

Odyssey School of Denver Board of Directors
Wednesday, August 21, 2024
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Our Mission: Odyssey School of Denver is a diverse, public, K-8 Expeditionary Learning school. We teach students how to learn through a focus on academic achievement, critical thinking and social responsibility, preparing them for high school and beyond.	
Our Vision: Odyssey School of Denver students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take risks and innovate;• Lead with integrity and compassion;• Be civically and socially engaged;• Push themselves to exceed expectations;and • Embrace learning as a life-long adventure.	Board Responsibilities: We ensure Odyssey's compliance to its contract with the Denver Public Schools, set and monitor the implementation of school policies, manage the school's annual budget and financial planning, and hire and evaluate the performance of our school's Executive Director.

1. Call to order - 4:02 pm
 - a. Travis moves, Amanda seconds. Passes
2. Roll call & acknowledgments of conflicts of interest
 - a. Present = Amanda Brown, Alex Hannum, Travis Haley, Ryan Lally, Patrick Lane, Laurel Lenz, Dawn Loge, Pete Martinez, Kelly McLeod, Keri Melmed, Melia Repko-Erwin, Caitlin Vaughan Sekar, Alicia Smith, Emily Wheat.
 - b. Absent = Kelley Krupicka, Juana Rosa Cavero.
 - c. No conflicts
3. Approve Agenda
 - a. Amanda Moves, Ryan seconds, passes.
4. Approve Minutes
 - a. Alex moves, Amanda seconds, passes.
 - b. Public Comment - none
5. Board Discussion Items 4:10 pm
 - a. Board Commitments
 - i. Signing of state oath.
 - b. Committee Memberships & Structure
 - i. Travis reviewed board committee structures.
 - ii. Looking for board members to serve on the Finance committee.
 - iii. School accountability committee - not essential that this is separate from the board, but it has been an outside committee in the past. Provides opportunity to dig into achievement data more deeply. Caitlin volunteered to chair. Pat expressed an interest in serving on this committee.
 - iv. Question about intention to focus on DEI work this year?
 1. Retreat focused on short-term goals during leadership transition more than specific long term goals.
 2. Exception to this is the need for a MS discussion.
 - v. Development committee - Looking for members. Committee focuses on leading efforts for the Colorado Gives day campaign (coming up in Dec), interfaces with the auction committee and family council.
 - c. Finance Committee Update
 - i. Ryan provided an overview of the projected budget for the 2024-5 school year.

- ii. Projecting a \$63K deficit due to purchase of bus. This was anticipated from last year and is not any concern.
 - iii. No other concerns with financials.
 - iv. Expecting a reduced % of total funding from fund-raising due to reduced levels of community involvement.
- d. Middle School Enrollment Expectations 25/26
- i. Pete reiterated that the discussion on MS is needed to ensure there is a plan in place if > 28 students who are currently enrolled in 5th grade opt to continue to middle school. This would lead to over-enrollment in the MS. This is also an opportune time to revisit the visioning for the MS.
 - ii. Travis shared a document that tracks middle school enrollment-related questions from the discussion at the board retreat. The document links to information outlining the process for school choice.
 - iii. Pete updated on work he and Elki have done to find answers to the board's questions.
 - 1. The school limit for utilization cap is 340 students. This is in principle the absolute cap on enrollment in the current school building. But it might not be feasible/realistic to enroll this many due to charter and space limitations.
 - a. What is the maximum reasonable/feasible class size? From the viewpoint of DPS, MS teachers, MS families/students?
 - 2. A role change is one option to ensure there is a process in place to restrict enrollment numbers for the MS, if this is necessary and deemed appropriate by the board. A role change could benefit the MS by increased marketing. This needs to be decided and communicated to DPS by October.
 - 3. Other points to consider:
 - a. Communication plan is needed.
 - b. Surveys may not provide fully reliable data.
 - i. Is the Odyssey MS a first choice for families who state they intend to return, or is this a "safe" choice?
 - c. Unclear how an over-enrollment in 6th would impact enrollment in 7-8th grade.
 - d. Typically, 50-70% of students in 5th grade choose a different middle school for 6th grade.
 - e. Intent to enroll and submission of choice applications for middle schools both occur in January.
 - iv. Discussion:
 - 1. Communication with families.
 - a. Meetings/discussions with 5th grade families should happen sooner versus later. "Immediately" would be ideal.
 - b. Recommended that Pete assemble clear slides to share with families that outline the situation/ limitations and what we do and don't have control over.
 - c. As part of the discussion with families, solicit their feedback on what they are looking for in a middle school. Also an opportunity to market the school/provide them insight into the strengths of Odyssey MS. Could also get a sense for how they would respond to the idea of a role change.
 - 2. Enrollment for 2025-6 requires an immediate solution. There is more time to flesh out the overall vision for the MS, possibly a job for a board subcommittee or workgroup.
 - a. For the board decisions, it will be important to define deadlines and limits clearly and asap.
 - b. Pros and cons of a role change?
 - c. Critical to ensure school meets the district and charter requirements.
 - d. Longer term, we may want to consider hiring consultants to help evaluate and plan for a build out of the middle school.

3. Solution framework: How do we keep 27 students from 5th-6th? Once this happens, how do we grow? I.e, some immediate need for vision - to improve and market the school, some longer-term planning.
 - a. Data to seek/consider:
 - i. Current 6th families - why did you stay? Safety, small classes, adventure... other?
 - ii. Older students/graduates - can we collect information on how well the MS does to prepare graduates for high school?
 - b. Anecdotal comments:
 - i. "Maybe I want my child to have larger class sizes (for more friends) and less adventure?"
 - ii. MS does a great job, but might not be the ideal choice for all students or types of students.
 - iii. Limited offerings, lack of sports, etc.
 - iv. Problems associated with onboarding a large number of students who have not been raised in EL.
 - v. Marketed last year as a microschool.
 - vi. Some 4th grade families feel that they have a guaranteed spot.
 - vii. 5th grade families may be assuming that all is OK
4. Board members wondered about Colin's thoughts/ideas on MS and its future? What are MS teachers thinking?
5. How do Odyssey attrition rates from 5-6 compare to other nearby K-8 schools? Elki noted there have been changes in enrollment trends overall.
6. ED, Board Committee & Council Updates 5:00pm
 - a. ED update
 - i. Update on start to year. Staff returned on Aug 1.
 - ii. Staff institute, staffing update, retreat.
 1. Retreat was geared towards modeling for staff what an adventure trip should look like.
 - iii. EL workplan.
 1. Faculty and leadership learning targets.
 - iv. Back to school celebrations
 - v. Current enrollment
 1. Currently 7 open spots.
 2. 13 (54%) of 6th graders are new to Odyssey this year. 11 are staying from 5th grade.
 - vi. Update on 30 day plan.
 1. Good progress. How to differentiate the culture of MS is work in progress.
 2. First ever MS only meeting. There is a strong and positive culture already embedded in the MS.
7. Wrap Up & Upcoming Agenda Items 5:45pm
 - a. Topics for upcoming meetings
 - i. Middle school.
 - ii. Board committee assignments
 - iii. ED evaluation process
8. Adjournment 6:00pm
 - a. Melisa moves, Laurel seconds, passes.