draft of the school calendar for 2022/23 with the goal to share with the community at the beginning of January. We are also preparing Positive Discipline Resources for new parents. We continue to release the Weekly Buzz and ongoing communications about safety and health.
- **Operations:** We supported the school photographer most days during school photo week. We continue to work with USD on necessary repairs and improvements on campus and oversee ongoing maintenance on campus. We passed the fire drill observed by the Fire Department and are preparing for an annual inspection by the Fire Marshall.
- **Marketing:** We attended the Los Gatos event at Belgatos Park as an opportunity for branding. Our Postcard retargeting campaign is running and we are continuing to post to Facebook and Instagram 2-3 times per week. Currently, we have Headshot photos scheduled for Friday 11/19 at 12pm. Kara informed the Board to take

advantage of this if they need new headshots or send over professional photos for the website.

- Head of School report: Priorities for 2021-2022 enrollment include attending and summarizing key notes from the NEAR roundtable sessions. There are two students moving out in December due to re-location, another student joining after thanksgiving break and two children in January 2022. We are continuing to add students in Kinder and PS.
- Finance: Following up on the last board's meeting comment regarding review of Quick Books categorizing, Kara confirmed there are two sets of eyes currently reviewing these reports to ensure accuracy of categorizing expense and income. We reviewed the data from CAL ISBOA regarding tuition, operating costs per student and 25 other slides. We are continuing to review the budget and determining when new hires to fill needs may occur.
- Development: HOS has been making phone calls and thank you notes to parent donors, including letters to selected alumni and grandparents. We are in the process of updating our snail mail addresses in Donor Perfect for failed delivery. In our Strategic Development meetings, HOS has begun reviewing collateral for strategic funds.
- Management: We have an offer out for the Administrative Assistant of Development. The role will be part-time for 20 hours per week and is more of a clerical position, but it will be important to get some support in Development as Enrollment season begins in November and December. Review of Employee and Parent handbooks have begun. Regarding Tech Upgrade, we are working with our consultant to upgrade our current Meraki router units as the last one was dated to 2015.
- Education: MAP scores for grades 2-8 were shared with parents. We are not showing the learning gap that many schools are showing. Our students are performing at or above "normal limits".
- NAIS: We have renewed our membership. Kara encourages the Board to look at member benefits and resource guide.

### **Finance Committee**

Fatosh provided an update of the November financials and budget-to-actuals. Tuition is tracking \$28K below budget due to students dropping. Magic of Mulberry is tracking slightly over budget and other income is on track to budget.

Regarding expense variances, administrative expense tracking below budget due to timing issues. Rent (including deferred rent) is on track to schedule payments. Payroll expenses are currently slightly below budget as there are 2 open positions with 1 in the process of being filled. Instruction expense is below budget as expected this time of year and facilities expense is tracking to budget.

Fatosh walked the Board through the budget to actual analysis.

## **OPEN**

### **Teams – Access to Committee Channels**

Nicole inquired whether access to committee Teams channels should be open to all board members regardless of assignments. Majority agreed that calendars should be open to everyone, however if members feel they need access to a specific report they should reach out to respective committee chairs. For now, a decision was made to leave the structure as is and continue to think through as we move forward.

### **Confidentiality Review Agreement**

Nicole reminded the Board about the confidentiality of matters discussed and action items during these meetings. All information is to be kept confidential unless explicitly stated otherwise.

### **Key Takeaways:**

Motions Approved:

Agenda for this meeting approved.

October 20 2021 minutes approved.

Agreement reached that the Board would meet on December 1, 2021, to discuss the issue of tuition and potential tuition adjustments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.