

Monocacy Montessori Communities, Incorporated (MMCI) Board of Trustees
(BOT) Leadership Work Session ~ July 10, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

Join via Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/jzw-sves-rdd>
Or dial: (US) +1 731-474-1846 PIN: 663 478 261#

MMCI BOT Quarterly Work Session Minutes

1. **Call To Order** 7:00 p.m.

Tara Dunsmore called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

0. **Attendance & Introductions** 7:05-7-15 p.m.

ATTENDEES:

Stephanie Budnicki, Shreenidhi Prabhakaran, Sheriann France, Jessica Lawrence-Wujek, Jay Schuerle, Meggan Sombat, Jan Francis, Carlo Serio, Kathleen Lutrell, Tara Dunsmore, Ryan Lewis, Damon Jones, Cynthia Florez, Louisa Diggs, Sarah Cramer, Bob Weiland, Paul Gouge, Melissa Reyes.

New Members:

- Shreenidhi Prabhakaran (Shree) - MMCI Treasurer
- Adawndria Sanni - MVM Parent Trustee
- Stephanie Budnicki - MVM Parent Trustee

Candidates:

Cynthia Florez - MMCI Advisory Member, Consultant to the Board

Jan Francis: Cynthia is someone that I've worked with previously and Cynthia has worked in New York Public Schools, Maryland Public Schools as well as in New Orleans. Cynthia is currently in Texas, and she is in Frederick, Maryland all the time. Cynthia also has two MA Degrees, she's an educator and now she's a traveling advocate for kids with special needs.

She has agreed to be our Friend of Education as a consultant to the MMCI BOT because a lot of parents had concerns with IEPs and 504 plans. They did not understand the actual process, so I'll have Cynthia take it over to continue to tell us about herself and I really appreciate the fact that she said yes to be a part of the MMCI BOT.

Cynthia Florez: Good evening and it is nice to meet everyone. My name is Cynthia Flores and thank you for having me here this evening. I'm going to give you a little bit of background about myself. So, I've been in education for 21 years and like Jan says, I've been in various states, but I've worked in Maryland schools, and I currently have a bulk of clients in Maryland in a variety of counties.

I've started my education & career in New York City Public Schools, and I've worked in a high school as a dropout prevention counselor, then I moved to Baltimore to pursue my masters. I have an MA in Administration & Supervision and an MA in Leadership and Teaching. My undergrad is in Psychology and African Latino Studies.

As I was reading the MMCI's website, I was excited to see that one of the first things was diversity, equity and inclusion. That's very important to me as a Black Latina so that was very enlightening. I'm very passionate about educating not only school-based teams, but also parents about just advocating for their children, whether they need special education or even general education or a 504 plan. I look forward to working with everyone and thank you for inviting me.

0. **Discussion & New Business**

7:15-9:12 p.m.

- **DISCUSSION - Team Building Trainings and Effective Leadership Workshops: Introduction of Mr. Damon Jones**

Jan Francis: When I started teaching, I was trained by Mr. Jones, he was my vice principal. Mr. Jones has a Master of Arts in Special Education, Administration Certified and is a Professional Development Specialist. Mr. Jones has been in education for over 15 years and continues to be a great asset to the community. I reached out to a lot of people that I use to work with and I was so happy when Mr. Jones agreed to be a friend of education, but as I continued to read and think about the things that our president actually wanted for us and with how diverse our team has become, I figured Mr. Jones would be much better to actually do some team building exercises for us. The team building exercises will help us understand each other where we're strong and where we're weak. Also, we will learn to work in one accord.

Damon Jones: Thank you for that wonderful introduction. I really couldn't ask for anything else. I really appreciate that Jan and I thank you for having me with you all tonight as your guest. It seems like you have a lot of great energy going on trying to support your school. So yes, as Jan stated I've been in education since 1997. I started out as a Special Education Secondary Teacher before I moved into Administration as an Assistant Principal on the elementary and high school level. I used to serve as the grant manager for President Obama's race to the top Grant. Currently, I help plan all of the induction services for our new teachers as they enter our school system as well as teachers that would like to enter either a school leadership plan such as being a principal, assistant principal or they like to follow the teacher leader track and going along our national board certified teacher route, or they were interested in anything with

curriculum instruction or testing. I am also a Clifton Strengths Coach and I welcome the opportunity to work with the MMCI BOT.

Tara Dunsmore: Thank you so much. I have to say I can't speak highly enough about the Clifton Strengths training and evaluations. I've done it through my day job, and I've done it quite a few times and each time I have learned a lot about myself and my leadership style as well as my working style. I think it could be a really enlightening experience for all of us on our board to just understand what we bring to the board and what each of us can bring so the idea of that really excites me, and so I'm excited that you're here and thank you once again Jan for finding us another valuable resource. All right. Next up we have MMCI Board Term Limits.

- **DISCUSSION - MMCI Board Term Limits**

Tara Dunsmore: Parent Trustee's and other parent elected members of leadership are limited to two terms and we were trying to interpret whether that means two terms ever or if it just means two consecutive terms. We do have a candidate for parent trustee for CCM who has previously served as a parent trustee for two terms, but then she has taken a break and she's willing to come back and continue to serve. The last thing I want to do is turn someone away who I know is going to be an active participant, but I wanted to get other people's kind of interpretation of the way that bylaw is written and make sure that we are interpreting it correctly.

