MOUNTAIN SUNRISE ACADEMY

Board of Directors — Leadership Retreat

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, July 31, 2026

Time: Called to order at 9:06 AM; adjourned at 4:12 PM (Mountain Time)

Location: 3130 West Maple Loop Drive, Lehi, Utah

Board Members Present: Carlos VacaGuzman, Emilee Krupa, Ryan Larson, Tayler Palfreyman

Board Members Absent: Steve Southwick

Others Present: Emily Merchant (facilitator), Shannon Greer(Utah Charters), Patrick Freeman, Jake Backues, Lybbie Pavlowich

Minutes Recorded By: Tayler Palfreyman, Board Secretary

9:06 AM — Call to Order

The Board leadership retreat was called to order at 9:06 AM with a quorum of Board members present.

9:08 AM — Introductions and Intentions

Emily Merchant led introductions. Each participant shared what they were bringing to the retreat, their hopes and intentions for the day, and their hopes and dreams for the school, including what drew them to serve on the Board and in education.

9:40 AM — Grounding Activity

Emily Merchant led the group through grounding eurythmy movement exercises.

9:47 AM — School History and Key Accomplishments

Carlos VacaGuzman and Tayler Palfreyman presented a brief history of the school and highlighted key accomplishments from the past year, including the growth of the school, the hiring of a director positioned to lead the school to success, the strength of the Board, the best teacher retention to date, and the trust built within the community.

9:57 AM — Waldorf Education, Threefold Social Order, and Stages of Organizational Development

Emily Merchant presented a review of Waldorf education, the Threefold Social Order, and stages of organizational development. The presentation covered the picture of the human being honored in Waldorf education, how the developmental approach informs curriculum and pedagogy, and the holistic form of education addressing thinking, feeling, and willing — head, heart, and hands.

10:12 AM — “Where Are We” Activity

Emily Merchant led the group through a “Where are we” activity, including a 4D mapping exercise. Discussion topics included what Mountain Sunrise Academy is, how the group functions as a team, the school's priorities and principles, the idea of balance, and the tension between form and content felt in every Waldorf school.

10:55 AM — Break

11:16 AM — Review of Goals from the Previous Year

Carlos VacaGuzman led a review of the previous year's goals and director objectives, with a focus on establishing measurable goals using the SMART model. Three goals were reviewed:

- **Goal 1:** Strengthen community connection and engagement — build a sense of unity, starting from within; if the community is strengthened, other areas will naturally improve.
- **Goal 2:** Elevate educational quality and holistic growth — Waldorf-aligned education that nurtures both academic and human development, with a focus on teacher quality and curriculum.
- **Goal 3:** Prepare every student for lifelong success — MSA students will develop the academic, social, and emotional competencies needed for success in their next stages of life.

11:30 AM — Discussion: Goals Alignment and High-Level Priorities

The Board discussed alignment of goals and high-level priorities for the year, agreeing to keep the goals as general guiding principles with high-level clarity.

12:09 PM — Board–Leadership Communication

Shannon presented on board–leadership communication and growing great governance. Topics included clarifying the Board's role in governing, strengthening commitment to exceptional governance through the APPLE principles, and a governance framework based on Governing for Greatness. Key themes: great boards hold themselves and the school accountable by asking questions that matter, protect the charter agreement, stay focused on the future by monitoring progress and leading with vision, and practice leadership rather than management.

12:48 PM — Lunch

1:36 PM — Discussion: Leadership Norms and Agreements for the Year

Emily Merchant led a discussion on leadership norms and agreements, focusing on communication practices that support the group's goals. Agreements and themes included: assume positive intent; give and receive feedback with openness through efficient feedback structures; build trust within processes and expectations; invest time in communication and meetings so information is delegated efficiently; ensure the right people attend committee meetings, with the Board Chair and Director joining PCC meetings; foster a culture of transparency and accountability; and build culture through consistent messaging over time, following a three-year rhythm — the first year the story and expectation are told, the second year retold, and by the third year it becomes culture.

2:14 PM — Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Training

Shannon led the Open and Public Meetings Act training. The training covered:

- **Purpose:** the purpose of OPMA is to ensure the actions and deliberations of public bodies are conducted openly, fostering transparency. The school is a public body supported by taxpayer money.
- **Definition of a meeting:** any time a simple majority (quorum) of the Board gathers to discuss, receive public comment on, or act upon school matters.

- **Notice requirements:** post in two locations — the school website and the building — with the public notice website as good practice; notice must include a specific date, time, and place with an agenda of topics.
- **Electronic meetings:** adopt a resolution or rule governing electronic meetings, provide public notice that a meeting will be held electronically, and provide an anchor location.
- **Agenda requirements:** the public body's name; meeting date, time, and location; reasonably specific agenda items; instructions for public participation if held electronically; and opportunity for public comment where required. Only topics listed on the agenda may be considered for final action.
- **Records:** an audio recording of all open meetings is required; the recording and approved minutes must be posted within three business days (public notice website / school website), and written draft minutes must be publicly available within a reasonable time after the meeting.
- **Closed meetings:** permissible reasons include discussion of an individual's character, competence, or health; strategy sessions for collective bargaining or pending litigation; discussions regarding the acquisition of real property; and security personnel or systems (see Utah Code for additional reasons). Closing a meeting requires a two-thirds roll call vote of members present, with the specific statutory reason stated and recorded in the minutes. No votes or actions may be taken in or coming out of a closed session.
- **Best practices:** err on the side of openness and transparency, correct any OPMA violation at the next Board meeting, use committees, encourage parents to attend, document everything, hold regular trainings, and stay updated on legislative changes.

3:14 PM — Break

3:22 PM — Committee Structure and Assignments

Carlos VacaGuzman led a discussion of the four proposed Board committees, aligned with the head, heart, and hands of the school: the Governance Committee (head), the School Performance Committee (heart), the Development and Strategic Planning Committee (hands), and the Finance and Audit Committee (the Board's fiscal responsibility). The vision is for each committee chair to update the full Board at every Board meeting, with written committee minutes distributed for review before Board meetings so members arrive informed and able to ask specific questions. The goal for the retreat was to select a chair for each committee, with committee formation to continue afterward.

3:38 PM — Governance Committee: It was advised that the Vice Chair serve as chair of this committee as a future training opportunity. Carlos VacaGuzman was selected as chair, with Emily Merchant serving on the committee.

3:45 PM — School Performance Committee: Emilee Krupa was selected as chair, with Tayler Palfreyman as the second Board member; Joe and Jessie were identified as possible teacher members. The committee's name was Suggested to change to the Culture and Performance Committee.

3:48 PM — Development and Strategic Planning Committee: Ryan Larson was selected as chair, with Jake Backues as the second member. The Finance and Audit Committee was amended to be a subcommittee of this committee.

4:12 PM — Adjournment

The retreat concluded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 PM. No formal action was taken; items requiring approval will be brought to the next regular Board meeting.