



Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School Governance Council

**** VIRTUAL MEETING DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING ****

Virtual meeting location: <https://meet.google.com/huc-tqqa-kjq>

Monday, July 13, 2020 7:00am

Governance Council members present: Ami Rosengren (remote), Amy Levash (remote), Becky Wollner (remote), Cecilia Guajardo (remote), Dan Davis (remote), Mary Ann Christopher (remote), Mike Mullen (remote).

Governance Council members absent: none

Teachers & staff present: Ashely Gauger (remote), Sarah Barron (remote), Kayla Buser (remote), Katie Popp (remote), Walter Sams (remote), Sunny Knutson (remote).

Guests present (all remote): Christina Knoske, Laura Wollersheim, Sarah Fortney, Moriah Butler, Angela Berend, Taylor Hoge, Laura Jach Smith, Greta Malek, Mia Arter, Courtney Finn, Sara Christy, Sarah Neumann, Korinne Haeffel, Chris Petersen, Sarah Fisk, Monica Ammerman, Monica Skwierawski, Amy Pollard, Kat (didn't sign-in with full name).

7:00 AM Welcome and record of attendance

7:06 AM Dan Davis called meeting to order

7:07 AM Approve 6/29/20 meeting minutes

Motion to approve: Amy Levash

2nd: Cecilia Guajardo

Passed unanimously. Minutes approved as submitted.

7:08 AM Approve 7/1/20 meeting minutes

Motion to approve: Becky Wollner

2nd: Mike Mullen

Passed unanimously. Minutes approved as submitted.

7:09 AM President's report – Dan Davis

Dan introduces himself as the new Governance Council President and gives an update on budget, meeting with RNC about cleaning procedures, hiring of School Administrator and

Administrative Assistant, class configuration, school reopening plan, election of new members, and early fall elections.

Dan introduces Mike Mullen as new GC member taking Mia Arter's vacant seat until fall elections. Mike was nominated and unanimously voted into the Governance Council at the July 1st meeting. Ashley Gauger introduces new teachers, Katie Popp and Walter Sams.

7:23 AM Dan explains public comment procedures

7:25 AM Public comment opens

Christina Knoske expresses concerns about kids coming from different communities and asks how this will affect decisions made regarding COVID spread. Asks how/when questions made by parents in GC meetings will be answered/addressed. Dan Davis replied.

Laura Wollersheim on behalf of Tera Rogers thinks that school should reopen on September 1st and that class structure decision should be postponed until reopening decision is made.

Monica Ammerman feels strongly that coming back in-person is very important for kids' well-being. Expresses that ROLES environment is great for social distancing. Asks if screening protocols will include temperature checks rather than just signs of cold/cough symptoms.

Mia Arter recommends to rethink the lottery procedure and how to get good-fit families.

Laura Smith asks about a plan for students/families who opt-out this school year because of COVID and if there will be changes in the lottery or if they will lose their seat. She thinks there should be a change in class scheduling with plans for inside and outside time. Expressed that combined class structure is not good with this mix of students and COVID circumstances.

Korinne Petersen asks how will in-person instruction plans look like. Expresses concerns about social distancing indoors and how will that look like. She thinks group activities are not safe. Asks for lottery accommodations for parents who opt-out for medical reasons. Asks about contingency plans for a possible outbreak and how will a shut-down look like.

Taylor Hoge asks what will drive decision making for in-person instruction and what's the plan for students/staff who might need to quarantine for 2 weeks. Asks for support and not to be punitive about absences for this reason.

Monica Skwierawski states that all parents are nervous and scared. Asks to put fears aside and focus on facts. Expressed that it's important to be at school in-person for mental/social needs.

Greta Malek thinks kids haven't been sick yet because they've been quarantined since the beginning of the pandemic. States that other countries tried to slowly reopen schools and had to close back. Thinks kids should not be in close proximity.

7:45 AM Dan Davis closes public comments and introduces the School Reopening Plan

Dan explains reopening plan is a recommendation and it is fluid. We will have to adapt and refine. Decisions to be made: Will ROLES go back to school in-person? What's the schedule? States that questions/concerns about losing place for opting-out this school year will be addressed.

