



# JUNEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Montessori Borealis Site Council

10014 Crazy Horse Drive • Juneau, Alaska 99801 • (907) 463-1700 • Fax: (907) 463-1963

**Date and Time of Meeting:** January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 8:00 – 10:15am, AMP Classroom

**Members Present:** Darla Madden, Alicia Smith, Stephanie Allison, Anastasia Tarmann, Cory Crossett (8:15), Debbie Chalmers, Adriana Bothelo

**Members Absent:** Barbara Thurston, Laury Scandling

**Guests:** Marion McQueen, Stephanie Kohlhasse, Sante Lesh, Lupita Alvarez, Robin MacDonald, Susan Erben

### **Pre-quorum discussion**

Stephanie Allison presented an AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) report for school year 2008-2009, one for grades 3-8 and one for grades 3-5 (testing does not begin until grade 3). The grades 1-8 report showed that 91% of the students were proficient in language arts and 85% were proficient in math. Stephanie A. explained that for funding purposes, Montessori students are included in Harborview (grades 1-6) or DZ (7 & 8). While the program is not usually looked at separately to determine AYP, Phil Loseby (Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator, JSD) provided the information upon request. Stephanie A. also explained that AYP breaks out subcategories of students, however cohorts less than 20 are not statistically sound and are not reported. The only subgroup for the 2008-2009 school year that was greater than 20 is Caucasian, which also had a proficiency of 91% in language arts and math was 89%.

Stephanie A. noted that this information would be presented to the JSD Budget Committee on February 17<sup>th</sup> in a packet of Montessori information.

### **JMS Board Presentation**

Stephanie Kohlhasse presented a position paper from the JMS Board. (See attached)

There was a discussion about the JMS kinders who met diversity targets not being identified. The SES (socio-economic-status) students are easily identified; however ESL (English Second Language) and failing to meet core students are not. Special education students are rarely identified in kindergarten and the IEP (individual education plan) process is lengthy (which is required to meet this diversity category).

There has been difficulty getting the JSD to provide the measurement tools required for the ESL and CORE targets. Although Homebridge personnel have been asked for the assessment tool, they have not provided. Homebridge does perform an initial assessment of kinders. Stephanie

A. suggested that the site council ask the district for the tool and have one of the lower elementary teachers perform assessments on all kinders.

There was a JMS kinder identified as ESL for this school year, the applicable paperwork was submitted with the application. For an unknown reason, the child was not considered a diversity candidate during the first lottery.

### **Discussion**

Stephanie A. noted that the site council had identified at the January 9, 2010 meeting the following options regarding the JS lottery:

1. Do nothing
2. Ask for non-substantive changes
3. Ask for substantive changes
4. Combo of above

Each of the voting members present was polled and a unanimous decision was reached. **The site council will ask for non-substantive changes (those that could be made without school board approval) and continue to move forward and plan for a request of substantive changes.**

Stephanie A. noted that once we have developed a list of requests, that information has to be discussed and approved by the other programs to which the lottery applies, JCCS (Juneau Community Charter School) and TLC (Tlingit Language Culture).

The following is a list of non-substantive changes that may be requested:

1. Add “under-represented” to lottery language
2. Ask the JSD for the tools to identify JMS kinders for ESL and CORE; ask that JSD follow those determinations and recognize our students that meet diversity categories.
3. Ask the JSD to follow the lottery procedures as written
  - a. Meeting the deadlines as written
  - b. Diversity targets could be met “within classroom” not by grade
  - c. Teacher notification of enrolled students
4. Items we would like JSD to change
  - a. August lottery is to be held after August registration, we’d like that to be one day after registration.
  - b. Teacher representation at the “lottery” itself
  - c. Change name from “Lottery” which implies randomness to “Enrollment Procedure”
  - d. Change second “lottery” term, since it really isn’t a lottery at all, names is pulled from the list.
  - e. Teachers determine at what grade there are openings, according to the design and sound pedagogical practices of a Montessori program as defined in the AMI training.

- f. JSD hire temporary assistance to relieve the overworked administrative assistant. Alternatively, since JCCS has classified staff, that person could run the lottery for the entire district.
- g. The JSD should ensure that procedures are clearly written to mean the same thing to every reader.
- h. All information should be available online

Items to consider for long-term planning:

- 1. JMS Kinders are part of the district, enrolled in Homebridge. Could this be interpreted as already in MB?
- 2. The JSD values peers in integrated preschool—same model applies to MB.

The next Site Council meeting on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, at 5:45 in the AMP classrooms. Stephanie asked that site council members review the relevant information so that the “non-substantive” list could be finished at that meeting. The goal is to get a document submitted to Laury Scandling by the end of February.

## **1-30-10, Stephanie Kohlhasse presenting JMS Board Opinion:**

**Thank you members of the site council for allowing our perspective to be heard. We understand that you have many important issues to juggle and also understand that this issue may require long-term management.**

### **JMS POSITION ON THE JSD LOTTERY FOR OPTIONAL PROGRAMS**

The Juneau Montessori Board of Directors strives to provide an authentic Montessori program to the Juneau Community. Our work at the toddler, preschool and kindergarten levels meet the standards established by the Association Montessori International. In fact, our non-profit school in Douglas has been accredited by them for the last 10 years. We would love to tell you more about JMS because it does so many great things, but this issue is larger than JMS...

As a Board, we believe that Montessori Education is a valuable option for many children and families, and we commend the Juneau School District for providing a public Montessori program at the elementary and adolescent levels.

We would like to encourage the Juneau School District to further support the Montessori Borealis program by protecting its integrity while implementing the lottery process for enrollment into this program.

~not only by acknowledging that the foundation of any Montessori program lies in the preschool component.

~but also by recognizing that children with prior Montessori experience, from anywhere in the world, entering at the elementary level are a resource that strengthens the overall program and should have a weighted preference to enter the Borealis program.

~This method of education is based upon a continuum where learning is built upon from year to year. As taken from The Whole School Montessori Handbook, "The preschool environment unifies the social, physical, and intellectual functioning of the child. Its important function is to provide the children with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security and a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, a habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their school career."

In our view, the success of the Montessori program represents a success for the Juneau School District.

Historically, most Juneau Montessori School children who have applied to Montessori Borealis have been able to enter this program.

This is in part because the Juneau Montessori School is becoming a diverse program whose children meet some of the district's diversity targets established for the current lottery.

However, the few children who have not been able to enter the program represent a loss for the Montessori Borealis program.

While we understand and support the Juneau School District goal to ensure that the Montessori Borealis program reflects the diversity of the district, we would like the JSD to consider restoring the Montessori preference to be applied after the under-represented diversity targets are met.

The Juneau Montessori School welcomes the opportunity to work with the Montessori Borealis Program, its newly formed Site Council, and the Juneau School District to ensure that the entire Montessori program, from toddler to adolescent, reflects the diversity of our community and that it is available to families who choose the Montessori Method of education for their children.