

## LNS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 7, 2018

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### **Attendees:**

- **Present:** Abby Adams, Cynthia Chang, Feyza Marouf, Murat Arslan Gina Cherco, Jessica Kaplan, Martina Ladd, Rebecca Blanchfield, Jess Callow, Vanessa Cartwright, Anna Angelova, Liz Heald, Sarah Robbat, Katherine Taunton-Rigby
- **Absent:** Carrie Menke, Becky Bermont, Sandra Coleman, Alex Benik, Cara Shortsleeve, Laura Leibowitz, Ania Richmon, Lauren O'Neil
- **Also Present:** Nancy Fincke

Board Members: President: Abigail Adams, Secretary: Vanessa Cartwright, Vice President of Operations: Cynthia Chang, Vice President of Programs: Martina Ladd, Treasurer: Rebecca Blanchfield, Enrollment: Katherine Taunton-Rigby & Carrie Menke, Gala/Fundraising: Gina Cherco, deCordova Liaison: Becky Bermont, Information Management: Alex Benik, Strategic Planning: Cara Shortsleeve & Sarah Robbat, PR & Communications: Laura Leibowitz, R Parents: Ania Richmon (B), Anna Angelova (Y), Sandra Coleman (P), Lauren O'Neil (R), Staff Search & Development: Jessica Callow, Welcoming & Social: Jessica Kaplan & Liz Heald, Extended Day: Feyza Marouf

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## LNS BOARD MEETING AGENDA

### **Call to Order and President's Report: Abby Adams**

- Annual appeal update. Started slow, but in a good place now. 23 families out of 55 have contributed, plus 3 alumni families. This year, in all studios, a family will offer to host a party if the entire studio makes a donation. \$14,000 is the goal for annual appeal. The goal is based on a three year average of past years donations. Last year the annual appeal brought in \$20,000 which bumped up the amount from an \$11,000 goal in 2017 to a \$14,000 goal in 2018.
- Tuition does go up every year, but it still does not cover all expenses, which means fundraising is needed. The question was raised in the meeting if LNS has considered raising tuition instead of doing fundraising. One of the dilemmas is not wanting to price people out. LNS is priced between an average nursery school and a private nursery school. The tuition at surrounding schools is taken into consideration when setting tuition at LNS.
- There was discussion around publicizing a timeline of when voluntary donations will be requested, so that families could more easily budget for making donations. The question was posed if LNS should state how much per family is expected. Since fundraising targets are published and people know there are 55 families, and people can do the math themselves, it was discussed that this was not needed, and doing so could lower some donations.

### **Secretary: Vanessa Cartwright**

- Approve September 2018 minutes: Katherine Taunton Rigby approved; Rebecca Blanchfield seconded.

### **Director's Report: Nancy Fincke**

- It's been a great Fall! The children are engaging with each other in play and through exploring materials in and outside of the studios. They have been out on the trails and in the Sculpture Park. This year's Umbrella Topic: "Lincoln Nursery School wonders about Art, Nature and

Empathy” is being researched by the faculty in conjunctions with the Learning and Engagement staff. The topic connects to work currently being exhibited in the museum. Emily Silet, Learning and Engagement staff member who installs the Process Gallery, titled the current exhibit in the Process Gallery: Art, Nature and Empathy. Teachers will be bringing the children up to the museum to see the Sheils Pepe’s work, the process Gallery and the Lab. Our environment is so incredibly rich, offering children and adults many unique opportunities for exploration and engagement.

- The faculty appreciates the efforts of parent helpers to arrive by 8:45. It makes a difference in the launch of the day for the teachers to have time to talk with parent helpers.