Cecilia asks to include staff members in this decision-making process since returning teachers have the best insight on how things work in ROLES' specific environment, which is very different from traditional schools.

7:48 AM Mike Mullen presents reopening plan.

Mike explains reopening plan. Asks for flexibility and patience. Describes the resources that were considered to make this recommendation and that it was made with the information we have up to this point. Clarifies that this will be a day-by-day / week-by-week planning process.

Ashley Gauger comments that teachers and staff have been working on a different proposal for reopening and that their input was not included in this recommendation.

Mike explains that the next steps will be a 3-part plan and that communication is critical. Instructional delivery plans will be refined and talks about considering legal implications. He emphasizes on the positive aspects and advantages of being a small school and having an outdoor learning model to face this pandemic.

Cecilia agrees that communication is key and that we should keep parents informed during these uncertain times.

Mary Ann proposes to implement outdoor tents and encourages to spend most of the time outdoors during the fall.

Amy L asks if there is going to be a survey sent out for parents and asks about more details regarding mask wearing.

Dan states that this recommendation is a start. Plans will be made with most current data. A committee will be formed and it will include staff members.

Cecilia recommends to include input from RNC since they started running outdoor summer programs and installed handwashing stations along the trails, and have experience with mask wearing procedures with kids.

Becky asks what is the goal and expresses concerns about having to decide about reopening today.

Dan replies that the goal is to approve this recommendation and to create a committee.

Ami R also expresses concerns about deciding today and thinks there is not enough information yet.

Dan states that the decision must be made by the end of July and clarifies that the details will not be ready since scenarios are constantly changing. Asks if we can have an online option ready and expresses that specific details have to consider our budget.

Cecilia thinks we should work on details for Plan A – “reopening in-person” but asks to also work on a plan B – “virtual learning” to be prepared for a possible online option if COVID gets worse in the upcoming weeks or in case there is an outbreak within ROLES.

Mary Ann agrees we need to be prepared for both options.

Dan clarifies that plans will be made for different scenarios and the online option will be included in the event of an outbreak.

Ami R states that other school districts have more resources.

Amy L asks how will lessons for quarantined kids be delivered. Will there be a temporary online learning option?

Ashley replies that teachers are brainstorming different ideas and their proposal including a 2-week responsive cycle, 4 days in-person and 1 day for deep cleaning per week. Clarifies that the teacher proposal is different from this recommendation. Asks for time to refine and present the teachers proposal for reopening. Teachers want to prepare a plan that includes inquiry learning and responsive classroom practices. Teachers want to consider parent concerns in the decision-making process.

Sarah Barron comments that the 2-week material prep will help handle contingencies and Fridays off would be spent on planning and deep cleaning.

Cecilia considers that the 2-week planning cycle is a good idea.

Ashley states that the teacher team is looking at different scenarios and is considering past experience with distance learning. Expresses that a small school response will be different from big neighborhood schools.

Dan asks if the teacher team included parent input in their planning process.

Ashley replies they are planning to implement a parent survey and acknowledges that budget restrictions need to be considered.

Dan entertains a motion for a committee to be created, including GC members and school staff. Teachers need to be involved in the plan; their input will help refine the detailed plan. GC will meet again in 2 weeks to review the proposal created by this committee.

8:36 AM Ami Rosengren makes a motion to create a committee and come back in 2 weeks with a more detailed reopening plan that includes budget considerations.

Amy Levash 2nd the motion.

Governance Council votes and motion is passed unanimously.

8:38 AM Dan introduces class configuration proposal and presents a summary of the 4 options

- Option 1 – Multi-age plan
- Option 2 – Current class structure
- Option 3 – Nearly straight-graded model
- Option 4 – Mixed model

Dan talks about pros & cons of each option.

Mike asks if current staffing works for all 4 options.

Ashley Gauger replies that current staffing works for all options.

Mike states that he has experience with many class configurations. He considers that team teaching can work great or be very challenging depending on the way it's implemented. Asks if teachers have experience and are trained on team teaching and multi-grade classroom settings. Talks about the difference between organic team teaching and foundational based team teaching.

