

MINUTES
Regular Governing Council Meeting
Aldo Leopold Charter School
March 7, 2024
5:30 PM

Ritch Hall 410 West 10th Street/In Person or Via Zoom teleconference

ALCS Mission: At Aldo Leopold Charter School, the human and natural environments serve as text and lab for learning through direct experience, inquiry, and stewardship.

ALCS Vision: Aldo Leopold Charter School graduates will use the skills, perspectives, and information they gain at school to enhance their own lives and to advance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

- I. Convene / roll call
 - GC Members present: Alex Tager, Alex Mac Kenzie, Sebastiano Marino, and Harry Browne
 - Others present: Hannah Wecks, Melissa Frost, Dr. Anthony Smith, Jennifer Bjornstad, Kelly Callahan (remote), and Will Tracy.
- II. Reading of the Mission and Vision
- III. Review of January regular, special, and February Meeting Minutes (action)
 - Alex Tager moves approval of all three sets of minutes with minor edits. Alex Mac Kenzie seconds the motion. Unanimous approval.
- IV. Agenda Review (action)
 - Alex Tager moves approval of the agenda with the addition of one BAR to item X. Sebastiano seconds. Unanimous approval.
- V. Public Comment – None.
- VI. Student Council report – None, since the Student Council representative is on the senior trip to Mexico.
- VII. Staff Report
 - Jennifer Bjornstad delivered the report on behalf of the staff.
 - Middle School visited the Expressive Arts Dept at WNMU; the staff there was fabulous.
 - They also did community service downtown, fixing up window boxes, painting bird houses, washing windows, and picking up trash: 200 pounds, in fact, not counting a very large amount collected in the Big Ditch. The mayor was on hand to appreciate the work.
 - Zack Tecca took a group of students to ENMU for a drama event. Three students were able to audition for admission to ENMU's drama school, and two were offered scholarships!
 - Nathan Shaw, Ray Cressler, and Ms. Bjornstad completed their WFR training.
 - 8th grade science did their annual Rube Goldberg projects.
 - Ms. Bjornstad's class had a nurse practitioner visit and peppered her with tons of questions – it was very positive.
 - The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was administered to 8th graders this year (it is administered to randomly selected schools in 5th, 8th, and 11th

grades each year). The visiting proctors reported that the students were very engaged and it went very smoothly.

- The Senior Class is in San Carlos, Mexico for the week. It was a huge, huge undertaking. This is the class that was in 8th grade when Covid hit, so it's extra special they can make this trip.
- The 9th graders in Molly's class are making posters of what makes up a biome. They *love* Molly – she was a great hire!
- Middle School is going on an overnight backpacking trip to the Sapillo next week. They'll be in three separate camps about .5, 1, and 1.5 miles in from the road.

VIII. Report from Will Tracy- Risk Management

- Mr. Tracy directs Western's Outdoor Experience program, which he has made far more active than it ever has been. He also runs a private business consulting with organizations on their outdoor education programs. He has prepared an outline of services he could provide Aldo. He believes the school has got an excellent program run by folks who are not necessarily outdoor professionals. He thinks it is really important to conduct training for these staffers out in the field, not just in school, and he proposes to do just that. He described his experience in outdoor education programs (for details see his written proposal).

Hannah mentioned that she and Will have discussed a number of specific tasks he could take on, including leading a staff backpacking trip in the Gila. It would be for three days and two nights, and Hannah is polling the staff to gauge interest. It would be paid training for staff.

Several GC members expressed support for this idea. Hannah and Melissa will put their heads together about funding for the contract.

IX. Strategic Plan

- Goal Manager Reports
 - Addressing the Poms report on our facility in ongoing
 - Rita has been heading up the Equity Council and conducted a survey of students. Anthony will work with her to draft an Equity Plan for PED.

X. Business Manager Report

- Experiential Education Costs FY 23-24 – the latest data indicates our Exp. Ed. expenditures this year will be around \$1.1 million.
- BAR #16
 - ESSER III funding has been redistributed, and we'll be getting an additional \$81,708 that must be spent by June 30. Part will be spent on new, quieter window heating/cooling units to replace the ones we bought with ESSER I funding back in 2020.
- BAR #17
 - Social Emotional Learning: \$32,100 in new funding for supplies, benefits (not allowed to pay salaries), and contractual services. There's a firm that provides services to families, connecting them to health and mental health services, helping them negotiate insurance, telehealth options, etc. Alex M and Harry suggested these funds could be used to pay for Will Tracy's contract; Hannah and Melissa will look into this.
- BAR #18
 - Rural and Low-Income Schools: \$13,817 that Melissa wants to use to pay part of the art teacher's salary.

XI. Director's Report

- A new rule from PED will cut into how much professional development and collaborative time we can give our staff. It requires schools have at least 180 full instructional days no matter how many hours of instruction are provided. We have typically had more than enough hours with 176 (or so) school days, including days on which we start late for collegial conversations or other PD. So we're looking to lose four PD days and all of our collegial conversations.

Kelly Callahan chimed in that all school administrators are upset about this rule. She hopes charter schools will explore the possibility of getting waivers of this requirement along the lines of the waivers we get for staffing patterns. The rationale, Hannah explained, is that more student time in seats is better. Quality teaching, collaboration, etc., are not valued.

XII. Old Business:

- Kelly Callahan (KCPS/NMPCS)- Discussion of Policy Handbooks and GC Training Report
 - Kelly has conducted a policy review for us, checking to see if we have all needed policies, if they are current, and what you need to fill in the gaps. She has sent the report to Hannah, who has distributed it to members of the Policy Committee. She believes ours are among the strongest policies of any school she's worked with. Our Special Ed section is especially strong. We are missing some things that many schools are missing corresponding to recent legislation. We have probably 98% of the policies we are required to have. She has sent us all the sample policies. She clarified that the ones she sent are all of the ones that the GC needs to approve—anything she didn't send is NOT a policy the GC needs to approve.

Policy Committee will be meeting on March 22 to continue its work.

XIII. New business

- a) Annual Emergency Medication Forms – There were no comments about this.

XIV. Governing Council Input – Harry asked if all GC members had received Aldo's annual PED report. Yes, they have. Will we have a chance to discuss it? Yes, we'll put it on next month's agenda.

XV. Action Items:

- Annual Emergency Medication Forms : Sebastiano moved approval. ?? seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - Vote on Jim Macintosh to join GC April 2024 to fill the remainder of Jon Walker's term: Alex T moved approval, Harry seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - BAR #16 - 532-000-2324-0016 (IB) - Fund 24330, ARP ESSER III, \$81,708.00
 - BAR #17 - 532-000-2324-0017 (IB) - Fund 27583, SEL Mini and Wellness Room Grant, \$31,100
 - BAR #18 - 532-000-2324-0018 (IB) - Fund 24160, RLIS Award, \$13,817
- Alex M moved approval of all three BARs as presented. Alex T seconded. Approved unanimously.

XVI. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

***Next Regularly Scheduled GC Meeting Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 5:30pm.**

