

**MINUTES**  
**VSWEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022**  
**VIA [Zoom](#)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kerstin Kubina (KK)–President	Nellie Grossenbacher (NG)
April Sauer (AS)–Secretary	
Dan Franks (DF)–Treasurer	
John Tanner (JT)	

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Gregory Schneider and Danielle Martinez**

The President, Treasurer, and Secretary were present, and a quorum was reached.

**GUESTS**

Invitees of the Board:

Frank Mirizio (FM)  
Michelle Kratzer (MK)  
Joan Treadaway (JDT)  
Ben Fong (BF)  
Myriah Mhoon (MM)  
Scott Edwards (SE)

Members of the public present via Zoom/Registration through Google Forms:

Andrew Young	Deb
MD	Barb Cunningham
Teresa	Amy Edwards
Rachel	Kristen
Nina	Roxana Elixavide
Tammy/Tom	Barnaby McGillicuddy
Sophie McCurley	Laura Heaney
Megan	Whittni
Sami Rank	W
Peter Rennick	Blayne Goodman
Kelsey Orosz	Colleen Ceton
Kelsey	Nicole Goodman
Zoom User	Bradley Young
Addie Heartkin	Sarah Baize
Helena Moriarty	Anthony

## **OPENING VERSE / INTRODUCTIONS**

Meeting was called to order at 6:34pm. KK welcomed the public to the meeting, read the opening verse, and reviewed the agenda.

The Board members introduced themselves along with JDT.

## **BOARD EDUCATION**

### **Creating Rhythm and Resiliency in Our Children**

JDT Thankful to be here. Her husband passed away, and she has had two bouts with Covid, but she is on the mend and happy to be here speaking. Speaking on creating resiliency in children. Shared a story about a student in early childhood who checked in daily regarding the rhythm. It was a lesson on rhythm and the sameness of predictability as an elixir in our children. We know this sameness in rhythm creates resiliency in our children, and this is one of the ways it happens—through this constancy of what is going to happen. It creates health. Steiner said for a child not have his meal on time daily is like for us if the sun didn't come up. A speaker in Prescott talked about consistent meal times and how children's digestive systems flow well. Adults can step back from that rhythm. But for children it affects them. Her father prayed regularly at the same time, and it was beautiful. When children's rhythms are interrupted, we see more and more asthmatic attacks, stomach problems, sleeping problems. Two years ago, we stepped into the unknown. We all lost control over our lives. Predictability was lost. We missed so much—people, relatives, school, schedules. Nothing in those two years was the same as it had been before. Virtual learning, talk of illness and death, computer learning—can you imagine what it was like for very young children to see people with masks? It must have been frightening and disconcerting. They were plunged into this world of continual conversations about the virus, illness, death, whether or not to go to school, worries, and fears. Children heard far more than what was appropriate to hear. Things are changing, but what is still there is that children heard so much. Children don't know how to talk about that. It's a silent grieving. We know that children can't reason like we can. We know from the theories of Waldorf education that children aren't ready to reason until they're 12. All of this information was coming to them; we thought they understood, and of course they didn't. Children have more ADHD and anxiety and sleeping problems. There's a collective trauma. Thank goodness it's somewhat over. The silent message is that the world is not as safe a place as it was. She has a graduate student who works for her who recently started therapy. He said he needed more support at 22 years old, so imagine what it's like for children. Her 16-year-old grandson is worrying about the draft and the war in Ukraine, so he is concerned. We are all concerned. Try to keep adult conversations away from children. We don't need to talk about the pandemic, the war, or what's in newspapers. They don't need that now; they will get that later. Don't read about these issues before bedtime. It's not good for us the same way it's not good for children. Anything you say in front of the child is taken in very deeply. Stop talking so much. We ask children too many questions. They don't know how they feel. Stop talking, and listen more. Stop asking, and listen more. We could talk about that topic a lot. It's a critical one for most parents in modern America.

