

## **LNS Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 8, 2021**

**Via Zoom**

### **Attendees (based on Zoom participant list):**

- **Present:** Mara Rus, Gabrielle Emanuel, Kate Brooks, Emily Lines, Laura Mellen, Abigail Flanagan, Greta Kaplan, Caroline Nordstrom, Katherine Ruhl, Emily Cardy, Anique Lebel, Mitch Brooks, Bryan Wynn, Lauren O'Neil, Kristie Fox
- **Absent:** Vickie Slingerland, Sasha Dages, Clint Cherco, Annie Magee,
- **Also Present:** Nancy Fincke, David Henry, Nathaniel Heald

### **President: Mara Rus**

- Welcome

### **Director's Update: Nancy Fincke (see full notes below)**

- Update on Studio Red Hours. Beginning in September, 2022, Studio Red will start their day at 8:30 and end their short days (Wednesday & Friday) at 12:30. An increase of 3.5 hours a week.
- Update on Masks: As some of you know, effective February 28th, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts discontinued its statewide mask mandate for all EEC-licensed and funded programs. We are working on assessing LNS's next steps with our COVID advisor.

### **Secretary: Gabrielle Emanuel**

- Approved Nov 16, 2021 meeting minutes. Mara Rus motions and Kate Brooks (and others) seconds

### **VP of Operations: Emily Lines**

#### **Nominating Process and Committee Preferences**

- It is now the time to do the nominating process for next year's board and figure out parent jobs. The first step is asking everyone to complete the job request form (emailed out 3/8/22, deadline end of the following week)

### **Gala Chair: Abby Flanagan**

#### **Gala 2022**

- You should have received a save the date for the gala on May 7<sup>th</sup> – it is an outdoor event with a tent

- We are looking for auction items. This year in the week leading up to the event there will be online auction items and sponsorship for local businesses. Auction items – doesn't need to be fancy. Could be something you put together yourself (like throwing a dinner party or an event for kids)
- Cost is higher given what we're doing and given COVID. We need to push fundraising efforts a bit more than past years

### **VP of Development: Kate Brooks**

#### **Recruiting and Retaining Educators in Early Childhood Presentation and Discussion (see full notes below and breakout session summary)**

- There is a workforce crisis in early childhood education that has only been accelerated by the pandemic
- LNS needs a plan to consistently recruit and retain exceptional teachers
  - Early-childhood education is critical, and it must be high-quality.
  - High-quality teaching is the most important aspect of high-quality early-childhood education
  - We've been lucky to have so many wonderful, long-tenured teachers for the past few decades. With some of these teachers retiring, we should be anticipating changes:
    - Competition from other fields (fewer people becoming teachers)
    - Competition from public programs (universal pre-k / public elementary)
    - Changing professional norms (change jobs more frequently)
  - The average preschool teaching salary in MA is \$36,000. The average Concord Public school teacher salary is \$110,000. Lincoln is \$94,000. The preschool field is losing many highly skilled teachers to the public school system.
  - We believe that our Reggio inspired philosophy with its emergent curriculum is part of what makes LNS a high quality program. Teachers with the skills and background to facilitate this type of education are in high demand.

### **Call for Updates/Questions**

- Anique Lebel: With the café now opened, she's reached out about, getting 4 dates when the studio can be open at drop off time and each studio can gather together for a coffee. Likely end of March/before April break
- Laura Mellen: LNS is at pretty much fully enrolled for next year, might be a space or two in Studio Red. So, if you know others interested in a year before kindergarten, please send them our way.

### **Treasurer: Bryan Wynn**

#### **Budget Approval (Executive Session; only open to members of the board)**

**\*\*\*\* FULL NOTES PROVIDED BY RPRESENTERS**

**Director's Update: Nancy Fincke**

**1. Studio Red Hours**

Beginning in September 2022, Studio Red will start their day at 8:30 and end their short days (Wednesday & Friday) at 12:30. An increase of 3.5 hours a week. The morning co-teaching team will be responsible for the Pre-K/K curriculum for 4 hours (8:30-12:30) An afternoon co-teaching team will be with the children on the long days (M, T & Th) from 12:30 -3:00 for lunch, rest and program enrichment. Early Arrival will be available from 8:00-8:30.

2. As some of you know, effective February 28th, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts discontinued its statewide mask mandate for all EEC-licensed and funded programs. Programs were told to refer to their local boards of health or municipality to determine if there is any indoor mask mandate in place that applies to child care facilities. Lincoln still has an indoor mask mandate. Lincoln Board of Health meets on March 9 to review this.

As before, the EEC also reiterated that programs may develop policies for their facilities. We are working on assessing LNS's next steps with our COVID advisor.

