

# CEMA | SCHOOL COUNCIL | MINUTES

Meeting date | time 4/5/2021 3:32 PM | Meeting location Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

<b>Chairperson</b>	Sarah Smith
<b>Principal</b>	Tanya Melville
<b>Teachers</b>	Trent Kissinger
<b>Parents</b>	Jenn Bailey, Yael Elfassy, Amanda Fanelli, Brendan Ferrara, Melanie Finnegan (PTA), Holly McCormick (PTA), Gloria Rigsbee, Nick Rintye, Suzy Wallace (MESS)
<b>Business/Community Partners</b>	Melody Burks, Lynn Franklin

Guest and others attending


## Agenda topics

TOPIC	DISCUSSION and Summary*
<b>OPENING: INSPIRATION</b>	<b>Inspiration – provided by Ms. Lynn</b> Life’s most persistent and urgent question is what are you doing for others. -Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr
<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES:</b>	Minutes provided for special called meeting 2/8/2021. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 corrections to the minutes – Change year from 2020 to 2021 in meeting date/time and correct date in prior minutes approved to reflect 12/7/2020</li> <li>• Motion to approve the minutes, with corrections, by Brendan</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yael</li> <li>• Minutes approved to be filed</li> </ul>
<b>Principal’s Report</b>	Update on Return to Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are only a few weeks left in the school year with major testing and directives.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMAS                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing for grades 3 – 8</li> <li>• Not sure how testing will be taking place, as in-person testing for this is mandatory</li> <li>• Information will be forthcoming on the administration of test, as directives come from the district</li> <li>• Will provide information on deficits, as well as enrichments</li> <li>• More for instructional purposes than accountability for this year</li> <li>• The in-depth information that comes from these tests is very helpful</li> </ul> </li> <li>• iReady                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing for grades K – 8</li> <li>• It will be used in lieu of MAP testing this year – likely to be the</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>benchmark moving forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This test puts students on a pathway (Mr. Trent to pass on to Ms. Beth – perhaps adding a growth percentile to a benchmark score</li> <li>• Amira <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing for younger grades</li> <li>• Reading assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In planning for the School Improvement Plan we will be taking limited data, along with teacher observations into account</li> <li>• We have added more students following the deadline – those families will be contacted today about returning to the building</li> <li>• Request was put into the district for ErdKinder to move to a 5 day week – no response as of yet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the only grade level that we can accommodate for 5 days a week, based on space</li> </ul> </li> <li>• EMBRACE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer program being offered by the district</li> <li>• Can assist with credit recovery</li> <li>• If parents feel students need enhancement, they should sign-up ASAP</li> <li>• Ellis students will be housed at Hesse for this program</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We are planning for a 5 days/week in the Fall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to plan within this on, how to focus back on the Montessori</li> <li>• The School Improvement Team will also discuss professional development for the staff</li> <li>• This year was focused so strongly on the virtual learning models, we need to get back to the focus on Montessori philosophy and methods of learning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Old Business</i>	<p>Transparent Classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All information was not lost, Mr. Trent has been working to back up files and photos</li> <li>• With this no longer being used, are any new programs being considered or looked into? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We acknowledge it has left a significant gap in terms of communication and tracking student progress</li> <li>• Currently looking into other options and tools available that will partner better with the district</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>AMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently on hold for this year</li> </ul>
<i>New Business</i>	<p>School Registration for 2021 – 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lottery has taken place and we have begun looking at all registrations that have been completed for the coming academic year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UpperEI is losing several children to specialty programs and private schools</li> <li>• We are looking at approximately 20 rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders alone, due to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

