
Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

6:01 pm: Call to Order

1) Consent Agenda Items (5 mins)

- a) Approve agenda
- b) Approve March 27, 2018 meeting minutes
Eileen entertained a motion to remove the approval of the March 27 [20th] from the consent agenda. Liz made a motion to remove the approval of the March 27th [20th] from the consent agenda. Jen seconded. Approved unanimously.

Liz made a motion to approve the consent agenda; so moved by Allen .

2) Community Sharing

- a) *Celebrate Compass* – a time for our community to identify and share positive feedback on our community
 - i) *Cameron wanted to celebrate the kitchen: she commended Scot who worked over spring break with his family to tear out the old kitchen; also the Platinum Group is doing a great job, flexible, on time.*
 - ii) *Seth celebrated Kalina—she spent Spring Break helping install the new PA systems at both campuses.*
 - iii) *Seth celebrated the Montessori conference members who visited the Golden campus.*
 - iv) *Jen celebrated CMEF fundraising efforts, especially the Goat Poop Bingo, which drew interest from people outside our community.*
 - v) *Liz celebrated testing and the fact that the last round was more compact and less disruptive to the days.*
- b) *Community Comment* – This is an opportunity for our community to express concerns, issues, or ideas. Members of the Compass Community who would like to speak during this time are requested to sign-up on a sheet prior to the start of the meeting. The sign-up sheet will be available 15 minutes prior to the meeting. A 3-4 minute time limit may be imposed depending on the number of speakers and the length of the agenda. Letters provided for reading will be limited to 3-4 minutes, and the full text will be included in the minutes.
No public comments were made.

3) Leadership Structure Committee Presentation – Liz Mendez (vote will occur at the April 24th meeting) **PRESENTATION ATTACHED**

- a) **PRESENTATION ATTACHED** *Liz gave a presentation on proposed leadership models*
 - i) *Committee composed of both principals (Cameron and Seth), one staff member (Kalina Herr), one parent (Tiffany Bucknam) and two board members (Liz and Allen)*
 - ii) *They discussed the history of leadership at Compass and the pros/cons*

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

- iii) *Reviewed different school models for structure ideas – they reviewed*
 - iv) *Liz presented models to staff at both campuses; staff representatives from each campus gave feedback to the board members*
 - v) *Models were also developed with respect to current budget. Previously, models were created without that information.*
 - b) **ATTACHED:** *Golden staff presented their comments on the leadership model options*
 - c) **ATTACHED:** *Wheat Ridge staff presented their comments on the leadership model options*
- 4) **Approve 2018 – 2019 School Year Budget – Dan Koerner, Allen Balczarek and Steve Stamps**
- a) *Dan presented the budget for approval. He noted that either leadership option would be affordable.*
 - b) *Challenges: He noted that revenues are not increasing, nor are per-pupil funding; healthcare coverage—Compass has opted to cover entire employee cost*
Allen made a motion that the Board approve the budget as prepared by the Business Manager. Steve seconded. Approved unanimously.
- 5) **Board level Special Education training – Jen Lillis**
- a) *Jen requested that the Board consider inviting a lawyer from the Office of Civil Rights to the June Board meeting and any community members to provide a presentation on Special Education Law.*
Jen made a motion to invite the Office of Civil Rights to a Board meeting. Allen seconded. Approved unanimously.
- 6) **Adjourn**
7:44 Eileen entertained a motion to adjourn the Compass Montessori Board of Directors meeting. So moved by Allen; seconded by Jen. Approved unanimously.

Next meeting:

Tuesday, April 24, 2018 6:00 pm at the Wheat Ridge Campus

Will vote on Leadership Structure

PARKING LOT:

- (a) Graduation Tracking
- (b) Review and approval of Board Self-Evaluation Tool

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

ATTACHMENT: Leadership Model Presentation

Compass Montessori Temporary Leadership Structure Committee Report

Process:

Committee: made up of the two Compass Principals, 1 Staff member, 1 parent, and two Compass Board members met over the course of 6 weeks.