### **Treasurer: Rebecca Blanchfield**

Treasurer’s Report to the Board

November 7, 2018

- General Updates
  - Tuition collection: Still waiting on the majority of families to pay final tuition installment due 11/15—note new feature on invoice to pay electronically
  - Extended day tuitions moving along nicely with ~\$2,600 daily signups (through October), contracts ~\$36,000
  - Annual appeal over \$9,00 with donations still rolling in (over halfway to goal)
- Endowment Update
  - In the last 12 months ending October 31, 2018, the endowment portfolio performance has been relatively flat, down -0.36%
  - Finance committee is reviewing asset allocation to see if we want to make any trades
- Audit Update
  - Annual audit is underway!
  - Consultant came for second year to help prepare our books and keep auditor costs down
  - Auditor recently informed us they are raising our rate by \$1,000 – not budgeted for
  - Lisa and I have been working to deliver all required materials

### **Call for Updates/Questions**

#### **Provocation**

**Empathy is the 2018-19 umbrella topic for LNS teachers. They will be exploring empathy through a variety of lenses and questions: nature, art, anthropomorphism, what fosters empathy in children and many more questions as their research evolves.**

- **When are your children most empathetic?**
- **How do you foster empathy in your children?**
- **What are some of your biggest questions/challenges around empathy?**
- **How are imagination and empathy connected?**
- **How do you differentiate empathy and kindness?**

A lively discussion ensued, some snippets of which are captured here:

- Differences between empathy vs kindness.
  - Definition of Empathy: ability to understand and share the feelings on another. You may not share the feeling yourself or you may not agree with it, but you understand.
  - Definition of Sympathy: you share the feeling of someone else. Empathy is you understand the feeling.
- Nature can bring up the discussion of empathy.

- Some quiet children can be empathetic, but it can be hard for them to show it. For extroverted children they may very easily show kindness.
- Does gender play a role in who is more empathetic? Discussion that it can depend on personality more than gender. Observation of how birth order influences it; one experience says oldest is more empathetic, youngest could care less. But others find the opposite.
- Wonder if the young child is feeling the empathy or modeling their parent's empathy for them?
- Wonder if there is a connection between imaginative play, putting yourself in others shoes, and being empathetic to others?
- Another family, younger one is more empathetic. But can also be mistaken as kindness.
- A child with an introvert personality can be very perceptive of other people's facial expressions, but she won't always share it right away.
- Does the empathy encompass the action of expressing empathy?
- Is there an age where it is developmentally appropriate to be empathetic? Age 3, 4, 5 are egocentric ages. Not necessarily empathetic ages.
- When we empathize, we imagine. Without our imaginations we may not be able to empathize. Children are so imaginative, so they may be able to get out of their stage of developmental egocentricity to be empathic.
- In order to have empathy, you need to be self aware. Many adults do not even have this ability. Must be able to understand how you are feeling and label that feeling.
- Even though empathy is thought to be a higher level response, some studies showed that crying in babies while they are in a hospital nursery was empathetic to other babies crying.
- One study showed that children were more empathic when they are disciplined by calling attention to the distress that was caused, rather than reprimanding the child for being naughty. But, isn't that shaming? Depends on how it is handled; eg "your words caused this response" rather than "that was naughty".
- When attention goes to the child who was hurt, then you are modeling empathy without focusing on the child who caused the hurtful behavior. A tricky piece.
- One study looked at the neurology of empathy: the amygdala is the old fight or flight part of the brain that is very present in children. Looking at people with physical damage to that part of the brain showed that people who used to be empathic before the brain damage, then became no longer empathetic when their amygdala was damaged.
- Empathy requires calm and receptivity to the emotions of other people.
  - At LNS we try to slow down and create calm so kids can start thinking about empathy
  - Nature. Even if kids are active in nature, they are in an environment of self regulation.
  - It is hard because when children are in conflict, it is when we want to jump in the most, but it is a time when they cannot hear. They are in the fight or flight part of their brain. Instead, try:
    - Sitting for a moment to calm down, rather than trying to solve something in the moment
    - Telling children we are going to take a break now is modeling empathy for that child. The teacher sees that the child needs to calm down and does not put another demand on the child in the moment.
- Stay calm, and think for moment before you react to a situation.
- Some children have acute awareness of other's feelings (change in tone of voice, etc) but then can lack the tools to do something with this, and as a result just break down in crying.
- A child who can say, "I want that toy, but I will find something else for you to play with." shows empathy.
- Some kids cry easily with empathy (for example, when seeing a mother animal die in a movie), and other kids do not. Kids are different.