this, it is likely we may lose a staff member

- Reasons shared by a few parent board members that have children moving onto Garrison School for the Arts
  - While Ellis has a wonderful community and have loved being part of that, our children have developed a strong passion for the arts and want to pursue that further
  - Ellis creates a strong foundation for education, as my children have grown, Ellis doesn't offer theatre at all and has very limited opportunities for chorus, while they can attend the specialty school and they are integrated into the curriculum, as well as afterschool programs
  - Lack of awareness about the full ErdKinder program, including community outreach efforts, highschool credit class, etc
  - Concerns about readiness for highschool math classes
- What can we do as a school to address retention, especially at this 3<sup>rd</sup> critical year of the UpperEI program (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>)
  - Survey families – identify why their students are choosing to leave and are there factors that we have control over to address concerns
  - Create a showcase program specifically focused on UpperEI and the ErdKinder program
    - The Choice school video that was created had a strong focus on the LowerEI
    - The video is also a reminder to parents of the beauty that lies within Montessori and its values
  - Drawing attention to all the details – even the small things
    - There is so much strength in the Montessori program in building their soft skills and preparing them for highschool
    - Building healthy habits and organization – following a work plan and being responsible for that
  - Highlight the classes that are offered, allowing students to earn highschool credits while in 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Invite recent Charles Ellis Alumni to return and talk to the 4/5/6 classes, as well as ErdKinder to share their Ellis experience and why they chose to remain at Ellis through 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation
  - Create a manual, similar to Why Kindergarten, but with a focus on Why ErdKinder
  - Make more literature and resources present and available
  - Establish and offer parent focus groups to revisit Montessori education
  - Things to note:
    - Private school options could perhaps be due to fear of not returning to 5 days/full-time (in the building) in the fall
    - Covid protocols this year could have had an impact on education decisions for next
    - We want to be able to do better in the long haul to keep our children through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and the full Montessori program at Ellis

	<p>Montessori Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes have really been made with the use of Montessori materials in the classroom</li> <li>• Ms. Laura created the resource kits and they are being used by the individual students</li> <li>• No updates yet from the district on the use of the wooden materials and shared items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we return to 5 day instruction in the building, we will need to really focus on the procedures needed to make use of the these materials</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Engaging Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we plan for an outdoor parent education program on campus in August? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too early to plan ahead for that – We need a confirmed back to school plan from the district first</li> <li>• We would love to have parents back observing classes first, then we will begin moving on to community meetings</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Health &amp; Wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has everyone in the building been vaccinated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul> </li> <li>• With Pfizer being close to having a vaccine available for those 12+, has there been anything from the district on vaccinations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not at this time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Safety &amp; Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any updates on the front vestibule? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently on the back burner with other pressing factors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A request was put in for additional cameras, awaiting an update</li> </ul> <p>School Council Call for Nominations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gloria will update the information in the Google Form that was created for the previous election</li> <li>• Link for the nomination will then be sent to Sarah to share through PTA channels and Ms. Lisa to share through school channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call for Nominations April 12 – April 23</li> <li>• Information posted online April 26 – May 7</li> <li>• Voting May 10 – May 14</li> <li>• Announce new council members May 17</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Council Retreat (to include all current and incoming council members), Tuesday, May 25 from 8:30 – 11am at McCauley Park</li> </ul> <p>School Board Meeting via YouTube April 14</p>
<p><i>Partner Updates</i></p>	<p>PTA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next general membership meeting, and new board election, 4/20</li> <li>• Teacher/Staff Yoga and luncheon were a success</li> <li>• Hopefully having an Art Showcase outside the front of the school, including several arts areas</li> <li>• Working with Coach Lesley/reaching out to Front Porch Improv about</li> </ul>

	<p>possible workshop (suggestion of Savannah Stage Company for Alice in Wonderland field trip for younger kids – pay what you can option is available)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full list of PTA Updates provided – pdf file sent via email</li> </ul> <p>MESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No update</li> </ul>
<b>Reflections</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflection – provided by Ms. Tanya</b></p> <p>“The foot is noble, to walk is noble...secret questions.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">-Maria Montessori</p>

Meeting adjourned 4:53pm

Submitted by: Gloria Rigsbee