



**Thomas MacLaren School  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 22, 2024**

***APPROVED***

The meeting took place in Room #314 at Thomas MacLaren School, 1702 N. Murray Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80915.

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order** Mrs. Sherman called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.
  - A. Roll Call: Mrs. Meredith Wardwell Sherman, Mrs. Katherine Brophy, Mrs. Carol Neel, Mrs. Khristine Prickett Vadala, and Mrs. Dawn Conley. Mrs. Purvi Sittner and Mr. Dan Cooper attended virtually. Dr. Marvin Lee started the meeting virtually and joined in person shortly after. *Also Present:* Mrs. Mary Faith Hall, Executive Director, Mr. Ben LaBadie, Head of Upper School, Mrs. Bridget Rector, Assistant Head of Upper School, Ms. Katie Maslow, Assistant Head of Upper School, Mr. Nico Alvarado, Head of Lower School. Mr. Jared Gonzalez, Assistant Head of Lower School, Ms. Laura Schlichting, Assistant Head of Lower School, Mrs. Kari Coleman, Chief of Staff, Mrs. Laura Hassell, Director of Operations, Ms. Kate Kewley, Director of Finance, and Mr. Eric Hall, Founder.
  - B. Public Comment: There was no public comment.
  - C. Approval of Agenda: Mrs. Brophy motioned approval; Mrs. Vadala seconded. There was unanimous approval.
  - D. Approval of January Minutes: Mrs. Vadala motioned approval; Mrs. Neel seconded. There was unanimous approval.
  
- I. Board Training and Development**
  - A. Board Confirmation: Mrs. Sherman motioned to confirm Mrs. Neel to a second Board term. Mrs. Vadala motioned approval; Mr. Cooper seconded. There was unanimous approval.
  - B. Board Modules:
    - a. Holding Productive Meetings (02) - Mr. Hall gave this training; he particularly encouraged the Board to ensure productive meetings by reviewing all documents in advance and to divide complex tasks into smaller steps for Board members to share.
    - b. Board Member Conduct (05) – Mr. Hall asked the Board to review afresh the Board member conduct document which outlines how productive Board members conduct themselves, their commitment to charter schools generally and to the vision and mission of Thomas MacLaren School specifically, and their policy-setting role. Mrs. Sherman made comments about the non-negotiable documents that the team is building for Board members and mentioned that the Board will review the Board handbook.
  - C. Liberal Arts: As a particular lens into what it means to be a liberal arts school, Mrs. Rector gave a presentation on MacLaren’s distinct approach to grading. She referenced the current cultural trend for students and parents to track grades even daily.

MacLaren's model assigns student grades in Upper School, but does not make letter or numeric grades the central focus of student evaluation. MacLaren faculty do not put any letter grade on a student's assignment; rather teachers give other feedback including narrative feedback to coach students towards individual student growth and learning. She gave student examples which demonstrate this approach. Mr. Cooper, Mrs. Sittner, and Mrs. Vadala asked questions about how to help parents understand this methodology and why it's more effective for student development. They additionally made comments about communicating this approach at key student transitions, such as the move from middle school to high school, and again in the college admissions season. Mrs. Neel mentioned cultural awareness that grades have become meaningless in some higher education contexts. Mrs. Sherman concluded that this topic will be part of the Board's ongoing conversation.