Ashley expresses she has previous experience teaching multi-grade students and that this proposal will increase their capacity for collaboration and asks for PD in co-teaching. Explains that in the past the teaching team has work collaboratively and that kids would have a specific home-room.

Mike asks about how staffing is set-up

Dan replies that 1 teacher and 1 paraprofessional are assigned to each classroom.

Walter Sams states that he has previous experience with team-teaching and that this proposal focuses more on collaboration.

Kayla Buser talks about her experience and success when focusing on student needs rather than chronological age. States that she had experience in co-teaching as a substitute teacher. Ashley, Kayla and Sarah Barron have experience in collaborative teaching from last school year at ROLES.

Sarah Barron expresses that she has experience from her previous school and last year at ROLES, and also asks to get more PD in co-teaching.

Katie Popp states she has Montessori training and talks about her experience in multi-age classroom settings and collaboration.

Cecilia asks for clarification on her understanding of this proposal: rather than focusing on being multi-age, the teacher proposal supports inquiry-based learning offering 3 levels: Level 1 - Structured Inquiry / Level 2 – Controlled Inquiry / Level 3 – Guided Inquiry, and the end goal is to become Free Inquiry independent learners.

Ashley confirms that is correct.

Cecilia asks how will individualized learning work and how multi-age level instruction would look like in order to avoid learning gaps.

Ashley replies that it would be a wider scope. Upper-grade students would share knowledge and direct themselves. Teachers would create systems for age bands.

Dan asks how would teachers decide what kids go in each class and how would academic achievement be handled.

Ashley replies there would be flexibility on assigning kids to each class and that they would develop age bands.

Dan asks Katie Popp about Montessori schools. How they handle class configuration, what are the lesson prep implications and if there is a curriculum set up. How does mixed age class configuration help teachers.

Katie replies that Montessori schools mix up to 4 grades in one classroom and that teachers build lesson plans as they go.

Dans wants to clarify how the curriculum lessons would be planned and if there would be enough time to prep or if teachers will prep as they go.

Ashley replies that inquiry-based learning is responsive to students. Repertoire is constantly building. There will be in moment planning. Multi-age level or not, that is how the inquiry model works.

Mike expresses concerns about teachers having enough time and is worried about the huge workload. He is also concerned about consistency. Teacher rotation will be a challenge. Asks about parent input in multi-age plan. He thinks we must know what parents want for their kids.

Cecilia also expresses concerns about parent reactions. We might lose families and that will affect our budget.

Ashley proposes a round table setting for further discussion and acknowledges that timing is not ideal.

Dan states that he would like to see the survey results.

Ashley clarifies that there was no survey implemented, it was an open question feedback option.

Dan asks to evaluate each option in terms of pros & cons and also what could be accomplished/sacrificed in terms of learning.

Mary Ann proposes to narrow options to simplify the decision-making process. She thinks options 3 & 4 could be ruled out. Expresses being open to multi-age classrooms having a positive experience herself. She's open to support the teacher's proposal.

Cecilia expressed that she considers option 3 & 4 as good possibilities and proposes to analyze all options.

Mike talks about class sizes changing every school year and even during the school year. This should be kept in mind in the decision-making process, and not only the actual number of students enrolled today.

Ami R considers that surveys should be anonymous so people are more comfortable expressing their opinions.

9:30 AM Becky Wollner left the meeting.

Dan proposes to schedule a follow-up meeting with more input from parents and teachers before making a decision.

Mike asks if teachers consider that all options would work in case we need to go to full virtual-learning. He expresses concern about safeguarding teachers time and how will curriculum would be handled.

Ashley clarifies that teachers are aware of the amount of work that this proposal involves and that they think this model will help them become better teachers. She states all teachers are on board.

Katie Popp states that teachers believe in ROLES and they are willing to put in the extra work.

Dan expresses that the Governance Council is listening and wants to take time to make this decision. It's a brand-new idea that takes time to fully understand. It can work or fail and we need to understand the future implications. The GC also needs to get more input from parents before making a decision. Dan is open to receiving feedback from parents and provides his email dan.davis@cgschmidt.com.

