

Mountain West Montessori Academy Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Monday, October 12, 2026

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



In Attendance: Steve Barnes, Nelson Altamirano, Robin Strup Koski, Gimenia Palmer, Tabitha Hemperly,

Excused: Corbin White,

Others in Attendance: Coleen Dolan, Angie Johnson, Cathie Hurst, Dawn Kawaguchi, Brandon Fairbanks, 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

2026-2027 BOARD PRIORITIES

Strengthen Mathematics Instruction
Advance Artificial Intelligence Integration

6:02 PM – INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- Call to Order – Steve Barnes
- School Mission – Nelson Altamirano
- Montessori Mastery – Rebecca Akester presented a Montessori lesson on peace education and how she helps the students develop empathy in kindergarten.

There was no PUBLIC COMMENT.

REPORTS

➤ Administration

- State of the School – Angie Johnson began with reviewed the board goals and priorities. She discussed teaching strategies for math education, including a lesson about identifying which shape doesn't belong in a series, emphasizing the importance of multiple perspectives and justification in problem-solving. Angie explained the implementation of essential math standards for fourth grade and described how these standards are used to identify and address gaps in student understanding through targeted intervention groups. Angie also introduced two new math interventionists, Ms. Serena and Ms. Leah, who are working with different levels of students to support their mathematical development. Angie moved on to AI integration in education, sharing how she used ChatGPT to automatically generate a professional development presentation on AI use in schools. She outlined three AI tools used at her school - ChatGPT, Gemini within Google

Classroom, and NotebookLM - and discussed responsible AI use practices including data safety and non-negotiables for teachers. Angie also described an upcoming AI and School Leadership Collaborative program run by UEN, which her team will participate in to learn more about AI implementation in schools. Angie discussed recent school events including field trips to the planetarium and space simulator, middle school camp activities in Heber, and a successful fun run fundraiser that raised \$20,000. She highlighted challenges with abstract work instruction, noting that children develop abstract thinking skills at different ages and not all students are ready for the abstract concepts required on state tests.

- ✓ **Amended Religion & Education Administrative Procedures** – Angie reviewed the amended Religion and Education Administrative Procedures which added language to allow students to express their religious beliefs in homework and assignments while maintaining non-discrimination requirements..

➤ **Board of Director**

- Financial Update – Cathie Hurst provided a financial update indicating the School is 25% through the year, with state funding tracking closely to legislative estimates and local funding slightly ahead due to higher interest rates and early fee collections. The financial statement shows that the PTIF is \$632,000 over the prior year. Cathie explained the process for determining how much money should be transferred to the higher-interest PTIF account after the audit is complete.

BOARD TRAINING

- Annual Open & Public Meetings Act Training – Brandon Fairbanks began training the board on the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act requirements, noting that public bodies must receive this training annually. He led a session using Slido to conduct a "quiz like" activity where participants answered questions about the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act including information on GRAMA (Government Records Access Management Act) regulations regarding board meeting minutes, public meeting disclosure rules and board compliance, public comment period, best practices, closed session, recordings, meeting materials and voting majorities.

CONSENT ITEMS

- August 17, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes – There was no further discussion. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the consent items. Robin Strup Koski seconded the motion.**

The votes were as follows:

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

VOTING ITEMS

- Updated 401(k) Participation Agreement – Angie Johnson reviewed the updated 401(k) Participation Agreement that simplifies employer match calculations based on payroll periods rather than complex employee actions. **Nelson Altamirano made a motion to**

