

Great River School
School District #4105



***Engaging intellect, shaping character, building
community***

MISSION

Great River School, an urban Montessori learning environment, prepares students for their unique roles as responsible and engaged citizens of the world.

GOAL

Great River School is the public school of choice for highly motivated students.

VISION

Great River School is a place where college bound students are excited and inspired to learn. Great River School encourages students to ask complex questions and seek new and difficult challenges. Great River School combines academic and social experiences in a culture of civility and trust through peaceful practices. Great River School is a place where students feel safe to express and challenge themselves. Every student at Great River School is a valued member of the community. The exceptional Great River staff teach teamwork through cross-country travel, experiential learning, drama, the arts, and micro-economic ventures while helping students set individual academic goals.

CORE VALUES

Great River School believes in the following:

- Montessori Education
- Community, Interdependence, and Sustainability
- Civility, Grace, and Courtesy
- Diversity
- Growth through Challenge

***Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge,
but must take a new path, seeking the release of human
potentialities.***

Maria Montessori

Great River School Board Meeting
April 22, 2009
6:30 pm – 8:30pm

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Consent Agenda.
 - A. Approve March Meeting Minutes
3. Head of School search committee recommendation to board – Tom Carrigan
4. Budget revision for 2008/2009 school year – Cory Olson
5. May trip approval
6. Legislative update
7. Election process update: proposed bylaw change; annual meeting date – Judy Plante
8. Occupation environment business start-up – Ben Moudry
9. Membership in high school league – Andrea Martin
10. Membership in MACS – discussion – Andrea Martin
11. Director's update
12. Reports from Standing Committees:
 - A. Finance Committee – Cory Olson
 1. SBS Summary
 2. Summary Income Expense Statement
 3. Balance Sheet
 4. Fund Balance Estimate
 5. Cash Flow Analysis
 6. Check Register
 7. Check Register Resolution
 - B. Personnel Committee – Tom Carrigan
 - C. Fundraising and Development – Mary Gantenbein/Lydia McAnerney
 - D. Nominations Committee – Tom Carrigan
 - E. Parent Involvement/School Support Committee – Mark MacGregor
 - F. Strategic Plan – Judy Plante
13. New Business
14. Adjourn at 8:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Present: Paulette Zoe, Tom Carrigan, Judy Plante, Andrea Martin, Corey Olson, Mark MacGregor, Candy Husemoller, Sarah Lawrence-Lupton, Mary Gantenbein, Michael Flood, Cece Spencer, Leah Brennan-Magidson, Kate Diehn, Andrea Christensen,

Absent: Kira Donnelly, Angela van der Puije

Community members present: Karen Cedars, Ron Wacks, Rose Gottlieb

1. Consent Agenda

2. Head of School search committee recommendation to board – Tom Carrigan

Motion: Candy Husemoller

Second: Ben M. & Andrea C.

Multiple thanks to the search committee, with special thanks to Tom Carrigan.

Passes Unanimously.

4. Budget revision for 2008/2009 school year – Cory Olson

Revised Budget.

Approve a \$35,000 deficit to fund balance for the 2008/2009 school year.

Motion offered Tom Carrigan

Seconded by Candy Husemuller

Passed Unanimously.

Resolution

5. May Term Trip Approval

This year, there are a number of trips:

1. Bike Trip to William O'brien State Park. Led by Andrea Christensen. This is a one night overnight. Jason Eldridge is 2nd chaperone.
2. Backpacking Trip on Lake Superior Trail. Led by Caroline Miesle. Still searching for 2nd chaperone. 8 day backpacking trip.
3. Colorado Equestrian Trip to Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Led by Michael Flood. This is an 8-day trip which involves 2-3 days of horse back riding.
4. Chicago Arts Trip – Presented by Rose Gottlieb. Currently the trip has 2 chaperones (Kira, Ben (age 21), going to Chicago for 3 nights/4 days. Staying in a youth hostel. During the day, they will be touring the city, attending museums. (Itinerary attached.) Transportation to Chicago by MegaBus.

5. Costa Rica – Led by Enrique Garita. His mother is the other chaperone. This is a two-week trip.

For future years, how should this be handled in future years?

Candy suggested that this should be something the new director handles and checks in with the board periodically.

Tom reminded the board that the school is liable for these trips, so that we need to be sure that the trips are well planned and that we are comfortable that student safety is well addressed.

Ben Moudry bring up the question: who is responsible for cost overruns? GRS? The students? The staff member?

