

Chugach Educational Corporation (CEC)

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: August 26, 2020, 7:15pm

Location: Chugach Optional School

- **Call to Order: 7:19pm Mandy Casurella**

- **Attendance**

Mandy Casurella, President

Tamar Ben-Yosef, Vice President

Joe Miller, Treasurer

Bo Grauvogel, Vice Treasurer

Fernanda Conrad, Co-Secretary

Brenda Lester, Co-Secretary

Maggie Miller, Member At Large

Liz Provencio (voting member), PC Coordinator

Clare Hill, Principal

**Additional Assembly Members:**

Amy Brabec - Via Zoom

Celeste Long - Via Zoom

- **Reading of Minutes/Review of Agenda:**

- **Identification of Time Keeper:** Time Keeper identified as Tamar Ben-Yosef

- **President's Remarks:**

- **Kimochi's Roundtable:** Feelings check in and emphasis on keeping SEL (Social Emotional Learning) and gratitude at the forefront of our community this year. *"When we bring feeling into learning, we learn better and go further."*
- *The negative sticks and the positive slips. It takes more attention to focus on the positive.*
- *It is a big learning curve being here on the board to navigate hurdles.*
- *As a group go around and let us know something positive either board related or not.*
- *Taking in the good and holding on to it.*
  - *Mandy is proud of learning new things.*
    - *Having a meeting and organizing things in this way.*
    - *Learning to navigate new systems.*
  - *Joe has the books in his and Bo's hands.*
    - *It was nice to see people in the school - the light up when you see them*
  - *Maggie is positive that we figured out a way to be together in person.*
  - *Clare feels like this week we've made it over a hump with technology challenges, starting school and it has been going well.*
  - *Bo was happy to receive the email that the board could meet in person and he had an awesome meeting about the books. Tamar has enjoyed working with Mandy - her role as Vice President will be bigger next year and the fact that we are doing*

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*this at this time makes her feel that we are learning about the board in a more in depth way than we would normally.*

- *Amy said yesterday was awesome because at the curbside pickup they saw kids and families and that is the whole reason we are doing what we are doing.*
  - *Fernanda is doing this with Brenda - we are aware of due process now, and it's nice to have someone check your work.*
  - *Brenda shared that her son Hatcher is a different kid this week being connected back with his community and that makes the work that we are doing on the board worth it.*
  - *Liz is grateful - she has been involved with the board for 10 years, she has been to most of the board meetings over the last few years but it has been nice to be able to share this with other parents.*
- **Approval of Past Minutes:** Maggie moves to Approve 8/12/2020's minutes, seconded by Liz - Board meetings are approved.
  - **Follow-up Board Business: 7:30pm**
    - Restricted funds donation refund - A parent emailed the board and asked for a \$500 refund of a donation that was made to a teacher that was not used. This is why restricted donations are a problem.
    - Revisions to the Chugach handbook should be done every year.
    - Board Bianual report has been renewed and is good for another 2 years - next renewal is 7/2022.
    - Loren's recommendation is to follow the 1996 bylaws that say that you do not have to be physically present to vote. Board assembly voting will be allowable via email/zoom.
  - **Principals' Update:7:35pm**
    - Neat things happening
      - Curbside pickup for Kindy and Upper.
      - Library curbside pickup will start soon.
      - We are getting emails out to families, that is inspiring.
      - Maya will be able to have families zoom with her if they have health related items
      - We are looking at Book Club for kids via Zoom and partnering with APU students that need hours and want to do some great things with Chugach children.
      - Some great learning is happening and if feels differently from the spring.
      - The Scoop will start on the 1st of September.
      - Families that have been doing the virtual program are having some issues but that is getting smoothed out.
      - Question from Joe - how are the staff feeling?
        - Last week was hard - we have some staff that are ready to go and some staff that aren't - this week feels like a breath has been taken.
        - Amy says they can't say enough about our staff and what they have done for our curriculum. They are becoming tech-people and it is stretching them in new ways. All of our teams have had at least 1 if not 2 team members.This has been a great time to get together to discuss what they

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are doing and WHY they are doing it. The silver lining in this is that our teachers are working very hard and figuring it out and building something great.

