

LNS Board Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2023 (First Meeting of the 2023-24 Board)
In Person

Attendees:

- **Present:** Emily Lines, Raleigh Werner, Kate Brooks, Jenny Rogers, Andrew Zhang, Liz Curtis-Bey, Abigail Flanagan, Akemi Martin, Anique Lebel, Andrew West, Nancy Fincke, Katherine Ruhl, Caroline Fiore, Greta Kaplan, Colleen Bixby, Christina Hempton, Laura Mellen
- **Absent:** Brian Wynn, Aidan Flanagan, Vickie Slingerland
- **Also present:** Paula Hinchliffe, Matthew Pescatore, Candice Pearson

President: Emily Lines

Welcome and Thank You

- Steering Committee wants to encourage community members to be part of meetings
- See attached PDF for full President's notes

Director: Nancy Fincke

Start of School Updates

See attached PDF for full Director's Report

2023-24 LNS Board of Directors

Board Goals Discussion

(see attached PDF of slides)

- All Board members were invited to share a goal for their committee / program area. President (Emily Lines)
 - Director (Nancy Fincke)
 - Budget & Finance (presented by Emily Lines in Bryan's place)
 - Onboarded new Investment Advisor
 - DE&I (Andrew West)
 - Request for recommendations of DE&I events in locations around LNS that the community can benefit from
 - Discussion around ways to bring more inclusive language into classrooms (and community outreach)
 - Discussion of DEIB ("B" standing for "Belonging") – an emerging addition to DEI
 - Discussion of implementing a vendor policy (i.e. woman-owned businesses, etc.)
 - Development (Kate Brooks)
 - Discussion around giving from "graduating" families. Recent focus has been on reserving funds from outgoing families for financial assistance.

- Enrollment (Laura Mellen)
 - Reminder of the LNS Open House on October 14th. Request for volunteers & participation.
 - Discussion around the major schedule and programmatic changes from 2022-23 year.
- Programs (Jenny Rogers)

See attached PDF for board goals slides.

President: Emily Lines

2023-2028 Strategic Plan Overview

(see attached PDF of slides)

- A few major considerations as part of backdrop to strategic planning:
 - Some teachers may retire in the next few years
 - Securing long-term lease with deCordova
- Review of the strategic planning purpose and process, including engaging with an outside consultant, gathering community and stakeholder input
- Topics discussed:
 - Teacher Recruitment & Retention
 - Cooperative (“Co-Op”) Model
 - Enrollment
 - Tuition & Tuition Assistance
 - Budgeting & Finance
- Question around timing of roll-out and sharing with LNS community. The plan is in the final stages of development and will be shared with community in coming weeks.

See attached PDF for Strategic Plan slides.

Presentation & Conversation: Rethinking Our Governance Structure

ACTION: Consider a consolidated board – gather input over next several weeks, present to Board in late October, vote at Nov board meeting

Comments about structure of board and steering committee

- Typically successful boards are 8-9 people; avoid having too many people
- We discussed the possibility of ad hoc members who are not steering – their roles and frequency of attendance need to be fleshed out
- There could be 7-8 members who can commit one day a month for day-to-day decisions (on top of community meetings)
- If we can wipe the current steering committee clean and repopulate, who should we include? President, VP, Enrollment, development, programs, community chair, treasury(?), Consider looking at other boards of co-ops (caution against generalizing too much since our case is quite specific)
- Consider alumni engagement? Other external advisors?

Feedback specific to Steering committee

- Overall comments: Steering length of term – balancing act between people who develop expertise in a role over several years vs. getting more people involved at that level
- Suggestion: President and VP fixed to 2 year terms with 1 year overlap to allow people to step up and others to hand the role to someone else
- Provide opportunities for people who are interested in stepping up to be seen and test the waters – have some flexibility on who other people are i.e. they don't have to be a chair or have set roles, but simply someone who can commit and contribute (1 year)
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Comments about meeting structures

Community meeting / engagement

- Community / Co-op Meetings could have pre-reads, which mean some time commitment beforehand but would make meetings run more efficiently with decisions made. Invite people from committees to report in on an as needed basis.
- Call meetings “community meetings” to be more inclusive and social – potentially make the first 20 minutes a time to gather and socialize informally
- 3 per year
- Suggestion: Incentives for attending – ideas around checking off shifts for duties for attending meetings; build on good food at meetings, people, camaraderie, and community (remember this is what people care about)
- Suggestion: Need mechanism to get feedback from community but not in board meeting which needs to be decision making, including window to submit new ideas that are not part of agenda
- Important conversations about school happen in board meetings (budget, teacher behind the scene) should be distributed to community for transparency

Comments about parent commitment

- Try more 1-to-1 encouragements to participate
- Need to balance accountability and privacy
- Diversify type of contributions – provide an hour-based commitment that includes studio commitment and parent job commitment combination, allowing for flexibility in the type of contribution as long as total commitment is met.

Closing ideas:

- Typically a board's responsibility is ensuring the organization is being managed effectively (is the organization wisely using its assets? Is the organization acting in accordance with its mission? Is it following local laws and regulations?)
- In most other independent schools that aren't co-ops, there are paid positions for Enrollment, Development, Operations, etc. At LNS those are volunteer roles filled by steering positions. This complicates how to think of a "board" in our case.

ACTIONS: (1) people may need a reminder about choosing two people that will consistently be the partner (doesn't have to be the parents but need to be the same two people); (2) Good time

to provide people with a reminder of what a co-op is, benefits, and responsibilities. Need to provide tangible benefits that every member can expect to get out.

****** FULL NOTES PROVIDED BY PRESENTERS**

See attached PDF.