

Odyssey School of Denver Board of Directors

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

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 am
2. Roll call & acknowledgments of conflicts of interest
 - a. Present = Amanda Brown, Paul Cindric, Travis Haley, Alex Hannum, Kelley Krupicka, Ryan Lally, Patrick Lane, Laurel Lenz, Pete Martinez, Erin Peikin-Sekar, Clarissa Pohlman, Melia Repko-Erwin, Caitlin Vaughan Sekar, Emily Wheat, Jeff Williams.
 - b. Absent = none.
 - c. No conflicts
3. Move to approve agenda
 - a. Jeff moves and Alex seconds. Passes.
4. Vote to Approve July minutes.
 - a. Jeff moves, Laurel seconds. Passes.
5. Public comment
 - a. None
6. Board Introductions.
 - a. Travis introduced the Board members to the shared computer drive with minutes and meeting materials.
 - b. Round of introductions.
7. Pete presented the ED update.
 - a. Highlights of Staff Institute and retreat.
 - i. The back to school celebration was well attended.
 - ii. Staff institute - theme: Anchoring our why. Rooted in purpose, aligned in practice.
 - iii. Held staff retreat at Lake Dillon in early August.
 1. Modeling/grounding for adventure.
 - b. Staffing update
 - i. Fully staffed, Pete shared a slide introducing the new teachers/staff.
 - c. Current enrollment
 - i. Goal of 333 students
 - ii. Enrollment is currently 330.
 1. DPS requires some slots to stay open through the end of August.
 2. There are a couple of offers out.
 3. Includes 15 additional students from Palmer (at request of DPS)
 4. Middle school

- a. 24 of 27 students in the 6th grade are returning from 5th.
 - b. 6th grade MS waitlist is ~40 students.
 - c. 7th and 8th grade had minimal attrition.
 - d. Strategic plan / EL workplan
 - i. Built a plan and goals for the year based on:
 - 1. Help from Marsha Fulton (former ED at Odyssey; funded by grant), Linnea (EL coach and former Odyssey teacher).
 - 2. Reflects the commissioned report from Olivia on the middle school (presented at the retreat in July).
 - ii. MIS#1 - School-wide norms and expectations (culture)
 - 1. Six areas of expectations for holding to the norms for K-5 and 6-8.
 - 2. Working to set expectations that are appropriate for each group of students.
 - 3. Friday PD check-ins
 - iii. MIS#2 - Integrate habits of a learner into instruction.
 - 1. Helping link to curriculum and help students meet expectations.
 - 2. Friday PD check-ins
 - iv. MIS#3 - Strengthen PLCs for data-driven instruction.
 - 1. Challenge and grow both the advanced and struggling students.
 - 2. Thursday meeting check-ins, once per month.
 - e. Questions about MS and school environment.
 - i. School culture, regulation and organization feels stronger this year.
 - ii. The current 8th grade class is enjoying a sense of being leaders in the school.
 - iii. MS team has been strategic and is focused on setting the school up for success.
- 8. Caitlin introduced board committees.
 - a. Oath and committees.
 - b. Introduction to committees
 - i. Finance - Ryan is Chair. Meets on Zoom. Tuesday on the week before the board meeting.
 - ii. Development - Kelley was chair. Will need a new chair this year. Critically important for school fund raising. Every member should take a turn on this one. Colorado Gives day is the biggest commitment for board members. The auction committee chair has recently stepped down.
 - iii. School Accountability Committee - Caitlin was past chair. Will need a new chair or structure. The committee supports Pete with school data and behavior activities. Pete would like to see more families be involved. The board already takes on a lot of this work.
- 9. Ryan presented a Finance update.
 - a. Financial dashboard
 - i. Fundraising is the only area where the school finances are not in the "green" zone but not a major concern. Odyssey brings in ~4% of revenue from fund-raising. Green would require this to increase to 5-10%. Progress is good. Fundraising per pupil last year was nearly \$700. Versus <\$400 during pandemic.
 - b. Projected change in fund balance for 2025-6 is currently \$189,000.
 - i. Reflects increased enrollment and fundraising plus reduction in staffing costs.
 - ii. Includes a ~\$10,000 increase in adventure costs.
 - c. Financial projections
 - i. Discussion of projections and upcoming shortfalls in next few years due to reduced PPR funding.
 - ii. Discussion of financial structures - options for reserve uses.
 - iii. Discussion of strategies and levers for budgeting to ensure the school bridges the projected future financial gap.
- 10. Vote on an updated succession plan.
 - a. Charter renewal process - identified a need to update the plan.
 - b. Updated plan was shared. Specifically states that the board can hire consultants and recruiters for aspects of the process to identify and vet candidates.

- c. New section on communicating strategies for the announcement of ED departure.
 - d. Travis moves to approve the revised plan, Alex seconds, passes.
11. Pete updated on middle school enrollment.
- a. This year will be the second year where a class of 40 current 5th graders will decide on whether to stay at Odyssey or move to another middle school next fall.
 - b. Next week there will be an initial poll sent to 5th grade families, with information on the middle school at Odyssey and impact of choosing into other schools.
 - c. Factors to consider as school plans for next year.
 - i. Last year, the initial polling indicated a 72% retention. The actual retention was 67%.
 - ii. This year, DPS enrollment choice has moved up one month (now in Dec/Jan).
 - iii. There is a need for additional 6th grade seats in this area of Denver.
 - 1. DPS would support a doubling of the MS.
 - 2. But there are space and other issues to consider before considering this.
 - iv. The goal for this year is to get more clarity on what the MS should look like at Odyssey.
 - v. Historical data and initial polling will help us to decide on enrollment trends and decisions on whether to stay.
 - d. Questions, discussion, suggestions:
 - i. There have been no changes in the 6th grade students who selected Odyssey last spring versus actual enrollment now.
 - ii. Revisit questions from last year to be prepared with answers.
 - iii. Improving the culture and strengthening the MS might lead to over-subscribing and need for e.g. a lottery.
 - iv. Current 5th grade families will be watching the current 6th graders.
 - v. If there is a high rate of retention (nearly 40), there may be a justification and path to double to MS and find more space.
 - 1. Palmer is already to be used for ECE and a smaller campus than Odyssey.
 - 2. Real Estate options will become available in October.
 - 3. Menu of options for portables?
 - 4. Begin to solve for the number of students enrolled that would necessitate an increased number of staff, etc. Some of this work was started last year and just needs to be updated.
 - vi. Charter renewal also comes into play. But the charter can be amended if/when needed.
 - e. Follow up topics for future meetings.
 - i. Revisit MS enrollment discussions from last year.
 - ii. Committee assignments.
 - f. Caitlin moves to adjourn, Jeff seconds. Passes.
 - g. The meeting adjourned at 5:54 pm.



09/17/2025

Caitlin Vaughan Sekar, Board Chair