

Mountain West Montessori Academy Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 24, 2026



Location: MWMA Library, 4125 W. Foxview Drive, South Jordan, UT 84009

In Attendance: Steve Barnes (via Zoom), Corbin White (via Zoom – 6:25 p.m. in person), Sheri Ebert (via Zoom, Nelson Altamirano, Gimenia Palmer (6:17 p.m. via Zoom),

Excused: Andrew Marx,

Others in Attendance: Angie Johnson, Dawn Kawaguchi (via Zoom), Cathie Hurst (via Zoom), Priscilla Stringfellow (via Zoom), Brandon Fairbanks (via Zoom), Coleen Dolan, Rebecca Akester,

Founded upon Montessori philosophy, the mission of Mountain West Montessori Academy is to facilitate student-centered learning and intellectual curiosity through an individualized and interdisciplinary curriculum, hands-on experience, and community involvement.

MINUTES

2025-2026 BOARD PRIORITIES

Expand Mathematics, Pedagogy & Fidelity
Educate Stakeholders and Community about Montessori education
Develop Artificial Intelligence Policies & Procedures

6:12 PM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- Call to Order – Steve Barnes
- School Mission – Sheri

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Dave Powell announced that MWMA had eight students qualify at the FBLA state competition to compete at the FBLA Nationals this summer. Cesar Agra Sanchez shared that he has qualified for Nationals in two events: exploring economics and a team coding project. Cesar stated that this is his first-year competing. Mr. Powell discussed the costs associated with attending Nationals along with sharing some handouts with estimated trip costs. He also requested help from the Board in finding sponsors or funding. Mr. Powell added that these students have grown so much with the experience they have gained through competing on the state level. The group agreed to discuss potential support for the students during the next board meeting.
- Rebecca Akester provided an update on the upcoming musical performance, stating they have 12 more rehearsals before performing. “You are going to cry!”
- This was the second public comment period for the 2026-2027 School Fee Schedule and Proposed Amended Fee Waiver Policy.

REPORTS

➤ Administration

- *State of the School* – Angie Johnson presented the Director's report, highlighting priorities including expanding mathematics, pedagogy, and fidelity, educating stakeholders about Montessori, and incorporating AI policies. She shared updates from the recent AMS National Conference in Washington D.C., where 24 teachers attended, though there were housing challenges due to mice in one rental property. Angie discussed insights from a conference session on grace and courtesy, emphasizing that inner grace comes first, followed by outward expressions of courtesy, and she plans to share these concepts with teachers and review the Grace and Courtesy curriculum for both students and adults. The musical performance of Maria Montessori the Musical was mentioned, with Angie inviting board members to attend and offering free tickets. Angie presented the *Gifted and Talented Plan*, including a \$9,306 state grant and current program details with 54 identified students. She explained their strategy to increase identification opportunities for historically underrepresented students through broad screening practices and multiple measures of identification, particularly by giving full screening to borderline first-grade students from underrepresented groups. The plan includes screening all first-grade students and providing professional development for teachers to identify gifted and talented students more effectively. The discussion focused on the school's screening process for identifying gifted students, particularly those from underrepresented groups. Angie explained that students from these groups who score near the cutoff are given the full battery test to ensure no students are missed, while the overall process aims to be free of bias. The conversation then shifted to the Land Trust expenditures plan, where Angie reported increased funding compared to the previous year, with allocations including \$30,000 for reading staffing, \$28,000 for math interventions, and \$28,000 for professional development opportunities including conferences and Montessori certification. Angie presented a student performance analysis of the Acadience reading assessment for grades K-3, showing improvements from beginning to middle of year, with kindergarten increasing from 72% to nearly 90% on benchmark and first grade improving from 72% to 80%. They set end of year goals to increase those scores from the middle of year. This month's strength was highlighted that 83% of teachers attended a conference in Washington D.C., despite some being unable to attend due to maternity leave. Angie also noted that a challenge right now is TIME. There have been time constraints due to accreditation, Title I monitoring, and change management activities taking up administrative time rather than implementation time.