Meggan Sombat: The bylaw doesn't state how long the break must be. So, I think that that was just the main question: Is it a break of an entire two years or does that make a difference?

Tara Dunsmore: That was the other question because she didn't take a full two-year break. Her term ended this past December and there are vacancies now technically the vacancy that exists is the term that started directly after her term ended but it has gone unfilled for six months. So, do we consider that a break enough that she would be able to come in as a Parent Trustee? Can she refill that position, or do she have to go a full term before we bring her back on?

Meggan Sombat: I was thinking about this earlier, what is the intention behind this term limit clause in the bylaws, is it so that we don't have power hungry parent trustees who are trying to stay on the board and take over committees? I mean, I think we actually want that right like that in this particular case, the term has gone unfilled. Nobody nominated themselves for it at the last annual meeting and election.

Tara Dunsmore: Bob, let me see filling vacant terms. It states: "I vote of simple majority the board of trustee shall elect a person to serve for an unexpired portion of any term vacated by a trustee."

Meggan Sombat: I think that is just only speaking to that function.

Tara Dunsmore: Right, but yeah, it doesn't put any limits on that so my assumption would be that whatever position they were being appointed to them would fall under the requirements for that position. I just want to get a temperature read because what I don't want to do is waste her time and ask her to come to a meeting and us to do a vote and then us to decide that we don't think she's qualified to be on the board. So, if we can just get a temperature read that says whether you are comfortable with her coming to our next board meeting and us putting her up for parent trustee or so yay or nay, then that gives me an idea of whether we should move forward or not. You can just type it in the chat if you would like for the parent trustee to return to the board.

8 Voting Members: YAY

1 Voting Member: Undecided

I think that everybody feels comfortable moving forward so I would say if you wanted to go ahead and have her submit her bio and we can either do an Evote or we can vote at the next voting meeting but either way, I think it's okay to move forward.

- **CLOSED SESSION:** The BOT will hold a Closed Session in accordance with one or more exceptions per the Maryland Open Meetings Act:
 - Any personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.
 - To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition;
 - To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;
 - To discuss, before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process.

Tara Dunsmore: We are not going to have a closed session tonight, but I can give the broad overview now, which is that on June 14th we filed an appeal with the Maryland State Board of Education, the four charter schools in Frederick County all signed on together as a group to appeal the budget decisions made by the Frederick County Board of Education. So, our petition asks the State Board of Education to issue a declaratory. The state has not imposed a mandatory 25% funding formula for Charter Schools. However, the Maryland blueprint for Education also has a new statute that talks about a minimum school funding level of 75% of PPA must go directly to the students. Giving district the leeway to withhold up to 25% of those funds for central office expenses that cannot be allocated individually to students. We are asking them to declare officially that those two things stand side by side.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Appointment of BOT Advisory Member (Jan Francis)**

The MMCI BOT has agreed to add Cynthia Florez to an Evote for the appointment of the BOT Advisory Member.

- **DISCUSSION/ VOTE: Appointment of CCM Parent Trustee (Jan Francis)**

The MMCI BOT has agreed to have the actively involved Parent Trustee return to the board as the position has been vacant for 6 months.

- **DISCUSSION: Recruiting and Nominating Process/ 2024 MMCI Annual Meeting and Election/ MMCI President Position**

Meggan Sombat: Almost every board member is on the nominating committee group and the reason being is because over the last couple of years, everybody who was on the nominating committee their kids were in the eighth grade and they all left at once. And so, then it took us a little while to rebuild the committee and now we have some really dedicated volunteers who are keeping that going year-round also planning to major events. And I think they're actually planning a third event coming up for next school year, which is fantastic. And I love that those things are happening based in the nominating committee and out of MMCI for both schools. However, we need additional support, and it is my hope that we continue to reach out to parents to find individuals to volunteers and to fill all our vacancies including our President Position.

Tara Dunsmore: Anything else that anyone would like to add before we call it a night.

Bob Weiland: You can give me the email addresses and we'll set them up.

Meggan Sombat: Okay. Yes.

Bob Weiland: They're all Google accounts for those that are new so anywhere you set up like a new account you just choose Google. And then, the initial password will be from the Google workspace team. You'll click on it to set a password, then I send you a QR code for Google Authenticator and then basically you scan with that app on your phone.

0. **Announcements:**

1. Upcoming MMCI Business Meetings (usually held at 7PM the FINAL Wednesday of each month): meetings will be virtual until further notice

- July 31, 2024 - MMCI BOT Voting Meeting

- August 28, 2024 - MMCI BOT Voting Meeting

2. Minutes and Agendas may be found online at <http://mmcimd.org/calendar/>

Tara Dunsmore: All right, thank you both Damon Jones and Cynthia Florez for joining us tonight. Cynthia, you'll be getting an email soon with your login information and Mr. Jones we will be in touch with you soon as well.

MOTION: Tara moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by all members in favor.

The meeting was adjourned by 9:12 p.m.