9:38 AM Dan proposes to close this agenda item and meet again the week of July 27th.

9:39 AM Mike Mullen makes a motion to adjourn.

Cecilia 2nd the motion.

Vote I: Ami Rosengren, Amy Levash, Cecilia Guajardo, Dan Davis, Mary Ann Christopher, Mike Mullen.

Becky Wollner left early.

Chat comments:

Christina Knoske

7:03 AM

Christina Knoske

Laura Wollersheim

7:03 AM

Morning, Laura Wollersheim

Sarah Fortney

7:03 AM

Sarah Fortney

Moriah Butler

7:03 AM

Moriah Butler

Angela Berend

7:03 AM

Angela Berend

Taylor Hoge

7:03 AM

Taylor Hoge

Laura C Smith

7:03 AM

Laura Jach Smith

Greta Malek

7:03 AM

Greta Malek

Mia Arter

7:04 AM

Mia Arter

Mike Mullen

7:04 AM

Mike Mullen

Courtney Finn

7:04 AM

Courtney Finn

Sara Christy

7:04 AM

Sara Christy

Sarah Neumann

7:17 AM

Sarah Neumann

Korinne & Chris Petersen

7:19 AM

For attendance purposes, Korinne Haeffel and Chris Petersen are present

Laura Wollersheim

7:19 AM

Welcome Mike!

Is there a call in number for this meeting? Two people cannot get in via the link.

Sarah Neumann

7:19 AM

Thanks for joining Mike!

Sarah Fisk

7:20 AM

Sarah Fisk

Laura Wollersheim

7:20 AM

Welcome Katie and Walter!

Mike Mullen

7:22 AM

Welcome Walter and Katie

Christina Knoske

7:24 AM

Comment

Monica Ammerman

7:25 AM

Monica Ammerman

Mia Arter

7:25 AM

I have a comment, if possible.

Laura Wollersheim

7:26 AM

TERA ROGERS cannot get into the meeting via her work computer, so she asked that I post this.

1. Please consider starting school sept. 1st instead of the 8th. Face time this year is invaluable and starting on the 8th is a disservice to our kids. 2. Please consider not making a decision on class structure until you know the numbers after reopening decision as there may be many parents that are hoping for a virtual option and will pull their kids from ROLES which could change numbers.

Laura C Smith

7:26 AM

I have a comment

Monica Ammerman

7:28 AM

I have a comment, please

Mia Arter

7:28 AM

Trying to unmute

Mike Mullen

7:29 AM

You can unmute on the bottom of the page.

Laura Wollersheim

7:32 AM

Yes, thank you all so much for making these very difficult decisions! We all need to be flexible as things change overnight.

Taylor Hoge

7:33 AM

I have a comment, please

Korinne & Chris Petersen

7:33 AM

I'd like to comment.

Greta Malek

7:35 AM

thanks Laura C smith

Taylor Hoge

7:39 AM

I have one

Laura Wollersheim

7:39 AM

Can we remove agenda? Am I the only one who sees it as large?

Sarah Fortney

7:39 AM

I only see the agenda also

Laura Wollersheim

7:40 AM

I agree Taylor!

Sarah Fortney

7:40 AM

Thank you Taylor

Greta Malek

7:40 AM

yes, Taylor!

Sarah Neumann

7:40 AM

Same concerns as Taylor

Monica Skwierawski

7:41 AM

I would like to speak

Greta Malek

7:43 AM

i have a comment

Christina Knoske

7:45 AM

And the new kids virus too!

Sarah Neumann

7:47 AM

I realize it's too late to comment, however regarding the survey NOSD sent to parents, I'm wondering why there was no survey sent to ROLES parents as the school is structured entirely different than NOSD?

Laura Wollersheim

8:05 AM

Can you give us an idea of staff input for fall?

Laura Wollersheim

8:09 AM

I'd love to hear staff input on this-they were there and hopefully have ideas that we all might not.