Paulette brings up the issue of first aid. There is minimal training for all staff (First Aid and CPR) and on all traveling trips, there is a first aid kit.

Kate asks if our forms have been reviewed by a lawyer.

Mary brings up the concern that some trips are not affordable for all students. Request more conversation by board at future dates.

Tom brings up concern about Costa Rica trip, and Enrique is sole person traveling on airplane to Costa Rica.

Motion to conditionally approve May Term Trips. On May 6th, at 5pm, EC will meet for final approval. The following conditions must be met in order to insure final approval.

- 1- Waivers from parents.
- 2- Clear parent responsibility for paying for bringing students home if issues arise on the trip – these cover all overages in cost of trip.
- 3- Background checks complete for chaperones.
- 4- 1st aid kit compiled and emergency contact forms compiled.
- 5- For out of country, medical and passport letters complete.
- 6- That Costa Rica Trip Waiver clearly spells out that Enrique is traveling as single chaperone during flight and include their travel plans with particular detail given to presence of 2nd chaperone for rest of trip and that a good faith effort be made to complete background check on chaperones in Costa Rica.

Offered by Michael Flood

Seconded by Corey Olson

Unanimously approved.

6. Legislative update: no new news. We are watching the charter school legislation. We are budgeting with the assumption of a 20% holdback beginning next year.

7. Election process update: proposed bylaw change; annual meeting date – Judy Plante Application deadline extended to May 1st.

Friendly amendment proposed by Ron, but not accepted.

Proposed by Andrea C.

Seconded by Tom

Approved unanimously.

Current board Composition

1 Ben 2010

Staff

2	Kira	2011	Staff	
3	Mary G.	2010	Staff	
4	Andrea	2010	Staff	
5	Kate	2011	Open Staff (appointed 2008)	Applied
6	Michael	2009	Open Staff (appointed 2009)	Applied
7	Sarah	2011(?)	Open Staff (appointed 2008)	Applied
8	Angela	2009	Open Staff	Open
9	Mark	2011	Parent	
10	Tom	2009	Open Parent	Open
11	Judy	2009	Open Parent	Open
12	Corey	2011	Community	
13	Paulette	2009	Open Community	Applied
14	Candy	2010	Open Community	
15	Leah/Cece	End of Term	Open (to be filled by students in Fall 2009)	

Open positions: 4 staff, 2 parent, 2 community.

Reapplied: 3 staff, 1 community.

Received application:

Open	Re-applied	Received	Total	Election?
4 Staff	3	0	1 short	
1 Parent	0	2	0	
1 community	1	1	1	

Proposed bylaw change, which will go to community meeting this spring for community vote.

Membership of the GRS board of directors will meet the requirements of the state statute, the State of Minnesota Department of Education, and the requirements of GRS sponsor (currently Hamline University), in that order.

There is general agreement that this should come to the annual meeting. Leah requested that we examine the legal issues surrounding having a minor on the board as a voting member before taking action to changing the board approval.

8. Occupation environment business start-up – Ben Moudry (attached)

Proposed micro-economy of school business.

This ideas includes having chickens at GRS.

9. Membership in high school league – Andrea Martin

Motion to apply

Motion by Kate

Seconded by Tom

Unanimously Approved

10. Membership in MACS – discussion – Andrea Martin

If the school joined, it would cost the school \$2,500+ \$5.25/student. Total cost: \$3,812.50. Andrea used to be a board member of MACS. She sees value in their ability

to bring charter schools together and lobby the legislature. They have a re-licensure process to support schools.

11. Director's update

- * Tami's class on landscaping received a \$2,000 grant for landscaping improvements to GRS.
- * Laura Mulcahey received a writing award.
- * 3 students (Brian Cusick, Grace Sonnabend, Nate Gerdes) have made it to semi-finalists for national merit scholarships.
- * Letter from state senator Ellen Anderson congratulating us on our state finance award.
- * Today – Tami Pust gave a sexual harassment presentation to 9-12 graders.
- * MCA testing has begun!
- * May Term is fast approaching

12. Reports from Standing Committees:

A. Finance Committee – Cory Olson

1. **SBS Summary:** looks as expected. Fund grew by about \$40,000. Revenues exceeded expenses, which is good.

2. Summary Income Expense Statement :

3. Balance Sheet

4. Fund Balance Estimate

5. Cash Flow Analysis

6. Check Register

7. Check Register Resolution

Motion to approve:

Andrea

Kate

Approved Unanimously

B. Personnel Committee – Tom Carrigan

Staff evaluations are mostly complete. 54 staff evaluations on line completed and 33 admin evaluations.