JDT Try to create a rhythm at home. We may not be able to do family meals every day, but maybe once a week. Find something that can be predictable—a hike maybe. Find a rhythm to connect. It's like food for them. When you do that, you're consciously creating rhythm and certainty for our children. Evening and bedtimes are important. Earlier in her career she didn't see the anxiety or ADHD like she sees it now. Creating a rhythm around evenings and bedtime helps children. When children are tired, they're cranky, ill, hyperactive, they're difficult to get

along with. A school aged child needs at least 10-12 hours of sleep. Creating that bedtime routine is a lifeblood for them. Whether that's a story and lighting a candle, bringing a soft glow into the room. It's calm and peaceful. It's one of the most important rhythms a parent can make. A parent should be choosing the bedtime for the child. Another thing we all need is humor and smiling. The relaxing of our muscles when we smile and laugh releases a kind of tension, even when you don't mean it at first. When children swing and smile and laugh, they lift themselves. This also happens when they're jumping rope. It lifts them out of themselves. Humor changes a rock hard constitution. She was fortunate to have parents who laughed all the time. See if you can find those things that make your children laugh even when they don't feel like it. The cultivation of humor and laughter is an art. The ability to bring humor into our home is a real gift. Lastly, the attention and interest we give our children is important. Listening to them and looking at them is important. It's difficult when a child is trying to get a parent's attention and they can't. Are we really present for our children? Do we look at them when they speak and without scattered thoughts? She's made it a practice to tell her grandson when she has a Zoom call so he knows when she is not available, so he knows when she'll be there for him. Children are grateful for that. And it creates a rhythm and constancy for children. Do we have a rule that there are no cell phones at mealtimes? If they're there, it creates a lack of interest. Sharing these few thoughts—these are gifts of the pandemic that have brought us to attention—to pay attention. These are some of things we can do to bring rhythm and constancy and care to our children.

KK Thank you; that was so illuminating. We're so glad to have you back.

SE What do you think masks do for kids in schools?

JDT I think they're terrible. You can't see each other, the emotion. I think they've been necessary at certain points, so there's that reality. But for what they do for children, at first, I think it was terrifying and damaging.

DF I really appreciated your speaking to the rhythm. It's something that we all know, but we continuously need to be reminded. We need to keep that safe space for them to grow. I think it's also something that adults need. It's almost celebrated if you can handle chaos, and it's super toxic, in my opinion.

JDT That's an important topic. Thank you.

MM Do you have any thoughts about getting young children into rhythm? Or bringing older children back into rhythm?

JDT These are just five different fundamentals, but one thing that might help is an evening routine. Spending time together reading or talking together. At that age, 11, they mostly want to talk. Maybe foot rubs. Spending time with him, your attention—we are the most important dimension in our children's lives. They look to us more than you can ever imagine. Spending time with them is vital. Her dad took time every week to be with each child by themselves. So giving children undivided attention and time is helpful.

AS I was lucky enough to participate in a similar presentation you gave years ago when my son was five and in kindergarten. He's now a senior and graduating in May. As I was listening, I was reminiscing to that time and what I took from your presentation and implemented in my own home. I remember consciously writing down meal plans and starting dinner right when I got home and moving bedtime up and creating a routine. That consistency and rhythm that I

03.23.22 Approved

brought into my home greatly affected my son for the better. We didn't know it at the time, but he has several diagnoses, and these ideas that came to fruition in my home and family improved things tremendously, so I want to thank you for your continued work on this and for sharing these thoughts with us.

JDT Thank you so much. I'll see you next month.

MK Introduced herself along with FM.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE**

FM The progress on the woodshop and bathrooms are still hung up with the City of Phoenix. We are waiting for permits to be approved. He's checked in to his contractor, and we're just not at the top of the list for the city. I'm hoping we can open the school year with those two projects completed. He attended the senior projects this week. Kudos to Crystal Lee as the class sponsor and Paula Cummings as our project manager. They both did an outstanding job. He saw handmade guitars and a made from scratch greenhouse. He saw a student who is a talented writer—wrote and illustrated a poetry book. She sewed it together and is putting it on the market to get it published. There was a young man who designed and coded a video game. Excellent work is going on, and I'm just very proud of them. Thanks to MK and NG since I saw her there and all the parents that came to school and cleaned out the riparian area. It's excellent and I couldn't be prouder of the work that was done. They were there for a good four or five hours to get that done. Thank you to the crew that you lead. Student enrollment—we're done to 284. As of today, we have 316 enrolled for next year with 24 in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class. Tomorrow night is high school information night for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. There will be some nice surprises about possible classes for entrepreneurship as well as a sustainability. We have two job openings—a special education teacher and a grades teacher for next year. We've hired a new 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher—Kelsey Thompson. She's developing rapport with the kids, and Dr. Darian and I are providing her with support.

