

Sands Montessori Parent Organization

SMPO September Rudder Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2021 / 7 PM / Zoom Meeting

SMPO LEADERSHIP ATTENDEES:

Heather Gerker - President

Courtney Ryan - Vice President

Dave Rolfes – Executive Secretary

Becky Economou – Business Manager

Michelle Durban – Business Manager in Training

Allyse Sonnega – Parent at Large

Sarah Lord – Principal

Caitlin Lavine – 3-6 Teacher Representative

Vanessa Barth – 6-9 Teacher Representative

Lisa Bowden – 9-12 Teacher Representative

Kris Spurgeon – Intervention Specialist

Nikki Marksberry – Community Coordinator

Rachel Danhires – SEP Coordinator

Amy Hueneman – Volunteer Coordinator

Holly Fritz – Fundraising Coordinator

Brittany Able – Communications Coordinator

Chris Vockell – Athletics

Richard Grosse & Erin Seidel - LSDMC

Alissa Paasch & Kim Fulbright – ILT

Meeting Agenda & Reports Sent Prior to Meeting:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Pb2axB3Wnxk00647zAgQVhr2jfGh_py7uqAu70cpHxM/edit?usp=sharing

Meeting Minutes

The meeting started promptly at 7pm and is hosted by **Heather Gerker**, SMPO President.

Richard Groose makes motion to approve minutes. **Rachel Danhires** seconded. The minutes were approved.

Sarah Lord gives appreciation for dinner over conferences and the newly built Gaga pit. Teachers continue to work on plan for upcoming learning plans. Ms. Toebe has had FC Cincinnati included. Book Fair netted \$13,000 in sales & every child got a book. A high level of appreciation for coaches for soccer & basketball. Field trips are also up & running which is great. We are working on the One Plan with various tasks for children at various levels. An ask for "Dad's on Duty" which was inspired by a video Principal Lord has seen. She would like to implement this idea for 9-12 recesses going forward, and this was discussed at LSDMC. More information coming. Possible ask of SMPO for purchase of shirts or something else that may identify volunteers.

Nikki Marksberry reports about identifying families that need assistance. Thanksgiving giveaway is this Saturday and includes 12 neighborhood partners. There will be a toy sale this year as well and she may need help. McNicholas HS is a strong partner and has been helpful all year and they would like to help even more for things like Carnival or other items.

Becky Ecnomou with updates on balances (included above). Earned back about \$1200 from Kroger in the most recent quarter.

Amy Hueneman announces that there are 2 Read-a-Thon chairs and an "observer" as well based on volunteer request in the Facebook group. Spring Event / Carnival has folks interested but not fully committed. Quick discussion on soliciting parent leaders for each room & working through filling out the roles. Sarah Lord mentions she can send it out and that is the agreed upon approach. The current list will be shared with the teacher reps before the broad communication. Final ask to work through the nominating committee for SMPO roles for next year. The committee needs to be formed by the January Rudder meeting per the by-laws.

Jon Paasch with a soccer update with a thank you for the efforts in soccer. A special thank you to Michelle & Becky from a business manager perspective. A thank you to Ms. Lord for opening spaces to use equipment and for all the COVID implications. Mr. Bob for putting hangers in. Finally Chris Vockell for all the things he has done to support the program. Amanda Robinson will be up next to help.

LSDMC - Richard Grosse representing. Sarah talked about "Dads on Duty" with more info to come. District meeting coming up tomorrow and Montessori schools are getting together on December 9.

Katilin Lavine report in notes.

Vanessa Barth with 6-9 team; no official updates, but thanks for the dinner, especially the gluten free options.

Erin Seidel with a quick question on temperature checks and whether or not the teachers need assistance. Vanessa with a quick response related to current process, and no need to add extra support now.

Lisa Bowden with 9-12 update; great field trip to Gorman Heritage Farms. Just a wonderful trip and the kids really enjoyed the time... "best day ever!!"

Old Business

Intervention Specialists as well as Fine Arts were approved to have voting rights at the prior meeting, which will need a by-law amendment. Heather Gerker & Dave Rolfes will make the change. Heather also shares language approved, which is the same as the other teacher roles for the Rudder. There will need to be an update to the by-laws as well related to the fact that teacher roles are appointed and not a elected by SMPO.