- II.** Public Hearing re: Student Data Breach/RAPTOR: A public hearing was held on this vendor data breach. Mrs. Hall indicated a minor breach occurred recently, but that there is no evidence that identifiable student information was breached. Following the breach, staff performed an internal audit of RAPTOR policies to ensure student information isn't pulled by the RAPTOR system. At this time, the staff is not recommending that we replace this system with another vendor. Mrs. Vadala asked what kind of information was breached. Mrs. Hall responded that she is waiting to learn more. There was no public comment.
- III. Status Reports**
  - A. Executive Director Report: Mrs. Hall gave an update on the lottery process, current enrollment projections, and the intent to return survey for current families. She also gave an update on open positions for next year. Mrs. Hall highlighted anticipated instructional openings. Mrs. Vadala asked questions about new salary information and if anticipated staff retention is typical. Mrs. Hall hopes staff retention will be higher in the next year and indicated the priority to fill leadership positions and then faculty openings. Mrs. Hall provided an overview of rich student and community life including Lower School February Festival, historic achievements of the athletics program, and MacLaren Society and MacLaren String Quartet events. MacLaren has a signed contract with D11 which is now posted on the website. Mrs. Brophy asked if D11 planned to announce the contract. Mrs. Hall responded that we are awaiting their communications efforts. Mrs. Hall introduced Mrs. Divine from the MacLaren's Communications Team and efforts to launch an expanded MacLaren Sponsorship program which invites the Board's participation in recruiting sponsor prospects.
  - B. Dashboard: Mrs. Hall indicated that there are no changes on the dashboard to discuss.
  - C. Finance Committee: Mrs. Sittner provided a review of January financials and noted that current expenses and revenue align with budget projections. Mrs. Brophy asked a question about purchasing cards. Mrs. Hall responded.
- IV. Policy Review and Accountability**
  - A. Approve 2024-2025 School Year Calendar: Mrs. Hall introduced three calendars – K-12, Lower School, and Upper School, and explained the primary changes slated for the next school year, including an orientation day for new students and possibly those making transitions into middle school and high school. She referenced highlighting to mark half days and early release days and tentative dates for state testing. She reminded the Board that their role is to ensure the calendar meets State requirements. Mrs. Brophy asked a question about conferences and in-service dates; Mrs. Hall responded. Mrs. Brophy motioned approval; Mrs. Vadala seconded. There was unanimous approval.
  - B. Approve Self-Carry/Self-Administration (Medicine) Policy: Mrs. Hall explained the policy which allows students to self-carry/self-administer medication. The policy includes a contract for student, physician, and parent consent. Mrs. Brophy asked a clarifying question; Mrs. Hall responded. Mr. Cooper motioned approval; Dr. Lee

seconded. There was unanimous approval.

- C. Approve Student Record Document Retention Policy: Mrs. Hall introduced this revised policy which adds clarity and applies best practices to a full spectrum of student records, including ESS and counseling records. Mrs. Brophy asked a clarifying question; Mrs. Hall responded. Mrs. Vadala motioned approval; Mr. Cooper seconded. There was unanimous approval.
- D. Update on Academy Project License Agreement: Mrs. Hall explained that staff conducted an audit of Upper School course curriculum which prompted licensing conversations with Academy Project. MacLaren and Academy Project have mutually agreed that this will be the last year that we license Upper School course guides from Academy Project. MacLaren has permission to continue using Academy Project course guides through December 2024. Mrs. Hall thanked the Academy Project and the MacLaren leadership team for their efforts in reaching this milestone. Mrs. Hall reminded the Board that this does not mean MacLaren is changing the curriculum, but rather that its course guides will be written and owned by the school. Mrs. Sittner asked about the timeline for implementation. Mrs. Hall responded that implementation will occur incrementally (and before December 2024).

**V. Executive Director Annual Review**

- A. Mrs. Brophy motioned to move to Executive Session to consider personnel issues under CRS 24-6-402(4)(f). Dr. Lee seconded. There was unanimous approval. All non-Board attendees exited the meeting, except for Mrs. Hall who was invited to join the Board for part of the session. Executive Session began at 5:19 p.m. A motion to exit Executive Session was made by Mrs. Neel; Mrs. Vadala seconded. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:02 p.m. Regular Session resumed at 6:02 p.m..

**VI. Announcements**

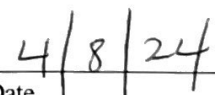
- A. March Board meeting scheduled for 3/21/24 at 4:00 p.m.

**VII. Adjourn**

- A. Mrs. Conley motioned to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Lee seconded. There was unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Julie Divine, Minutes Recorder

  
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Date