NG Can we expedite the permit in the city with a fee?

FM My contractor said that's not possible. There's bound to be some ethics issues there. It's on a stack and whoever is next goes next.

NG How many families have left since January?

FM I can find that out and email that information.

NG I know we have some waiting lists and fill those spots fast.

FM We're pretty down in the waiting lists. We had 20 families touring who are looking to next year.

NG Good. 20 families is a good tour.

FM That's pretty average.

NG Are they giving feedback?

03.23.22 Approved

FM There's a general excitement. Ms. Bonnie, Ms. Crystal, and Dr. Darian are doing those tours. They like the site itself. It's an ooh-wow moment. That's a really positive thing, and they like that. They like the idea that you could stay with your teacher. They talk positively about the tours.

NG Thanks for all that.

KK Thank you. Let's keep our fingers crossed for those permits.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS/OPEN ISSUES**

KK moved to approve the 02/16/22 Meeting Minutes. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, NG. **Motion passes.**

KK moved to approve the 02/16/22 Meeting Minutes for the Executive Session. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous Votes in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, NG. **Motion passes.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program (DEI)**

KK It is evermore clear that we need to have some sort of program to support diversity, equity and inclusion. I spoke with Sarah Baize who specializes in these types of issues, so we're hoping to look into programs.

FM Does ASU have a program they developed and liked and used? And is it accessible to outsiders?

BF I'm not sure if there's a college-wide program. We hired a firm to help us, but I can look into it.

KK I feel like as a board we need to create a subcommittee to put this together. Does anyone have desire to jump in on that?

MM I can help.

DF I'd be happy to help as well.

AS This is very important to me. I don't mean to get emotional. You talked about bandwidth and mine is very low right now, but I'm happy to help with any behind the scenes research—sending emails, making calls, etc. I don't think I can make meetings, but if my bandwidth expands at some point, I'm happy to jump in more.

KK I don't have a lot of time, but this is something that is very important that we need to move forward.

FM Sarah and I have already started research, and once we find something we love we will report back to that group, and we can go from there.

03.23.22 Approved

### Board Election Process/Timeline

AS Reviewed the election process document that was created as a playbook as well as the ASBCS process of adding new members. Reviewed the timeline for the May board applications and the updates that need to be made on documents that are used during that process.

NG Any thoughts about changing bylaws to have community voting? And do we have a special meeting to change the bylaws?

AS JT's been here much longer than I have, so he may have something to add, but I've never seen that before. I've only seen board members voting on board members. And there's no special meeting for bylaws, it's just added to the agenda.

KK Would you like that on the agenda?

NG Yes.

AS Discussed ASBCS charter rep training, who can be a charter rep, and the communication they receive.

AS moved that the Board accepts the completed term of Gregory Schneider who served from 11/20/2018 to 11/20/2021. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in Favor: KK, AS, DF, NG, JT. **Motion passes.**

AS moved to elect Kerstin Kubina as a Charter Representative for the VSWEA with the AZ State Board for Charter Schools. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: AS, DF, NG, JT. Abstain: KK. **Motion passes.**

AS moved to elect Frank Mirizio as a Charter Representative for the VSWEA with the AZ State Board for Charter Schools. DF second. No further discussion. Votes in Favor: KK, AS, DF, NG. Opposed: JT. **Motion passes.**

7:45pm SE left the meeting.

### Board Interviews

KK Some of you may have been reached out to from some individuals from the contemplation. There's an interview with prepared questions and follow up with an audience present, and it would be recorded. I responded to Peter to ask some follow up questions regarding the interviews. I wanted to bring it up for discussion.

NG This is a request coming out of the contemplation?

KK I'm not sure if it's a direct or more of a bridge the gap of communication.

FM I do not remember this being part of the original contemplation when we met. I believe this is something new coming out of the small groups. Am I remembering that incorrectly?

03.23.22 Approved

JT Your recollection is the same as mine. If I didn't hear it, then I want to put that out as a statement.