- Compass history
- Researched other Montessori school leadership models and other small multi-campus charter school models
- Created matrix of leadership roles and responsibilities
- Identified specific considerations for Compass culture/values
- Created options – selected top 2 options

Staff feedback – Both campuses discussed the options at a staff meeting, both campuses had the opportunity to provide private feedback with Board/committee member.

4/3/2018

1

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

Compass Leadership History

20 Years of High Quality Montessori Education Under Evolving Leadership Structures	Compass Opens	1 Campus = 1 Principal
	2 nd Campus Opens	2 Campuses = 2 Principals
	Modified structure to save money	1 Principal & 1 AP running both campuses
	Principal Resigns	(Leadership search proves challenging) 1 Principal & 2 Instructional Leadership Roles
	Principal Resigns	ED Hired Golden = Co-Principals, AP; Wheat Ridge = Principal
	ED Modifies/Simplifies Leadership Structure	ED Golden = Principal; WR = Principal
	ED Leaves for Other Opportunities	1 yr Transition Plan: Board supervises 2 Principals, 1 Farm School Program Director, 1 Business Manager

4/3/2018

2

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

Committee Considerations

- Charter Schools have range of leadership tasks:
 - School Based –Daily Operations Tasks
 - Political/Networking – Big Picture Tasks
- Money Matters– Compass has to be able to afford the models
 - School’s budget is very tight – there were models that the committee liked but Compass can’t afford right now.
- Committee created options to meet Compass’ current needs. In a few years we may have different needs, committee did not attempt to create a model to last forever.
- Compass’ size – the total enrollment at Compass is about 700. Diverse needs due to ECE – 12th grade model, but relatively small student population.
- The campuses’ needs are different. Responsibilities at Golden with ECE -12th grade are too broad for only one leader.

4/3/2018

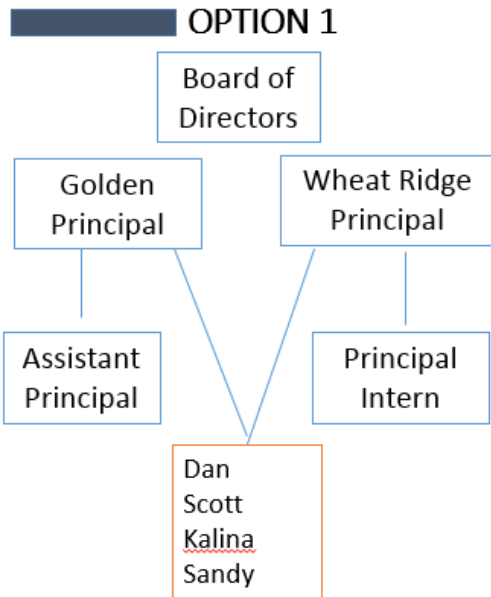
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Meeting Minutes
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6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus



How is this different from Transition Year:

- Executive Director responsibilities given to 2 principals rather than Board
- Board would have two direct reports rather than four
- Leadership support (AP) for Golden Principal will allow him to fully optimize his role as executive leader.

Rationale (why are we recommending this option?):

- Having a 2nd administrator (AP) at Golden Campus would help distribute responsibilities and be a thought partner to Principal
- Principal Intern provides opportunity for mentoring of current teachers and career ladder for teachers
- We are two small schools with small budgets – this is more affordable than an ED model.
- Least disruptive change

Benefits:

- The work right now of syncing up the two campuses is going well – want to continue this path.
- Aligned with Strategic report idea of two separate and great schools
- More distributed leadership (rather than ED) brings more ideas to the table and more checks and balances for decisions.

