

Fernwood School Engagement Council (SEC)

May 25, 2025

<https://meet.google.com/tir-huzv-ikc>

YTD Attendance as of 5/27/25- 95.2% Great job considering we were at Douglas!

5:30 Welcome

Kristy Lowell, Meredith Genrich Mertes, Katie Walters, Jennifer Sarnowski, Karen Lemke, Kristen Adler, Jennifer Cramer, Ryan Baumer, Amy Joyce, Jennifer Brumm Maciejewski

1. MPS District Advisory Council Report - none

Washington DC report- Great experience! This was the biggest group we have ever taken on a trip like this! Ms. Kristy went to support the group. The kids experienced consequences (of not sleeping, or getting ice cream for dinner, etc). Our tour guide said "our kids are different". They are inquisitive, engaged....a big compliment for parents, teachers, and our Montessori education! This was a big success! The plan is that there will be a DC trip every other year for the adolescent program.

5:35 Hiring Updates-Due to retirements and choices that people are making, this has been a big year for hiring! Hopefully, this will not be a trend.

Elaina Sullivan-She has been an interventionist and a school support teacher. She is a total Montessori expert! She is retiring this year to spend time with **grandbabies!**

Lower El-Elaine Clay is retiring after 35-40 years of teaching! She has taught some of our teachers! This was announced to her community a week ago, the new teacher is Lauren Schweiger (she worked with Ms. Kristy at Ben Franklin, she is a vet but new to Montessori, she student taught for Montessori at Fernwood with Ms. Jen). We are thrilled to have her!

Music-This position was vacant for 2024-25. Ryan Baumer and Jenny Bouton helped on the committee. Ms. Kristy has been working with the person who will be taking the position and she is very excited to start. Her name will be revealed ASAP.

Upper El-Ms. Vogel has let her classroom know and she will extend her maternity leave into a leave of absence (she will forgo her position in MPS). Ms. Jean is a Fernwood staple! This happened at the end of the interview cycle. There is someone who will come out of Montessori training with the district placed here to take over her class. Her name is LaBernadette Ferense.

Jamie Krutsch will go to substitute teach. Tracy Meier will be the new teacher in our Autism Unit.

Parent Coordinator-Ms. Meredith moving into a classroom para position. The candidate is excited but still in the process of accepting the position.

Para-A para left mid year. Ms. Meg Costello in Room 26 actually has a teaching license so she will be moving to Burdick to be a teacher. The para who is coming over is from within MPS.

CHA-This position will remain open. We had one applicant who did not show up for

the interview. This position is historically difficult to fill (MPS does not offer competitive pay).

5:35 Wisconsin Legislation: Act 20

-Wisconsin Act 20

We beat the state level of proficiency and we continue to grow.

Teachers will get reading training (they have gotten half of it at this point). Our school has already been using approved curriculum and we use the science of reading. Ms. Kristy has been getting principal training (about 15 hours so far).....she is getting a lot of information and she is already doing a lot of it.

Act 20 involves additional testing. The lowest students will be getting a personalized reading plan which includes literacy skills goals and benchmarks, details on how will progress be monitored, and a list of interventions (based on the science of reading). Fernwood uses the curriculum called Waseca which is based on Orton Gillingham (which is very established and evidence based).

-Teacher perspective: Katie Walters (Primary), Jen Sarnowski (Lower El)

Issues from the teacher perspective:

A kid might have a bad day or read slowly and then they get a flagged for a reading intervention and it may not "fit". So, there are a few kids who are getting "flagged" who might not need it. Some primary students do not do well with timed reading (also not very "Montessori" to time kids). Some kids/parents of primary students might be unnecessarily concerned. Ms. Jen says that the teachers should "push" reading rather than the parents being the "pushers". Assessments are in print and Montessori teaches cursive.

General Concerns with Act 20:

Our new Superintendent is reallocating positions at Central Office. There might be part time math or reading interventionists at schools but Ms. Kristy is not optimistic about it. We had an interventionist (a person who can pull out students who need extra support to help teachers) but it was cut (Ms. Elaina). So, this is all poor timing.

Ms. Kristy thinks we can get to 80% proficiency (100% is probably not possible)! A strength of Montessori is that we are developmentally aware (some kids get it in 1st grade, some in 2nd grade). We can track that, we understand that, we can meet kids where they are, so we don't panic. Yay us!

Historically, we kept our interventionist because we have lots of kids (versus other schools who don't have as much enrollment=less funding=less staff), we have paid for extra reading tutors because again, we have lots of kids and a bigger budget. Some schools only have 200 kids, don't have money for interventionists, AND they have 10% reading proficiency (tough, tough situation).

Under the new Superintendent, budgets may be centralized and there may be more budget equity across schools.

Ms. Kristy is more concerned with Math at Fernwood because there is more room for improvement there.

-More Act 20 information if you are interested: <https://dpi.wi.gov/wi-reads/act-20-faq>

6:30 Schedule of future meetings-all will be virtual unless otherwise noted at 5:30 p.m.

6:30 Adjournment

Thanks to all for your commitment and participation this year!

Have a great summer!