FM I think I'd like to sit with Barb and talk through this a little bit because I do not remember that as one of the things we wanted to do. I remember several other things like town halls, board members being present at events, asking JDT to speak at board meetings, and having someone respond to emails quickly and with more sensitivity. I remember all of those things. I even remember instituting that board members could be on campus to talk with individuals. I've seen AS and NG and Danielle on campus, so I believe there's more access. I'd like to get more clarification and get back to you.

NG MK, do you remember this from a breakout?

MK I do think it came from a smaller group. There were some things agreed upon at the contemplation. For instance, community comments were talked about, and I think this is perhaps another way to get more communication with the board.

FM I do remember that that was on the list of things that they wanted to see happen, and I remember this board accepting all of those other things but not this one. I remember Gregory saying that open questions don't work because the board cannot answer a question in board meetings because it's not on the agenda. He thought it would be better to have these discussions in town halls, which we've been doing once every nine weeks. But for those who were on the board, do you remember that? I see agreement.

AS When you sit down with Barb and anyone else, I'd love to see a communication come from the contemplation that specifically states the ask. We're all volunteers, and we need to know what we're agreeing/not agreeing to.

FM My point is that the contemplation didn't have time to discuss that idea. That came from a small group. I'm not sure I'm comfortable that a small group made a request. My feeling is that this didn't come from the whole group.

MK This is not a contemplation thing. The people who did it are not doing it were a part of the contemplation, but it's not specifically from the contemplation.

MM Outside of quorum, this group cannot do any governance. If there's agendas, that's doing governance work. You can't formulate like that. We can talk as individuals. That dialogue as one offs isn't best practice.

FM You're referring to the interview process?

MM Yes, you can have conversations, but interviews may be more significant.

KK Thank you. We are trying to dot our I's and cross our T's. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us.

### **PROPOSED MOTIONS/EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**DF moved to adopt the CDC's new mask guidelines. In line with the new CDC guidelines issued February 25, 2022, Desert Marigold requires all students and staff to wear masks while indoors when the Maricopa County Community Level is listed as "High" according**

**to the CDC;** ~~Desert Marigold School requires all students and staff to wear masks while indoors;~~ however, when community members are outdoors, masks will be optional. These outdoor times include: drop off and pick up from the parking lot, during recess and break times, and when walking to and from classes. **On the days that they are required,** students are encouraged to bring at least two masks to change as needed. **On the days that masks are required,** masks are to be **provided by** Desert Marigold ~~will provide masks~~ if a student does not have one. (These are changes to the first paragraph of the 2022 Covid Policy and Procedure document.) NG second. The following discussion took place:

DF The motion adds that nuance around the community level of covid and how it's listed. The metrics are on the CDC website. I did look at the tool. We are at medium right now.

AS I did some research on this and checked out the CDC and MCDPH. There's no new information about schools other than they'll be updating their guidance. Also, I noticed they have a widget we could use. I checked in with Laura Heaney to see if we could put this on our website's front page and Parent Square. But there's an issue here. The widget has data from March 2<sup>nd</sup> and says we're in high transmission. When you use the tool directly on the CDC site, the data is from February 24th and says we're in medium transmission. The widget has the most up to date data. So that discrepancy is worrisome. Also, I'm wondering about the logistics of this. Who's checking it? Parents? Admin? Teachers? Who's responsible for managing this? How often does this data change? I'm worried about who's going to manage this, and if it's even manageable.

FM AS dug deep and found the latest data, but 10 other families found last week's data and are planning on not masking. This could be an issue. JT, what do you think?

JT I would like to move on with this and follow the guidelines we set for ourselves. I don't want to set ourselves up for failure where we're not keeping people safe.

MM I know I don't have a vote, but I'm ready to move on, and there's nothing preventing us from enacting an emergency trend. I think we can take that route as necessary. People aren't following that anyway, and it sounds very tedious.

DF The back and forth would be ridiculous. It may change week to week and would be pretty challenging. I'm curious how we switched from medium to high in a week. I assumed we wouldn't be flipping unless something unusual happens.

KK BF, do you have any thoughts you'd like to add?

BF Sorry, I'm looking for the widget. Maybe it requires some rewording for the policy. Maybe if the numbers go up, we change it. My interest is to abide by a legal standard of care. This is one of them. I can't say that I always agree with it, but my personal feelings about that may differ than as a board member. I haven't seen the new numbers from the widget. I thought the numbers going down would be steady. I can see how logistically this would pose some issues. We'd need to email the school when our status changes. I would trust JT and FM about how enforceable something like this is.