Courtney Ryan with an outdoor update including bed fixes based on the most recent garden day. The Gaga courts are finished and in a good spot including some outside volunteers. A good reminder that having volunteers do meaningful & impactful work will inspire them and keep them coming back. There was a discussion about trees around the outdoor classroom as well. An open question about some of the fields on the way off the Sands property and who owns them. Courtney & Sarah Lord will connect on this. Courtney Also made a connection with a person that works with Pleasant Ridge Montessori on their outdoor space. Courtney also shared a survey with the teachers about having a naturalist coming to Sands regularly. Tetherball is up next to be installed (4 sets), with some questions about where they should be installed. Contact Courtney with ideas. Vanessa Barth recommends checking with the para professional teachers about where the best spot might be. There is a request to have the teacher reps make the connection. Other suggestions made include low cost items such as painting a US Map on the cement and/or hopscotch.

Vanessa Barth brings the topic of air purifiers as a request from both the teachers and the students. She makes a motion to vote on purchasing air purifiers for each classroom. Courtney Ryan seconds it. Kim Fulbright commends Vanessa for bringing it back up. Question comes up from Brittany Able about whether this can happen. Explanation since there was no formal motion to vote on it, there is no issue here. Amy Hueneman asks about ongoing costs and plans; Courtney Ryan confirms costs going forward which were discussed in October Rudder meeting. (Notes are available in the October 2021 Meeting Minutes). Allyse Sonnega asks about teacher preferences; Vanessa Barth confirms that her asks of the teachers reflected that a strong majority (about 20) wanted purifiers while roughly 8 teachers did not. Michelle Durban asks about supporting purifiers for independently purchased purifiers and the

consensus is that SMPO would be to support only SMPO purchased purifiers. The motion passes 10-5.

NOTE: It was determined after the meeting that the vote did not meet the proper notification standards set forth in the by-laws for a vote involving this much of an expense. Heather Gerker sent a follow-up email notifying the Rudder of this. The body of the email is below. [A screenshot of the email is attached here.](#)

Hello SMPO Leaders,

Thank you for a great meeting last night. I'm excited about our future work together and very excited about hopefully seeing everyone in person on December 14 at Fifty West!

As I have mentioned previously, we can spend up to \$15,000 (beyond what is budgeted) with a vote from the Rudder. However, the second part of this important bylaw article states that the vote must be presented to the Rudder at least five days before the meeting (it has to be on the agenda). I'm sorry I did not realize this sooner. It seems that no matter how much time I spend studying those darn Roberts Rules and our SMPO bylaws, I still can't think on my feet (maybe someday). We are always learning!

*If we were to move forward with the vote as it stands, we would then need to go through the approval process from ILT, LSDMC, and the general parent community to spend the money from our savings. If any of ya'll worked on the most recent outdoor classroom upgrades, you will recall that this is **quite** the process. I spoke with Vanessa this morning. As the person who brought the motion to the table, she has said she does not want to move forward with spending the funds from our savings. So the vote last night is null and void. If someone wants to bring the vote back to the Rudder in January, they will need to tell me at least a week before the meeting on January 18 to get it on the agenda.*

I hope this makes sense.

The silver lining? Let's hear from our community! I can't wait to learn from the Sands community at all levels what they would like to see the SMPO do in regards to fundraising, spending, and community building. Our intentional community engagement process will help us make informed decisions down the line.

Thank you for all that you do and for your patience as I continue to learn what I'm doing ;)

More to come soon.

*In gratitude,
Heather*

New Business

Heather Gerker mentions engaging the Sands community at a whole new level including community members that are generally under represented. [Here is a link to the plan.](#) It will be emailed to the Rudder with a request for feedback.

Callout for informal SMPO meeting in December with a proposed outdoor suggestion at 50 West, tentatively scheduled for December 14.

Meeting adjourned at 825pm.

Chat for family traditions:

Heather Gerker (she/her) to Everyone (7:02 PM)

Share your most favorite Winter family tradition in the chat!

Allyse Sonnega to Everyone (7:02 PM)

Festival of lights!

Amy Hueneman to Everyone (7:02 PM)

Eating all the cheese!

Dave Rolfes to Everyone (7:02 PM)

Hosting a holiday cartoon party!

Jon Paasch to Everyone (7:02 PM)

Visit family in Wisconsin/Minnesota

Kim Fulbright to Everyone (7:03 PM)

Snow play and hot cocoa

Nikki Marksberry to Everyone (7:03 PM)

Family portrait in front of Poinsettia tree at Krohn Conservatory.