

Bylaws

Montessori Borealis Site Council

Purpose:

The purpose of the Montessori Borealis Site Council is to provide a forum for sharing the perspectives of the entire Montessori Borealis community through the participation of parents, teachers, and administrators, and providing each of those parties with a role in the decision-making process of the program.

This set of bylaws is to establish a set of rules and procedures under which the Montessori Borealis Site Council will function.

Scope of Responsibility:

In accordance with JSD Board policy 8140, items within the scope of the site council's authority include:

- Communications with parents, district administrators, and the school board

Provides a forum for parent input into program decision making. Communicates regularly with parents about program issues, their status, and potential decisions. Acts as a spokesperson for the Montessori Borealis program when responding to questions or concerns from district administrators or school board members.

- Program growth and priorities

Makes recommendations to district administration and school board regarding the program's desires for growth (or not) and the relative priority of different alternatives.

- Public relations and enrollment

Works with district staff on program publicity and recruitment; works with district administration on enrollment issues

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- Facilities and transportation

Represents Montessori program in discussion with other schools, district administration, and school board regarding facility or transportation issues

- Allocation of specialist time

Provides input into decision-making regarding the allocation of specialists and classes

- Coordination with other schools and programs

Works with parents, site councils, and staff at other schools to address areas of concern or improve relations

- Program enhancements

Evaluates existing or potential educational programs (such as Discovery Foundation, Art, or DARE) and makes recommendations about their use in the Montessori program

- Calendar and Program schedules

Provides input to district regarding proposed calendar and schedule changes and applicable administrator regarding changes to program daily schedule

- General behavioral issues

Provides a forum for discussion of general behavior issues; makes recommendations for changes to improve situation. Items appropriate for discussion by the site council could include issues such as the appropriate use of the high school turf field before or after school, interaction between Montessori and students from other schools on the bus or playground, etc.

- School safety issues

Receives input from parents, students, and staff regarding safety issues; makes recommendations for improvements

- Program-wide student assessment

Reviews summary student assessment reports and discusses potential changes to improve student achievement

- Hiring of new professional staff

Assists appropriate administrator in interviewing applicants for teaching or other professional positions

The site council's responsibility does not include participating in the day-to-day management of the program or the classrooms.

Membership:

The site council shall consist of 10 members. All members (other than the Assistant Superintendent, the public member, and the AMP student) must either be a parent of a child currently attending Montessori Borealis, or must be a teacher or other staff person working with the Montessori students. The member spots are allocated as follows:

- 1) The Assistant Superintendent
- 2) One Adolescent Teacher
- 3) One Elementary Teacher
- 4) One parent of an adolescent student
- 5) One parent of an elementary student
- 6) One parent of a special education student
- 7) One parent of a minority student
- 8) One parent who is serving as a representative of SEAFOM
- 9) One student currently enrolled in the adolescent program
- 10) One member of the public, who is not otherwise affiliated with the Montessori community. Examples of potential public members include current Harborview, Yaakoosge, or DZ Site Council members, or leaders of a community or group that is currently underrepresented in the program.
- 11) Other Montessori parent(s) or staff if needed to bring the total to 10. The spots for the public member and the minority representative will remain open until filled.

A parent may be counted in more than one of the above categories, as applicable. In accordance with board policy 8140, no more than four of the members may be school or program employees (the Assistant Superintendent is included among this four).

Elections of members for a school year occur in the spring of the previous school year.

Teacher members of the site council are elected by the full- and part-time employees of the Montessori program.

The SEAFOM representative is chosen by the SEAFOM board or membership.

The adolescent student member is voted on by the students in the adolescent program.

The public member may be recruited by any member of the Montessori Community. In the event that more than one person is interested in becoming the public member, the Assistant Superintendent will select a member from among the interested people.

Parent members of the site council are elected at large by parents with children enrolled in the Montessori program. Each parent (or custodial guardian or step-parent) with a child in the program gets one vote.

For the first year only, elections will be held in the fall, as soon as possible after adoption of the site council bylaws by the Board of Education.

Officers:

At the first meeting each fall, the site council shall elect a President and a Secretary, whose duties are as follows:

President:

- Develop the meeting agenda, with input from parents, Montessori teachers, and the Assistant Superintendent.
- Run each meeting, making sure that discussions stay on topic and each member has an opportunity for input, and helping to facilitate consensus.
- Serve as a contact person for district staff wishing to bring an item to the attention of the site council.

Secretary:

- Publicize the date, time, and location of each meeting to parents via email, a note sent home with students, or another method as approved by the site council.
- Publish and make available to parents the meeting agenda, at least two days before each meeting.

- Make notes of meeting discussions and decisions, and publish minutes in a format and location accessible to parents.

Term of Office:

Members other than the Assistant Superintendent and the adolescent student are elected to office for a term of two years, and may be reelected for additional terms.

The adolescent student representative serves a one-year term.

For the first year only, 5 members (not to include the assistant superintendent) will be selected randomly to serve one-year terms. This is to assure that term expirations are staggered.

If a member leaves the site council during a school year, the other parent or teacher members (as applicable), the SEAFOM board (for the SEAFOM representative), or the AMP students (for the student representative) may select a replacement to serve for the remainder of the school year *or* may elect to leave the spot open for the remainder of the school year. A new member will be elected at the next spring election. If a member leaves at the end of the school year, but before completing their term of office, the spot shall be filled during the regular spring election.

In both cases, the newly elected member will serve a two year term, unless the site council votes to have the spot filled for a one-year term, in order to avoid having a disproportionate number of members' terms expiring at the same time.

A parent member whose child leaves (or graduates from) the Montessori program and who no longer has a child in the program must resign their site council position. A teacher or staff representative who is no longer employed by the district to work with Montessori students must resign their position at the time their work with Montessori students ends.

Quorum:

For the purposes of making decisions at a site council meeting, a quorum is met when a minimum of 5 site council members are present, including at least 2 parents and 2 school staff (including the Assistant Superintendent).

Decision-making:

Whenever possible, site council decisions shall be made by consensus. Where consensus is impossible, decisions may be made by majority vote. When making a decision, members will:

- Define the issue or issues to be decided
- Seek out the thoughts and recommendations of those individuals who are most familiar with the issue
- Provide all interested parties an opportunity to be heard
- Discuss possible solutions to the problem or issue
- Come to a consensus as to the best solution
- Communicate the decision to the relevant individuals and groups
- Support the decision once it's made

It may be appropriate to designate a subcommittee of the site council to investigate an issue and recommend a solution (or solutions) before a decision is made by the council as a whole. Such subcommittees should be selected at a site council meeting, and should be representative of the membership.

Meeting dates and times:

The site council will meet at least monthly, at a regular meeting time and place determined by the site council at its initial fall meeting. The initial fall meeting will be scheduled by the site council the previous spring. Additional meetings may be necessary to discuss particular urgent topics. Such additional meetings will be publically announced ahead of time.

Meetings are open to the public. Where space permits, non-members who are attending meetings will be invited to sit at the table with members and participate in discussions, though they may not vote on issues.

Expectations of Site Council Members:

Site Council members are expected to:

- Attend site council meetings and notify the site council president if unable to attend

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- Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda and any materials sent out ahead of time, and making an effort to gather other information they feel is important or relevant
- Come to meetings in a spirit of cooperation, open-mindedness, commitment, a supportive attitude, and with no pre-arranged decisions and/or agreements
- Consider the interest of the Montessori Borealis program as a whole rather than a personal agenda

Amendment Process:

Recommendations for amending the Site Council Bylaws will follow the same process as all other issues brought before the Site Council