KK MK, I'm curious to hear your thoughts?

MK Being on campus, I see a lot of not wearing masks, and I'm almost thinking that we're already kind of doing that. It's not being as enforced anymore, but I'm also at the point that the



people who are going to wear masks are going to wear masks. And those who don't will not. I know people feel done with it.

KK NG, thoughts?

NG I've spent a lot of time trying to find people who are middle ground to see where they stand. I feel it's important to hear from the community, and a lot of the people who are middle ground know that the tools are there. They can vaccinate and wear masks. People should be able to make their own decisions for their families. I think masks should be optional, and if we're going to be posting widgets then we also need to pay attention to our bill of rights for parents and allow them to make their own medical decisions.

DF I think it's important to point out that we're voting on the latest CDC guidelines, but not how to implement that. We could add light language that we'll only check once every two weeks or once a month. We don't want to make it a pain and put all this work on FM, so I think it's important that we should write some sort of guidance. I would think it would trend a certain way for a while before switching.

MM I'm saying this with love. I don't want to discuss this. I think the motion needs to be cleaned up and let's take a vote. If I had voting rights, I'd want to wrap it up. I suggest we amend the motion and revote.

Motion retracted.

DF moved to adopt the CDC new mask guidance from February 25, 2022. NG second.

FM I have a question. That widget that AS mentioned says that we wouldn't change anything right now, right?

DF If that's correct, then that's correct. This would give you flexibility.

MM That's not what I was recommending. I was suggesting we change the mask mandate, but this isn't my motion.

NG I would love that.

DF I'd like to stay within the standard of care.

BF I echo DF's concerns.

MM There is language that the CDC is trending on relaxing mask guidance.

AS I think we need to vote, and if someone else wants to put forward another motion, then we go from there.

Votes in Favor: DF, JT, DF. Opposed: AS, NG. **Motion passes.**

KK Any other motions that anyone wants to make?

03.23.22 Approved

NG moved to make DMS mask optional. AS second. No further discussion. Votes in favor: KK, JT, NG. Opposed: AS. Abstain: DF. **Motion passes.**

KK moved to implement the mask optional policy effective as of March 7<sup>th</sup>, communications going out March 4<sup>th</sup>, and the 2022 Covid Policy being updated and available on the website by the effective date. DF second. No further discussion. Unanimous Votes in Favor: KK, AS, DF, NG, JT. **Motion passes.**

FM Would you like me to make that update available online?

AS I did that the last time, so if someone can update the policy and get it to me, I get can put it up on the website. I'm able to do it again.

FM Would you like me to put that information out to the community or would you like someone from the board to do that?

KK I don't have a preference.

FM AS, send me the wording of the motion so I can put out a communication to the community.

AS In a nutshell, I will send FM the motions, he will send out a communication to community, FM or staff will update the policy and get it to me, and I'll put it up on the website. Is that what everyone heard? I see nodding. Thanks.

FM We did not change if someone has covid and needs to be in a mask for five days. That CDC stance stays?

AS That did not change. That stays the same in our policy.

KK moved to go into Executive Session for discussion regarding personnel matters and also to invite Frank Mirizio, Scott Edwards, Ben Fong, and Myriah Mhoun into the session. DF seconded. No further discussion. Vote unanimous in favor: KK, DF, AS, JT, NG. **Motion passes.**

KK explained logistics of executive session.

Executive session began at 8:30pm.

The minutes of the Executive Session are confidential and are maintained separately pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 38-431.01 and 38-431.03.

Executive session ended at 9:34pm.

Regular meeting resumed at 9:36pm.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

03.23.22 Approved

KK Spring Break is March 14-18. Our next board meeting is March 23rd, and our townhall is March 22 from 5:30pm - 7:00pm on the patio.

KK moved to adjourn the Wednesday, 03.02.22 meeting. NG second. No further discussion. Unanimous vote in favor: JT, DF, AS, NG, KK. **Motion passes.**

**CLOSING VERSE**

JT read the closing verse.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:38pm.

Prepared by AS on 03.02.2022.