Considerations:

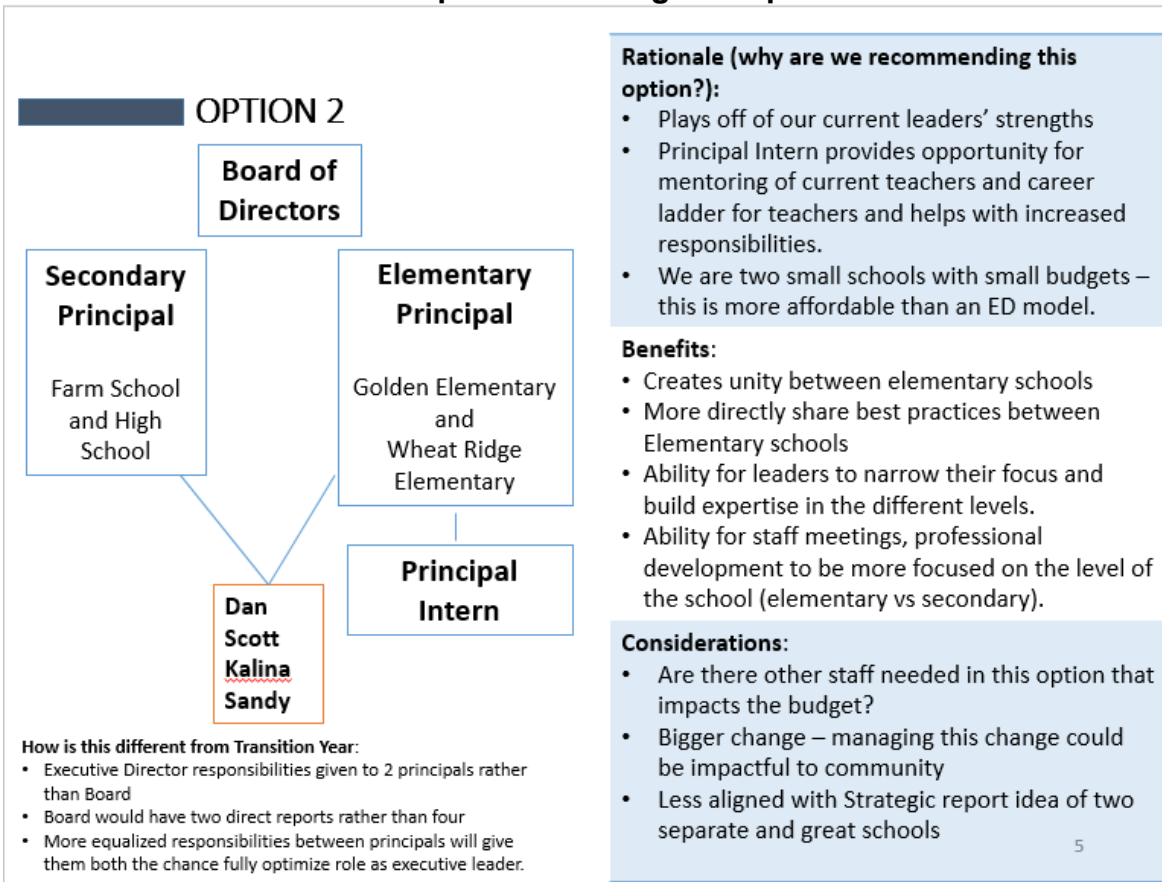
- Will the Principals be able to handle the ED responsibilities on a long term basis?
- Is the AP help enough at Golden?

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Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus



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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
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Appendix

4/3/2018

6

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

Mtg. 2 Notes Cont.

Leadership Responsibilities – Categories of Focus

What are the different areas of responsibility or categories of tasks that we need to cover with Compass' leadership model?

School Based Tasks - Daily Operations	Budget	Operations/safety	Legal /Compliance	Manager/Supervisor	Instructional Leader	Discipline	Culture Steward
	budget oversight	facilities	HR	Staff Development	professional Development	Daily low-level	Inspirational Leader
	long term planning	manages campus operations	Licensing	Staff Supervision	Curriculum Development	high level (i.e. Legal)	Builds relationships with staff
	Fundraising	Emergency Planning School Safety	Special Education	Staff Evaluation	Montessori/standards alignment Student Measurement and Assessments		Responsible for aligning all school activities and long-term vision with the school's mission statement

networking - big picture	Development of program	Board of Directors	Public Face of School	District Relationships	Parent Relationships
	Holding Montessori awareness of ed. trends/research	implements strategies defined by BOD	Networking in Montessori Communities	Special Education	Parent Communication
	awareness of district developments	prepares for mtgs	Leader in Secondary Montessori Social Justice - Advocacy as a member of public school community	Charter Achievement Director	
	vision and Strategy for school clearly defined strategy vs operations	manages BOD relationships	charter community participation awareness of ed. legislation related to Charters		7