- Some kids notice that physical touch can be an empathetic connection.
- Projecting feelings onto animals in nature, anthropomorphize, can bring kids together with nature; an opportunity to create empathy and care for the natural world. This is so important for our world, for future generations and how we take care of our world.
- Discussion on the birds used in studio blue. Interestingly the bird seems to be a lovey to the kids in studio blue. The kids are not nurturing the birds, but rather the birds are nurturing the kids. This is unlike the baby dolls, which the kids do nurture.

**Vice President of Operations: Cynthia Chang**

- No updates at this time.

**Vice President of Programs: Martina Ladd**

- No updates at this time.

**Enrollment: Katherine Taunton-Rigby & Carrie Menke**

- Enrollment is going well; so far, so good. The open house was great; the most people we have ever had despite the rainy weather.
- There is a lot of buzz asking if there are spots available for next year. This is good!
- Enrollment starts by asking existing families who is coming back. Then once that is firmed up, we know how many openings there will be for next year. Siblings come first. The deadline to say your child will be coming back next year is after the first conference around December 1st. After vacancies are determined, at that point, rolling admission will begin.
- A letter to Studio Yellow has gone out asking if people need more information on what Studio Red is all about; the pre-K vs K option, the full day vs half day option. They are awaiting on results from that survey.

**Gala/Fundraising: Gina Cherco**

- Right now Gina is working on getting letters out to the community with donations and sponsors.
- The more sponsors, the less pressure there is with the other parts of the donations. The best way to get to sponsors is with personal connections. If anyone has a personal connections in the community, please help.
  - For example, your Dentist.
  - Or if you recently bought a car, go back there.
  - Or it can be anyplace.
  - Realtors who have donated in years past, Gina will see them in person. Last year there was one realtor who donated \$750 and the others gifted \$250.
  - Rebecca will be asking the LNS auditor since they are raising our rates.
  - Yoga studio in Weston should be asked.
  - Miss Helena, dance teacher in Concord, said No.
  - Please run your idea by Gina first, so that we do not double ask someone, because there is already a list they are targeting, .
- \$750, \$2,500, \$5,000 are the levels of sponsorships. If you donate \$2,500 or \$5,000 you get free tickets to the Gala. If you donate \$5,000 you will also get your name on the invitation.
- Experiences offered at the Gala are very cool.
  - Asking the Lincoln Police to see if they will donate a ride to school in a police car.
  - Experiences tend to raise the most money.

**deCordova Liaison: Becky Bermont**

- No updates at this time.

**Information Management: Alex Benik**

- No updates at this time.

**Strategic Planning: Cara Shortsleeve & Sarah Robbat**

- Sent email to gauge interest in Studio Red Kindergarten, waiting on responses to report.

**PR & Communications: Laura Leibowitz**

- No updates at this time.

**Room Parents:**

- **Blue: Ania Richmon.** No updates at this time.
- **Yellow: Anna Angelova.** No updates at this time.
- **Purple: Sandra Coleman.** No updates at this time.
- **Red : Lauren O'Neil.** No updates at this time.

**Staff Search & Development: Jessica Callow**

- No updates at this time.

**Welcoming & Social: Jessica Kaplan & Liz Heald**

- No updates at this time.

**Extended Day: Feyza Marouf**

- No updates at this time.

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**Verbiage for Summary Email:**

SUBJECT: November LNS Board Meeting Minutes

Our most recent board meeting happened on November 7th.

Abby updated us on how the Annual Appeal is going, which led us into a discussion of fundraising, the Gala, tuition covering only part of LNS expenses, and how enrollment is looking for next year.

Nancy updated us on all the studios being engaged, and how they will be starting to take the children into the museum.

The most lively part of the meeting was our discussion around the provocation of **Children and Empathy**. The enclosed notes capture much of the discussion.

For all details, please read the enclosed minutes attached via pdf and always available on the LNS site. If you have questions regarding the minutes, please contact the relevant board member (or let me know, and I can point you in the right direction).

Vanessa  
Weston's Mom, Studio Purple