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**OAK HILL MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKING SESSION MEETING AT  
OAK HILL MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2022 – 12:00 P.M.**

**Board Members Present:** Lillyan Hoyos, Juli Rubin, Erin Doan (non-voting, ex-officio), Matt Howell, Anne Wussler (virtual), Chris Kindler, Jason Eggers

**Board Members Absent:** Mary Wilcox, Kim Vappie

**Other Attendees:** Amanda Cade (OHMCS), Mollie Petracca (OHMCS), Kristen Marsella (OHMCS), Jasie Zarnoth (OHMCS), Heidi James (OHMCS)

**Meeting called to order by Lillyan Hoyos, Board Chair, at 12:15 pm.**

**AGENDA**

Introduction and agenda for discussion. Working session regarding AMI certification. Reiterated that there is NO vote today, this is only discussion and listening session.

**What are the benefits to the school, faculty, etc that the AMI recognition/affiliation/association are providing?** Note: OHMCS current status is Recognized status – highest level achievable.

**Do parents look for AMI?**

Some, but if they do it is looking for both AMI and AMS.

Discussed current benefits around recruitment of teachers, training opportunities, resources, etc. Also discussed costs associated with these benefits.

**Is it important for recruiting staff?**

Limits us by reducing the candidate pool for AMI trained teachers, but it ensures we know they are well trained.

**Does it jeopardize our connection with Montessori Training Center and St. Kate's?**

MTC sends students to train with AMI trained teacher even if it is not in an AMI recognized school.

Teachers provided experiences and discussed high level of rigor with Recognized status:

- Don't like that AMI limits the materials to only AMI materials and overlooks the needs for different/adaptable materials for students with different needs, but AMI culture/training is important.
- It is important to have the AMI principles. When teachers have different accreditations, it can cause strife.

- OHMCS has a strong Montessori program. It uses AMI created materials and those have to be primary. Having too many materials is not good. It is good that AMI tries to limit materials to support a good classroom environment. They do not want to abandon AMI entirely.
- Concern is we don't see the benefit of membership. As we spend school resources, is it a benefit to the school. But this is something that we can try to improve with AMI if we move forward with them.
- They have received valuable feedback from consultants on items to incorporate to their lessons. The important thing to consider is how do we get the great teachers AMI can provide? AMI for the school is not the important piece, having AMI teachers is. Can we sponsor more teachers to ensure we can have access to teachers to fill open spots?
- Lake Country is not AMI anymore before they feel Specialists are critical and they couldn't keep it with AMI. Have Independent School Association of Central States (ISACS) affiliation.
- When a school is an AMI Recognized at the primary level, it makes is more of a "school" feeling, rather than a daycare.

Discussed differences between AMI and AMS accreditations, including those for elementary vs. primary levels.

- Can't hire AMS teachers and keep our status with AMI. AMS allows flexibility, but AMI doesn't – more technology, more materials e.g. language and practical life. There is more flexibility in the upper elementary.

### **Is there a clash with MDE and AMI requirements?**

Using specialists in the classroom (more important for OHMCS and not an MDE requirement) has to be limited to one afternoon a week for elementary. Children's House AMI does not want specialists at all, not wanting to pull the students from the classroom. Kindergarteners need to be part of art and music so they can meet MDE standards.

### **Can we set a standard for OHMCS to state that teachers are AMI trained without the school needing to be AMI Recognized?**

This could be an option.

### **Is there a value to ensuring teachers continue to be AMI members?**

Elementary Alumni Association (AMI trained teachers of elementary level) is an organization made up of AMI trained members that support each other. It is free membership for public school teachers. You need to be AMI member to be an EAA member.

### **Can we codify AMI Recognition into the bylaws or the charter of the school?**

Lillyan will inquire with Craig Kepler, the attorney who helped with the bylaws and has charter school experience.

**Do we want to hold AMI Recognition at one level and not another?**

This is something else we could consider.

Requiring AMI trained teachers with AMI/AMS Recognition is an option.

**How can we bring specialists into the Children's House in a manner that is manageable, how would that look like?**

This could be something that the teachers discuss and come up with ideas, so it prevents the students from leaving the classroom and interrupting the work cycle lengths that are an AMI requirement (2 uninterrupted hours in the afternoon, 5 days a week).

**Would you choose between Specialists and AMI Recognition?**

One Children's House teacher and one board member responded they would choose keeping the specialists.

**What would be the concerns with an AMS accreditation?**

From the Administration's perspective, AMS is more flexible on special education needs. AMS has broader focus on supporting school for learning and recruiting new families. However, the legacy of the school which is focused on AMI trained teachers outweighs the benefit to the administrative benefits.

**Can we find mentorship from other organizations to support teachers?**

Yes

AMI Recognition builds rigor into the structure and is less likely to vary when there is change in staff, ED, board, etc. The director makes a difference but having the AMI Recognition allows for the continuity of the Montessori to withstand leadership changes (in both the board and the Executive Director).

AMI provides tighter guardrails for the traditional Montessori education OHMCS is built upon. The feeling from the group was that it would be important to keep those "tight guardrails" and that we should try to work with AMI to resolve the issues that have been a concern (having the materials needed to help children with different needs, keeping specialists, and getting more productive feedback).

Discussed options for next steps. Immediate future - Pay the fees, set expectations, see how process works, have staff meet with AMI to discuss gaps/issues, decide if a change is needed in three years.

Thanked the teachers and staff for attending and providing candid discussion. Very appreciated.

**Adjourn**

**Since there is no outstanding business Lillyan adjourned the meeting 2:02 p.m.**

***The next OHMCS Board Meeting is Monday, October 24, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.***

***Respectfully Submitted by Juli Rubin, OHMCS Board Secretary***