Laura C Smith

8:09 AM

Mary Ann, thank you for your creative thinking. I think we need more out-of-the-box creative solutions like yours.

Sarah Neumann

8:09 AM

Thank you Amy.

Laura Wollersheim

8:12 AM

Yes-GREAT idea!

Laura Wollersheim

8:14 AM

Do the teachers feel this is the right plan to vote on?

Sarah Neumann

8:14 AM

I hope maybe you might poll the parents at ROLES before making a decision.

Greta Malek

8:15 AM

Shouldn't a parent survey be taken into account before making decisions?

If a decision will cause a big number of families to leave, that could put the school in jeopardy as well.

Sarah Neumann

8:16 AM

Being ROLES has several communities in one classroom, is partially outdoors, has yurts as classrooms... we are vastly different from NOSD so using their parent survey doesn't seem appropriate to me.

Laura Wollersheim

8:18 AM

I understand the need to make a plan A today as families are making decisions by the end of July. Thank you for all who are involved and will be involved on this committee!

Greta Malek

8:19 AM

Thank you Cecilia! Let's have a virtual option planned that is better than it was in spring.

Laura Wollersheim

8:21 AM

Should Fridays be "off" for disinfecting and much needed teacher-prep for in-person and possible plan b online?

Laura C Smith

8:23 AM

Has a half day option been considered? Then the students could be outside the entire time, reduce the use of bathrooms and shared meal time, reduce the time students need to wear masks, etc. Then the afternoon could be a start to virtual learning, if it turns to all virtual to reasons out of the school's control. This would also give the teachers more time to prep all-outdoor lessons, prep virtual lessons.

Sarah Neumann

8:25 AM

We appreciate you Ashley asking about parent opinion on it! Thank you!

Greta Malek

8:32 AM

Thank you, Ashley. Having a virtual plan on hand in case kids can't come in will be very good. We know, kids will not be able to come in because they will be getting sick with the normal "fall/winter" illnesses. Having this virtual packages at hand will make it easier to keep kids at home until they are 100% healthy.

Laura Wollersheim

8:35 AM

Can the rough draft of the 2-week plan get sent out? It sounds like it addresses a lot of the concerns brought up.

Sarah Fortney

8:36 AM

Thank you Ashley

Greta Malek

8:41 AM

Option 4: what happens to the 4 1st graders of the mixed group next year? They would need to be integrated back into the rest of the grade after having missed being with those peers a whole year.

Greta Malek

8:42 AM

Option 3: 22 kids in 1st - are final numbers of returners in already? how many are actually coming back? Number might be less.

Christina Knoske

8:43 AM

Option 3 this year! With uncertainty of COVID-19

Cecilia Guajardo

8:44 AM

Christina Knoske, can you mute your mic, please?

Greta Malek

8:47 AM

Thank you, Mike for putting that concern out.

Greta Malek

8:49 AM

Are we recruiting with multigrade structure in mind?

Sarah Neumann

8:51 AM

Isn't team teaching different than multiage grouping?

Greta Malek

8:52 AM

Team teaching vs. multiage teaching are two different things, though.

Sarah Fortney

8:58 AM

Have staff considered current and incoming family needs? or answered any of the questions raised in the survey?

Sarah Neumann

8:58 AM

How do you plan to teach combined classrooms virtually, when most parents I spoke with thought it failed last year in person?

Amy Pollard

8:59 AM

Yes, how does this work with distance learning? This sounds like a lot of in-person involvement that would be very challenging to implement virtually.

Sarah Neumann

9:02 AM

Agree with Sarah Fortney's comment. I know an incoming family that plans to leave if there are combined classes, as well as current families that may leave with combined classes.

Sarah Fortney

9:03 AM

Will the same teacher and cohort stay together year after year?

Greta Malek

9:07 AM

It seems this flexibility of "not being stuck" wasn't an option for some in last years K/1st set-up.

Monica Ammerman

9:12 AM

We have a high caliber of educators at ROLES. I trust their ideas and experiences. I think this plan is flexible and can be extremely effective. ROLES is think-outside-of-the-box school. If parents are going to withdraw based on combined classes, that is narrow sighted in my opinion.