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

ATTACHMENT: GOLDEN STAFF RESPONSE

General Thoughts

We hope that the leadership structure that is chosen will be in alignment with the vision for the school long-term. We hope not to create positions that become redundant or obsolete in the future. There are some concerns that choosing a leadership structure before setting on a vision could be putting the cart before the horse but it also could give our leaders the confidence to share out their vision and ask the community to get on board. Vision includes size of program, location of program, etc... Would these be the leadership models if we were all on one campus? Hope that the leadership model is built around positions, not people. Need to have tiers of leadership or a pipeline of leadership so that homegrown leaders can replace outgoing leaders. Job descriptions need to be written for these jobs so that the delineation of responsibility is clear. Regardless of the model that is chosen, many at the Golden Campus hope to cultivate a collaborative and constructive relationship, particularly at the elementary level. Regardless of which model is chosen perhaps there could be more all-staff (as in both campuses) professional development. There is also an underlying reality that the Golden Campus, because of its secondary program, is existentially dependent upon the Wheat Ridge campus. This dependency is both a vulnerability and a point of strength. Going forward as one school our leadership needs to promote the fact that we are a K-12 campus. It also could be worthwhile to elicit feedback from students. Students treasure things that you wouldn't expect and feel a great loss when things they identify as traditions are changed.

Option 1

Remaining Questions:

Can we afford four members of admin?
Is the intern a temporary position - what is the long term plan?
Are the AP and intern Montessori structure?
Why does Golden have an AP and WR have an intern - does WR need AP?
What happens to program directors?

Thoughts/Suggestions/Concerns:

This model allows for the campuses to run parallel to one another. If there is not a cross-campus position built into the model or an executive director then there is a fear that cross-campus collaboration will not occur. The board cannot be the only body that unites the two campuses. In this model, would it make

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

sense to split and become two schools with two boards?

Job descriptions need to be written for these positions - who is responsible for discipline, for pedagogical leadership, for parent ed, etc... Admin includes a lot and these responsibilities need to be delineated.

Concerns that this model could be expensive - how does that affect our budget?

Concerned that "two people at the helm is two different helms."

Option 2

Remaining Questions:

What happens to program directors?

Thoughts/Suggestions/Concerns:

The elementary principal position seems too large and unsustainable. It creates a situation when the WR

campus will be without a leader about 50% of the time. Crises pop up when you least expect them and it

is so important to have an administrator on site to deal with them.

As written, the plan could be confusing and frustrating for parents. Absence of an administrator can create

anxiety in the staff and the parents. A "part-time" principal would create a vacuum on some days.

This model fosters more collaboration between the campuses and promotes consistency at the elementary level. Could heal the perception of vastly different practices.

Having a separate secondary principal acknowledges the differences of secondary and the planes of

development. Secondary principals deal with very different issues than elementary principals. Discipline

issues at secondary are often larger in scope and more time consuming.

It seems that there should be a middle ground between paying four people and paying two people. An

Elementary AP could hold down the fort at whichever campus the Elementary principal is absent from.

Another proposed option is having three principals.

Could possible employ an "administrative coordinator" to be the 504 coordinator, SAC. This could promote a network of leadership (social permaculture) as opposed to a hierarchy.

The Elementary Principal will have to generate a lot of buy in from the staff in order to make compromises

in the name of consistency.

More collaboration and consistency could help the student experience and in turn help secondary - a

more cohesive student body.

Conclusion:

In general there seems to be more support for Option 2. The hope for collaboration and vision is strong.

