

**Governance Council Minutes**  
**Verona Area International School**  
VAIS-LMC  
Monday, November 14, 2022

**Attendance**

James Kokalj, Sally Parks, Grace Flores, Brandon Braithwaite, Sarah Shaw, Evan Henderson, Steve Kean

Virtually: Joanne Mueller, Darlene Berkowitz, Teresa Mueller, Kelly Gibson

Also attending: Katie Bhandare (virtually)

Absent: Charles James, Patty Arifin

Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m.

Approval of October minutes. Teresa moved to approve the minutes, Brandon seconded. Motion carries- minutes are approved.

**Director's Report**

- Teachers were very grateful for the meals provided to them over conferences.
- November 4th was our asynchronous day, and teachers did professional development. Thanks to parents for working with their students at home.
  - The whole staff was together for the first time and were able to engage in some community building activities, in addition to the professional development work.
  - The company that owns level Chinese has some improved features, with more of a focus on oral learning. Teachers learned about some of these new features and the upcoming changes and additions to come later this year.
- Confucius classroom grant- Clarissa will draft an outline of the report for the university.
  - One aspect of the grant is the cultural activities, including the tea ceremony. Those will take place in the coming week.
  - Sally is working with Clarissa to see if we can move funds around to cover some of our Chinese level learning curriculum, which would be a huge financial help for us.
- Staffing updates
  - In the process of hiring a new secretary
  - Amelia McConnell has been helping out in the interim.
  - We are hiring a new EA. An offer was extended to a candidate today.
  - We are working on hiring a long-term substitute for Lumei's maternity leave.
- Ms. Shawl has been working with students on "debugging" problem solving strategies.
  - These are used throughout the building to help students learn to resolve conflicts.
- The staff is looking for cafeteria volunteers, which is 11:20-12:45. There will be communication shared to solicit help for that time of day.
- Outreach- we have been in touch with the Boys and Girls club- we will be there in January during the lottery period to help people get registered for the lottery that evening.

- Sarah Shaw discussed Chinese New year. The school celebration date is 2/3/22.
  - The MS/HS teachers have been in touch to collaborate.
  - We are hoping to have an event that families will be able to attend and see in person. Sarah is looking for some guest presenters to come in.
  - There will be an event on 1/21/22 at the Library for Chinese New Year.
- Brandon has been nominated as the VP by James Kokalj. Teresa seconded the nomination.
  - Congratulations to Brandon, who will serve as the VP for this year, and will fill the second year of the term if he is re-elected after his term is up at the end of this year.
- Evan is finishing up the directory and it is almost ready to distribute.

### **Budget committee**

- The committee will look to transition tasks and duties to the next assistant to help with the work that Christie Kass used to do.
- The budget will need to be amended to include the field trip expense change we voted on at the last meeting.

### **Fundraising committee**

- Question whether it is ok to put fundraising goals on the vaisverona.org website with an explanation of why we need to fundraise.
- Giving Tuesday is coming up November 30th, 2022.
- The Holiday gift guide is live.

### **Outreach**

- The committee met to review and proof the communication materials for the recruitment season.
- They created a calendar of events and a mailer that can go out to 4K families. They are waiting for the mailing list from the district.
- There is a sign-up genius which provides volunteer opportunities for parents to help out.
- Volunteers have been updating the website. They'd like to include awards that have been awarded in the past. There are solicitations going out to gather that information. A list of awards gathered so far:

#### Awards:

- 2022 Niche Top Ten Elementary School in Madison Area (only Verona elementary school)
- 2017 Donna Clementi Blue Ribbon Award Winner
- Huang Laoshi's recognition as World Language Teacher
- Ms. Reiter's training in oral proficiency in Chinese testing and distinguished language educator
- 2 students won 2020 Excellence in Chinese Learning Award by the Wisconsin Association of Chinese Language Teacher

- graduates can go on to receive certificates of biliteracy at graduation
  - 2019 1 student won Excellence in Language Study Award from WAFLT
  - Several students have passed AP Mandarin Test
  - students won speech contest
- The Kids expo went well. There were several families who are already very interested, and also many families that were unaware of the school and Charters in general.

### **School Climate**

- No updates.
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### **Parent engagement**

- We hosted a well-attended Ice Age Trail Family Hike - thank you Jenn Tzeng for organizing!
- Conference night meal deliveries and snacks were generously donated by families and greatly appreciated by staff.
- Fall classroom parties were a highlight for students. Thank you, Karen Reed, for organizing, and special appreciation to all the creative and fun parent volunteers!
- The Fall Family Party at Harriet Park was also well-attended with costumes, pumpkins, playtime, and snacks enjoyed by all. **Thank you to Diana Shelton and Sara Beuthien for leading this activity!**
- Dads' Night Out was a hit with two tables full of VAIS Dads, games, conversation, and laughs. Thank you, Alan Feder, for leading this event!

### **Other business**

- Our school newsletter came out and was very well-done. The students are already working on their next issue.

Sarah motioned to adjourn, Brandon seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:18.