- Teacher's are doing AMAZING. We have an outstanding program.
- The Chugach spirit is FELT across the computer. :)
- We have some wonderful new families at Chugach that need connections. We need to figure out how families can connect with each other.
- Liz and Nina are waiting for the school to get settled before connecting with parents.
- Scoop will be sent out every 2 weeks - the 1st and 15th (ish) of each month.
  - Scoop is getting revamped with a new look.
  - Student voices will be in the Scoop.
  - Lots of room for additional materials (Videos, etc.).
  - We can feel free to get creative with our Board messaging.
    - Board Logo
- Joe asks if we are having student council - Clare says we can absolutely still do that
  - Art Page or Submissions for Scoop from Students - Talk to Susan Hayner about Zine?
- Clare says we have several staff that want to be Canvas experts.
- **New Business: 7:49pm**
  - **PC Update** - Liz says there is not much going on yet, she and Nina have been in contact with the front staff and will work on getting PCs together for a Zoom next week.
  - **Budget - Joe & Bo**
    - Taking on the Treasurer role this year has been very stressful.
      - Not knowing what we can give to the teachers to deliver the education that they want.
      - Normal looks like: At the end of a school year the board hands over the books to the new Treasurer, we manage what is already set up for us, and work with the community to approve it.
      - This year we are building and flying the plane at the same time. We are creating the budget WHILE teachers are spending money because they need it now. We have emergency issues coming up.
      - Per our bylaws, we must have an approved budget.
      - Bo and Joe have visibility of the issues to be reconciled from last year and we need to get the focus back on this year's budget.
      - The issue that we have is that normal budgets have knownline items, we do not have those yet.
      - Per the bylaws - anything over \$1000 needs a community vote.
        - Big issue we are anticipating. How can we quickly spend money when we need it because we won't know we need it until it is right in front of us.
        - Fiscal flexibility.
    - We need a strategy.
    - Joe wants everyone to share one concern or question about the budget

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- Clare's concern is she doesn't know what our economy will be like, it feels scary to spend money because as of right now, all of our fundraisers are cancelled. Within our school we have a lot of financial differences. In April we are going to have scary conversations at a public school level.
  - Bo thinks that the teacher's might not be asking for things - maybe we need transparency for where we are.
  - Celeste - Her concern is a carryover from last year - she didn't turn in receipts until the end of last year. This year she won't do that. She needed to buy a monitor so that she could see all of her kids on her Zoom sessions. She is worried that they won't know what they need until they know. Amy - Teachers are spending money. That needs to be communicated to them. They think that the Big Simple that they didn't spend last year is being carried over. Library Books.
  - Tamar wants to understand more about what the teachers are spending money on right now. Looking at the budget from last year and evaluating what might or might not be used. So we can have a better understanding of how needs are going to be different.
  - Fernanda is hoping that COVID will be over in the next year and that we will be able to come back and do our fundraisers as we knew it, but if that is not the case and we don't have fundraisers then what money are we going to have next year? What is that going to look like so that the conversation in April is not as scary.
  - Brenda's concern is about Auction, taxpayer dollars and transparency of allocation of funds.
  - Mandy's concern is wanting staff input. The staff is at the front lines, money needs to be accessible to them. We need their input to have a collaborative effort.
  - Maggie is wondering what we can do to make it clear that we DO need help to those that can but we don't expect it from those who can't.
    - We want people who CAN give to know how they can do it and the people who can't to know that they don't have to, as well for everyone to know that any amount they give is welcome.
- Board Fund.
  - Principal Fund.
  - Teacher's Fund (spent \$9000 less last year) - Roughly ½ our budget for 2019-2020
    - We need staff input.
  - Enrichment - Roughly the other half of our budget for 2019-2020.
  - We have enough money in the bank currently to cover our budget AND keep the required reserves the bylaws.
  - Joe is proposing a strategy that has flexibility - how do we create this?
    - Trust and Transparency.
    - Flexibility.

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- A smaller, generalized budget that comprises the CEC, the teachers, the principal, and enrichment.
  - We don't have line items yet.
  - Example - Outdoor school is enrichment
- Discussion:
  - How does this work without line items?
  - We don't know what we don't know.
  - This could make us stretch in ways we didn't think of.
  - Any suggested Google Sheets or something to hold us accountable.
  - We are a 501c3 which allows us people to give a \$300 deduction against your income.
    - We can apply for grants because we are a 501c3
    - Any expense that goes toward transitioning to working from home that you didn't originally budget for can be reimbursed.
    - October 14th for awards - AKCAN - up to \$20,000
      - 3 options for applying for COVID relief funds.
      - We have experienced grant writers as parents - reach out and say this is a great way to volunteer.
    - What was the teacher expense process previously?
      - Submit receipt with paperwork that qualifies the expense.
        - Give it to Joe.
      - Going forward, same process but modernized, somehow we have to get a receipt that qualifies it as Teachers, Enrichment, Principal or Board.
      - Every meeting there is a treasurer's report - more transparency.
      - Xero - App that was super helpful, or Concur, or Take Five - Celeste will look into what the app was.
  - Next Steps:
    - Joe needs to connect with staff.
    - Clare has a Zoom call coming up.
    - Celeste will contact the teachers to engage them in the budget.
    - Both teachers and community members will be threatened by talking about a reduced budget - we need to anticipate that community response. We need to remember that and work together.
    - This issue will stay on the table all year long. The budget is a big part of what we do as a board.
  - Engage staff.
  - Clean set of eyes on what we are going to send out to the community.
  - 30 minute Zoom before CEC Assembly meeting on Tuesday 9/1 at 7:30PM. Joe will be on the Agenda for Staff meeting on Monday 8/31 at 3:00PM.
- **Spread the word about the assembly meeting. We have to have a budget approved for this year.**

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*At Chugach Optional We Practice Many B's*

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- **Assembly Meeting - 9/3@ 7pm**
- **Adjourn 8:53pm**
  
- **Next CEC Meeting Date & Time: 9/1 @ 7:30PM**