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

ATTACHMENT: WHEAT RIDGE STAFF RESPONSE

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

Wheat Ridge Staff Leadership Structure Feedback April 3rd, 2018

Model 1: Principal of Each Campus With AP Added to GD and Intern Added to WR

- Positive Feedback
 - Provides support for both Golden and WR admin
 - Overall support for the concept of succession planning for both models
 - Aligns with results from strategic planning, "let's make our two campuses as awesome as possible"
 - Supports continued progress and success at WR
 - Like idea of keeping Cameron available for emergencies and open-door policy feels like it has been part of her success as principal
- Concerns
 - See details about principal intern below
 - Discussed at staff meeting that some staff may get stagnant without "something next"
 - Changing a good thing/system at WR, taking steps backwards
- Questions
 - Is it financially feasible for WR to have an intern or AP?
 - Which model would help us expand?
 - Why not hire an additional secretary person at WR and not a principal?

Model 2: Cameron as Principal of Elementary of GD and WR; Seth Principal of Secondary

- Positive Feedback
 - Aligns with strategic planning work around systems and structures and tight/loose
 - Specifically allows for cross-campus consistency of experience for families and standards for staff
 - Stronger overall elementary would positively impact secondary levels
 - Allows for innovation and potential for growth to match demand from waitlist
- Concerns
 - Leaving Wheat Ridge without administrator on consistent basis
 - What could happen if current office staff changes? Huge loss of institutional knowledge
 - May have a trickle down burden on WR campus as whole and put stress on Amy and Nicole
 - Less staff access to Cameron
 - Benefits Golden but not WR
 - Worries this split model will stretch Cameron too thin, but also don't want to stifle her passion

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

- We've done this before when Tracy was the principal
 - Spent more of her time at Golden, so felt like WR was left behind
- Questions
 - What is the intention/purpose behind this model?
 - How would non-level-specific decisions be made? Who makes the final calls?
 - Who would have oversight of Golden facilities?
 - Special Education?
 - What other responsibilities would need to be defined between a two principals?
 - Is this model feasible/fair to Cameron and other WR front office staff?
 - Will everyone be spread too thin?
 - How does this impact the current program director model at Golden? What will this transition look like?
 - Would the AP at Golden be state licensed or on the path to licensure?

Additional Feedback:

- Principal Intern model
 - Multiple people liked the idea of intentional succession planning
 - Could draw people to the school if they knew there was a pipeline to the next step
 - Support for internal candidate in this role or as next school leader
 - Already doing some of this with teachers taking on roles in GT, MTSS, SAC, and 504
 - Past experiences with similar model
 - Concerns shared that if Cameron is out of the building, the principal intern will be pulled into admin decisions during the school day
 - Principal intern will be mentally transitioning to a new role, creating different energy in the classroom and between staff members
 - Significant concerns about principal intern impacts on classroom
 - Putting needs of the school above the needs of specific classroom
 - Is this fair to the students to have a teacher pulled away, either physically or mentally
 - Challenging dynamic - reduced energy/time for collaboration
 - Would have to protect the three-hour work cycle
 - PI would have to commit to hours after school and evenings, not taking away from planning time for classroom responsibilities
 - Concerns about principal intern impacts on co-teacher
 - Opted into co-teaching with expectation of full, not embedded, teamwork
 - Places more burden on the other co-teacher
 - Embedded leader may struggle to have a partnership in the classroom
 - Experienced similar dynamic when implementing learning coach model and this was unpopular with some
 - Blurs lines between staff members and creates hard feelings

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Compass Montessori Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
6:00 pm Wheat Ridge Campus

- Concern about process of selecting PI
 - What is the interview process?
 - Does this guarantee this person will be selected to be principal in the future? Or will there be another hiring process?
- Program director model
 - WR CH has advocated for no program directors
 - If program directors are going away, how will the reporting structure change?
- Multiple people would like to survey to staff
 - Want to not make another hasty decision
 - Feel this should be done before a decision is made
 - Suggesting other options and getting general pulse
 - Had many changes and the staff outside of admin will live the repercussions of the decisions so their voices should be heard

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