approve the updated 401(k) Participation Agreement and allow the Board President to sign on behalf of the school. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend TSSA Framework – Angie Johnson reviewed the amended TSSA Framework that includes new literacy achievement requirements mandated by state law. **Tabitha Hemperly made a motion to approve the Amended Teacher Student Success Act Framework. Gimania Palmer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Attendance Policy (Administrative Procedures) – Angie Johnson reviewed the amended Attendance Policy and Administrative Procedures. As the state focuses on attendance they have given schools actions to help coach and encourage attendance by implementing attendance monitoring and intervention practices. Angie reviewed the procedures that they do which includes new coaching procedures for parents, escalating consequences for truancy, and reporting vacation absences with consequences of including 20% of attendance to grades as well as possibly contacting DCFS. Angie added that there are also guidelines for excused absences, including requirements for sanctioned rodeos and other approved activities. There was a discussion on tardiness. **Robin Strup Koski made a motion to approve the Amended Attendance Policy. Tabitha Hemperly seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Enrollment & Lottery Policy – Angie Johnson reviewed the amended Enrollment & Lottery Policy regarding enrollment preferences and current laws governing the denial of student admission based on prior disciplinary actions and misconduct. She explained that students previously suspended or expelled from another school for serious misconduct may be denied admission until a thorough review is conducted by administration. Angie also mentioned that applicants must disclose past serious disciplinary actions and criminal convictions in their applications, and failure to disclose could result in enrollment being put under review. **Tabitha Hemperly made a motion to approve the Amended Enrollment & Lottery Policy. Robin Strup Koski seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Fee Waiver Policy – Angie Johnson reviewed the amended Fee Waiver Policy including fee waivers for school-sponsored trips under House Bill 142, which now limits students on fee waivers to two trips per school year with additional requirements for the second trip. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the Amended Fee Waiver Policy. Gimania Palmer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Capitalization & Expense Policy – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Capitalization & Expense Policy changing the threshold from \$5,000 to \$10,000. **Gimania Palmer made a motion to approve the Amended Capitalization and Expense Policy. Robin Strup Koski seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Financial Reporting Policy – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Financial Reporting Policy which corrected its reference to “Financial Accounting Standards Board” (FASB) to “Governmental Accounting Standards Board” (GASB)
- Amend Financial, Debt & Risk Management Plan – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Financial, Debt & Risk Management Plan.

Nelson Altamirano made a motion to approve the Amended Financial Reporting Policy and Amended Financial, Debt & Risk Management Plan. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimania Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye

Motion passed unanimously.

- Amend Procurement Policy – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Procurement Policy including new requirements for small purchases between \$5,000 and \$50,000, requirements for reviewing at least three vendors for service purchases, and specifications for using federal grant funds. **Steve Barnes made a motion to approve the Amended**

Procurement Policy. Tabitha Hemperly seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

- *Amend Student Conduct & Discipline Policy* – Brandon Fairbanks reviewed the amended Student Conduct & Discipline Policy which includes requirements for reintegration plans after serious offenses, updated physical standards for seclusion rooms, and new notification procedures. Angie added that MWMA does not have any seclusion rooms. **Gimena Palmer made a motion to approve the Amended Student Conduct & Discipline Policy. Steve Barnes seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:**

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- *Calendaring* – ALL
- Next Pre-Board Meeting on November 18th @ 5 p.m.
 - Next Board Meeting on November 30th [*Electronic – IF NEEDED*]
 - Holiday Social on December 14th @ 6 p.m. @ The Wild Rose
 - NCSC27 June 28-30 in Columbus, OH

7:51 PM – Gimena Palmer made a motion to enter a CLOSED SESSION to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual and to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property pursuant to Utah Code 52-4-205(1)(a) & (d) in the library. Nelson Altamirano seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows:

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye
Nelson Altamirano – Aye**

Motion passed unanimously.

Angie Johnson and Coleen Dolan were excused at 8:23 p.m.

8:57 PM – Steve Barnes made a motion to exit the CLOSED SESSION and ADJOURN. Gimena Palmer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows:

**Steve Barnes – Aye
Gimena Palmer – Aye**

Nelson Altamirano – Aye
Robin Strup Koski – Aye
Tabitha Hemperly – Aye
Motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT

Mountain West Montessori Academy

Board of Directors

Closed Session Statement

Monday, October 12, 2026

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



CLOSED SESSION SWORN STATEMENT:

*At a duly noticed public meeting held on the date listed above, the board of directors for **MOUNTAIN WEST MONTESSORI ACADEMY** entered into a closed session for the sole purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual in accordance with Utah Code Ann. 52-4-205(1)(a).*

I declare under criminal penalty under the law of Utah that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed on the 12th day of October, 2026, at South Jordan, Utah.


Steve Barnes
Board Chair