Greta Malek

9:12 AM

We need to keep in mind that there is not a "Roles II" option for middle school, so essentially the kids will need to be ready academically to go into middle school in another setting.

Christina Knoske

9:14 AM

Ashley do you think combining students will work virtually this coming year?

Taylor Hoge

9:16 AM

Our kids are well supported and can pick up academic "facts" at any point and with interest. Inquiry based learning, collaboration, flexible thinking, etc are lifelong skills that cannot be replicated. Yes, the children may need time to review some factual data, that is widely available in resource materials, the other skills are foundational.

Sarah Neumann

9:19 AM

Has Mike seen parent letters? I know several were sent.

Taylor Hoge

9:19 AM

All of the input from parents with the last packet and at the last meeting were from majority K/1 parents. There was no survey widely distributed. There was no feedback from the 3/4 classroom widely available or shared.

Greta Malek

9:19 AM

Did the incoming families were told about this multiage possibility before the lottery?

Sarah Neumann

9:20 AM

The input shared were from whichever parents felt strongly enough to send a letter. You are right Taylor, there was no survey.

Kat

9:23 AM

Can the surveys please include incoming families?

Taylor Hoge

9:23 AM

As majority concerns were from K/1 parents, it is possible removing K as separate group will mitigate issues. Also having upfront education and expectations will be a huge piece. Was 3/4 a better success because parents were fully informed from Day 1? These are important questions.

Sarah Neumann

9:23 AM

Agree with Kat. I know parents coming in and they would like to be included.

Greta Malek

9:24 AM

New families need to know about those options early in the process so they can make their Plan B as well.

Kat

9:25 AM

Also, it would be nice if incoming families could be made aware of gc meetings. Thank you.

Greta Malek

9:27 AM

Option 3: it still is unclear how many 1st graders there really will be due to all the uncertainties. Number will look different.

Sarah Neumann

9:28 AM

I know many parents that would like options 3 or 4. So maybe don't take them off the table until sending out the parent survey

Sarah Fortney

9:28 AM

Option 3 should stay as an option

Kat

9:28 AM

Most parents I have spoken to have wanted Option 3.

Amy Pollard

9:28 AM

Yes, please keep option 3, especially with the uncertainty of COVID

Sarah Neumann

9:29 AM

Thank you Ami. That was a surprise about the last one.

Taylor Hoge

9:30 AM

Responses should be anonymous when shared, but a way behind the scenes to check off one response per family to not give false weight to multiple same responses.

Greta Malek

9:31 AM

Please don't rule out anything before the survey.

Christina Knoske

9:31 AM

Made rank options with what thinks parents work best to make a decision.....

Taylor Hoge

9:35 AM

Exactly, the teachers are advocating for themselves and saying this will amplify the model. Studies have shown that mixed age models work the best when it is teacher choice and teacher supported, rather than a forced model due to budgetary or enrollment concerns.

Sarah Neumann

9:36 AM

However last year, the teachers voiced their struggles of not having enough prep time. They even asked parents to help with drop off so they had more prep time. I was also informed last year by a teacher that they were working 80 hours a week and didn't have time for anything (this was a teacher of a combined class).

And also the requested extra PD days they were proposing as well.

Taylor Hoge

9:38 AM

The teachers last year also had no paras at the beginning and limited prep time and were doing literally everything from drop off/pick up until halfway through the year. They had extremely limited prep time at all during the day and were with students.

Monica Skwierawski

9:39 AM

They are better prepared this year, and have a plan that puts our children's learning first.

Laura Wollersheim

9:40 AM

Thank you ALL so much for volunteering your personal time!

Katie Popp

9:40 AM

Thank you GC and parents. Everyone is putting in a lot of time and effort here to support ROLES!

Sarah Neumann

9:40 AM

Thanks all!

Amy Pollard

9:40 AM

Thank you everyone!

Taylor Hoge

9:40 AM

Thank you!

Greta Malek

9:40 AM

Thank you!

Sarah Fortney

9:40 AM

thanks to all