Looking forward, this system will be re-evaluated and discussed in May.

C. Fundraising and Development – Mary Gantenbein/Lydia McAnerney School foundation

D. Nominations Committee – Tom Carrigan

Community meeting set for May 19th, 2009.

E. Community Advisory Committee – Mark MacGregor

Another Voices meeting since last board meeting. Ben and Mary attended.

F. Strategic Plan – Judy Plante. Nothing new. A few changes from last month to be completed and then it will be posted to website.

13. New Business

a. Vigorous Course Waiver for IB English, presented by Andrea Christenson. Andrea points out that the IB English covers the entire state standards. This is more of a formality

Motion by Kate

Seconded by Michael

Approved Unanimously

b. Andrea Martin presents a letter she received from a graduate student who is doing research on school boards. The study requires that each board member completes a survey (15 minutes) and as incentive they will donate a \$100 gift card to GRS. Ben says that he feels compelled, as an educator, to support research. Board agrees to say yes.

c. Ben Moudry announces that contractors have toured the school, and are submitting proposals soon. Currently the stated substantial completion is November 23. This will have a major impact on the fall operations of the school.

14. Adjourn at 9:00 pm

Consent Agenda
March 25, 2009

C09032501 The Great River School Board approves the minutes for the February 18, 2009 meeting, and approves the contract for Innovative Special .

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Candy Husemoller

Adopted this 25th day of March, 2009 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

09032501 The Great River School Board adopts the revised strategic plan.

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Kate Diehn

Adopted this 25th day of March, 2009 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

09032502 Approval of Use of the Fund Balance

The Great River School board authorizes use of the fund balance to address budget shortfalls for the 2008/2009 school year.

Offered by: Andrea Christensen

Seconded by: Angela van der Puije

Adopted this 25th day of March, 2009 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

09032503 Election process revisions

The Great River School board approves revisions to the elections process.

Offered by: Michael Flood

Seconded by: Tom Carrigan

Adopted this 25th day of March, 2009 by unanimous GRS Board vote.

09032504 Check Register Approval

The Great River School board has reviewed the check register listing checks written on GRS's behalf from February 1, 2009 through February 28, 2009.

Offered by: Kate Diehn

Seconded by: Andrea Christensen

Adopted this 25th day of March, 2009 by unanimous GRS Board vote.



April 22, 2009

HEAD OF SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Great River School Head of School Search Committee voted recently to recommend the GRS Board hire Christina Beck as the Director of Great River School. She has accepted and will begin work on July 1, 2009.

The Head of School Search Committee began work in September 2008 to find a Head of School to lead Great River students, staff and community. The Head of School opening was advertised in six national Montessori, charter, education and public forums resulting in over 20 applications from around the US and one from India. The committee conducted preliminary interviews with eight candidates, four in Minnesota and four from outside the state. The committee narrowed its search to four final candidates, one of whom was from Colorado. This candidate withdrew his name from consideration when he received an employment offer in Colorado he could not refuse. The remaining three candidates interviewed at GRS with the students and observed staff and students on April 6th, 7th, 8th. One candidate interviewed with board, staff, and community on March 25th and was also available during lunch on April 6. The other two final candidates interviewed with Board, staff and community on April 15th.

The Head of School Search Committee has been focused on finding a Head of School with leadership, management, collaboration and strong communication skills. In addition the GRS staff was looking for a leader who can develop staff, bring cohesiveness and collaboration to the school and be an informed decision maker. The committee was also looking for a candidate who is passionate about Montessori education and our school. The Head of School needs to be committed to the school's mission and vision and be able to make decisions based upon them. The ideal candidate also would have public education, fundraising, and management experience.

On April 16, the Head of School Search Committee reviewed all the feedback regarding the candidates, which overwhelming favored one candidate over the other two. The Head of School Search Committee felt one candidate had the necessary experience and passion to lead the school and voted unanimously to recommend the Great River School Board hire Christina Beck as Great River's Head of School.

GRS will set up a time in the near future for the GRS community to celebrate our new Director and give people a chance to meet Christina and get to know her. We will announce the celebration in the GRS News and Yahoo Group. If you have questions or comments regarding the process or the outcome of the decision, please do not hesitate to contact Tom Carrigan at tcarr389@aol.com or call 612-840-2598.

Thank you to those members of the search committee, teachers, board members, prior board members and parents, for a long but fruitful process. The current Great River School Board Executive Committee, the Interim Director and the Montessori Director were also part of the decision-making process. Feedback was solicited from parents, staff and students.