**Recruiting and Retaining Educators in Early Childhood**

Presentation adapted from Charlestown Nursery School within the context of LNS

**Overview:**

- There is a workforce crisis in early childhood education that has only been accelerated by the pandemic
- LNS needs a plan to consistently recruit and retain exceptional teachers
  - Early-childhood education is critical, and it must be high-quality.
  - High-quality teaching is the most important aspect of high-quality early-childhood education
  - We've been lucky to have so many wonderful, long-tenured teachers for the past few decades. With some of these teachers retiring, we should be anticipating changes:
    - Competition from other fields (fewer people becoming teachers)
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- The average preschool teaching salary in MA is \$36,000. The average Concord Public school teacher salary is \$110,000. Lincoln is \$94,000. The preschool field is losing many highly skilled teachers to the public school system.
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### **Early-childhood education is critical, and it must be high-quality.**

0-5 is a pivotal time for brain development

- A child's brain develops more, and more rapidly than at any other time in life.
- The brain is most flexible and adaptable during the earliest years of life making it a critical period for learning and growth.
- The relationships and opportunities for learning in the first five years establish a foundation for all future learning and are integral to who we become.

What does high-quality look like?

- Play based with a focus on social emotional learning
- Motivation, self-regulation, problem solving and communication are formed in these early years – or not formed. It's much harder for these essential brain connections to be formed later in life.
- Tennessee study
  - Focus on academics too early to the detriment of critical social emotional skills

### **High-quality teaching is the most important aspect of high-quality early-childhood education**

- The most important school related factor influencing student achievement is teacher quality.
- A well-trained and highly skilled teacher tailors their interactions to fit the needs of each child—asking open ended questions, using responsive language, scaffolding their learning, fostering independence, and creating a language-rich environment.
- At LNS, because we have an emergent curriculum, our teachers are building the curriculum around the interests of the children. We know children learn best when motivated, when they're curious. The teachers are asking questions to discover the children's ideas and theories and then learning and researching alongside them. They're skilled at creating a community in the studio and helping children work through the conflict and frustration they may encounter as part of a group. And they aren't just thinking of each child in isolation—they're thinking of

them in relation to the family, with the other children, with the environment of the school, and the wider society.

- This all takes time and it takes skill.

## **Workforce Crisis in Early Childhood Education**

- We've been lucky to have so many wonderful, long-tenured teachers for the past few decades. With some of these teachers retiring, we should be anticipating changes:

§ Competition from other fields (fewer people becoming teachers)

25% of teachers leaving the field

Factors:

- Low wages: 35% of teachers live below the poverty line
- Can make more at Amazon or babysitting
- Benefit needs have increased
- High Inflation
- Cost of higher education
- Student loans and debt
- Teacher training programs closing

§ Competition from public programs (universal pre-k / public elementary)

- Average preschool teacher salary in Massachusetts: \$36,000
- Average childcare worker salary in Massachusetts: \$29,000
- Average public school teacher salaries (2019):
  - Concord: \$110,665
  - Lincoln: \$93,180
  - Boston: \$105,235
  - Cambridge: \$94,947

· Public schools are also experiencing a teacher shortage. Many are waiving licensing requirements. Public schools are recruiting and hiring preschool teachers. If you graduate with student loans and could make \$40,000 at a preschool or \$90,000 at a public school, it's an easy decision.

§ Changing professional norms (change jobs more frequently)

## **What are LNS's priorities?**

- We want our teachers to be happy, mentally and physically healthy, and able to focus on the important work with young children.
- We need to prioritize attracting and retaining high-quality educators in a competitive market.
- We've made gains in teacher salary and benefits the past few years
  - § Raised salaries

- § Increase health benefit stipend
- § Now offer 50% reduced tuition for children of teachers
- § Looking into a 401K matching program
- We are still a long way off from the public school salaries; however, LNS offers other things that many candidates find appealing: smaller classes, more planning time, not “teaching to the test” more freedom, more collaboration.

### **Breakout groups:**

#### **Prompts**

- What skills and qualities does an exceptional preschool educator possess?
- What do you value most about your child’s education at LNS?

#### **Summaries**

- **Katherine Ruhl:** We can tell the teachers value the students as part of the community. They are really paying attention to what’s happening in the classroom
- **Emily Cardy:** LNS has respect for children as not just cute but as whole human being that are worthy of equal respect to what we give adults.
- **Anique Lebel:** We love seeing the language that the teacher uses and how it is displayed through the classroom and in documentation. Teachers help support parents, and the language translates into the home.
- Question about teacher salaries.

**Kate Brooks:** teacher salary and benefits make up 80% of our budget. It doesn’t leave much room for other things. Salaries hover between \$45-70k and LNS has worked hard to get to those higher numbers. Much of the range is due to number of days you are working and which program you are in.