➤ Board of Directors

- *Financial Update* – Cathie Hurst presented a financial summary showing the organization is on track with revenue, though federal funding is lower due to limited grant applications. She explained that expenses are under budget, with higher costs attributed to USIMS integration compliance and the AMS conference. Cathie noted that property expenses appear high due to the Nook Pod equipment, which must be capitalized. Steve expressed approval of receiving financial summaries in advance.

BOARD TRAINING

- Annual Open & Public Meetings Act Training – Brandon Fairbanks asked that we table this item until the next board meeting. He also teased that there will be prizes involved so study up.

CONSENT ITEMS

- January 26, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the consent items. Sheri Ebert seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**
 - Steve Barnes – Aye
 - Gimena Palmer – Aye
 - Nelson Altamirano – Aye
 - Sheri Ebert – Aye
 - Corbin White – Aye**Motion passed unanimously.**

VOTING ITEMS

- 2026-2027 School LAND Trust Plan – There was no further discussion as Angie Johnson reported on this in her director's report. **Corbin White made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 School LAND Trust Plan. Nelson Altamirano seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**
 - Steve Barnes – Aye
 - Gimena Palmer – Aye
 - Nelson Altamirano – Aye
 - Sheri Ebert – Aye
 - Corbin White – Aye**Motion passed unanimously.**
- 2026-2027 School Fee Schedule – Angie Johnson presented the 2026-2027 school fee schedule. Changes included adding AP Human Geography exam fee, removing fees for dance and PE electives, digital and business electives, and adding FBLA fees. Angie explained these changes were made to make fees more cost-effective for parents. **Corbin White made a motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Fee Schedule. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**
 - Steve Barnes – Aye
 - Gimena Palmer – Aye
 - Nelson Altamirano – Aye
 - Sheri Ebert – Aye
 - Corbin White – Aye**Motion passed unanimously.**
- Amend Fee Waiver Policy – Priscilla Stringfellow reviewed the amended Fee Waiver Policy which are in respect to the legislative changes. She explained that this policy now has two categories: non-fee classes (required subjects like math and science) and fee classes (electives), with a requirement that at least one fee-free path must be available for students to complete the entire program (up to grade 12). **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the Amended Fee Waiver Policy. Corbin White seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Sheri Ebert – Aye
Corbin White – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Administration of Medication Policy – Priscilla Stringfellow reviewed the amended Administration of Medication Policy noting key changes including staff being allowed to administer glucagon to diabetic students after training and updates to emergency medication procedures. There was a discussion on school’s having a nurse on staff. **Nelson Altamirano made a motion to approve the Amended Administration of Medication Policy. Corbin White seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Sheri Ebert – Aye
Corbin White – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Helpside Professional Employer Agreement Renewal – Brandon Fairbanks stated that Helpside has been the PEO for the school since the beginning. Helpside provides payroll services and liability protection. The five-year term is up and needs to be renewed. Brandon explained that no changes were made to the agreement or rates although the benefit costs usually increase each year. **Sheri Ebert made a motion to approve the Professional Employer Agreement with Helpside. Gimena Palmer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Sheri Ebert – Aye
Corbin White – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Calendaring – ALL
- Maria Montessori The Musical will be held on Friday, April 17 @ 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Friday, April 18 @ 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.
 - Next Pre-Board Meeting – May 5th @ 11:45 a.m.
 - Next Board Meeting – There was a discussion on making this an offsite retreat. Reschedule time and place on May 18th at Corbin’s family cabin in Oakley from 3-5 p.m. for a Strategic Planning board meeting and then dinner around 6-6:30 p.m.

There was CLOSED SESSION.

7:14 PM – Corbin White made a motion to ADJOURN. Nelson Altamirano seconded the motion.