



## BOARD OBSERVATION RUBRIC

**School Name:** Bluffview Montessori School

**Meeting Date:** April 18, 2024

**School:** Meeting Type (check one): X Regular

**Start Time:** 6:34 p.m.

**VOA Observer:** S. Olsen

**Board Members Present:** Maria White (Teacher/Chair), Jessica McIlrath (Parent); Crystal Hegge (Parent/VC); Shelly Merchlewitz (Teacher/Treasurer); Anna Aare (Teacher); Marcy Faircloth (Community)

**Board Members Absent:** Meghan Booth (Teacher)

**Members virtual:** None

**Ex-officio Members:** Henry Schantzen

**Others in attendance:** Travis Berends, Creative Planning finance vendor attended virtually. Kim Bell (employee)

**Board Member Early Departures:** None

**Codes:** **Yes (Y)** – This item was addressed. **Partial (P)** – This item was partially addressed. **No (N)**–The item was not addressed. **Not applicable (NA)** - The item was not addressed at this meeting but will be at another meeting. (#) VOA Standard Alignment.

**Authorizer Observer Suggestions:** Name tents for board members would improve audience observation of the meeting. The authorizer also suggests that motions and votes are more clearly articulated and that board members speak at a voice level that can be heard by observers throughout the meeting.

Code	Meeting Checklist	Comments/Explanation (if necessary)
<b><i>Before the Meeting</i></b>		
Y	The meeting is open to the public and the board meeting time, location, and agenda was posted publicly. (6)	website
Y	Board agenda and materials were sent to board members and VOA 3 days in advance. (15)	
?	Votes are recorded and the Journal of votes is available. (6)	
Y	Up to date minutes are posted to school board website. (6)	<a href="http://bluffviewmontessori.org">March 2024 (bluffviewmontessori.org)</a>
Y	Board membership is observed to be compliant with Minnesota statute and the school's bylaws. (1)	Noted on attendance
Y	One set of materials relating to the agenda was available for public inspection. (6)	There was no area for public sign-in or board materials
Y	The Board of Directors maintains a Board Documents Binder which includes meeting minutes, bylaws and articles of incorporation and financial statements (16)	Authorizer had a discussion with school leadership that the visitor sign in, sample board packet, and board binder could be displayed more clearly/visibly.
<b><i>Meeting – Procedures and Content</i></b>		
Y	Board meeting attendance provides evidence that the school is meeting the requirements laid out in its bylaws and membership requirements as required by Minnesota Statute (1)	The authorizer suggests board member name tents and a verbal roll call of member attendance at the start of board meetings.
Y	The meeting was started on time.	The authorizer suggests that the start of the meeting be more formal perhaps with a reading of the mission and the member roll call noted above.
Y	Quorum was established and maintained. Action on items is taken only with a quorum present. Arrivals and departures of members are noted during meeting and recorded in meeting minutes. (6)	The authorizer suggests that this item be expressed more formally at the start of the meeting as part of the official commencement of the meeting.

Y	An adopted agenda is followed after approval and is adhered to during the meeting. (6)	The observer did not hear that the meeting agenda was formally adopted. The published agenda was followed.
Y	Appropriate materials were available to board members to accompany agenda items. (6)	Distributed to members prior to meeting.
N	Conflict of interest is addressed in the agenda.	This was not observed. The school should consider establishing a standing item on the agenda to help be sure that if/when any board member has a conflict of interest on an agenda item it has proactively been disclosed at the beginning of the meeting.
Y	If used, a consent agenda was properly executed.	There was discussion on consent agenda items.
Y	The board provided an opportunity for public input.	Yes, but no visitors were present to speak.
Y	An orderly methodology guides the running of the meeting (e.g. Roberts Rules).	
N	The mission and vision of the school are referenced and/or used in decision making.	This was not observed. The purpose of VOA-MN suggesting this agenda item is to provide public demonstration that the school board decisions are guided by the school mission and vision.
Y	The agenda contains an item(s) on finance (board reviews the school's finances). Finance reports include register, balance sheet, rev/exp, and cash flow. Enrollment is part of budget oversight (Pupil Units vs. head count).	Very well done as presented by the finance vendor. The school is operating under-budget so the surplus may be higher than expected at the end of the FY. The financials were adopted, but not by roll call. The revised FY24 budget was presented and adopted. The FY25 budget was presented and adopted. There were no board member questions or roll calls.
Y	The meeting included one or more of the board's annual responsibilities:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluating the leadership. (9)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitating and monitoring board elections. (8)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approving the WBWF annual report. (13)</li> </ul>	
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing parent, teacher, or student satisfaction data. (14)</li> </ul>	The board reviewed the surveys that will be distributed to faculty and parents.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of bylaws. (7)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data Practice procedures and responsibilities. (12)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New board members are provided orientation. (3)</li> </ul>	
P	The meeting included a review and discussion of student academic performance (not merely activities). (13)	The board has an element of Montessori method presented at each meeting. Authorizer had a discussion with the school leader that perhaps an element of student performance could be added to his monthly director's report.
Y	The meeting included policy review. (17)	Revisions to Policy 507 were adopted.
N	The board references policies in decision making. (11)	Not observed. The authorizer discussed with the school director that this could be added to board motions (ex. Motion to approve the FY25 budget in accordance to Policy 701 which requires the budget to be adopted by June 1.)

Y	The board addresses board development. The board references its strategic planning process (at least quarterly), continuous improvement plans, and goals to monitor and evaluate effectiveness (new schools-readiness to open checklist). (2)	Two-year board development plan was distributed last month. The self-evaluation data was reviewed at this meeting and the board development cycle was approved.
P	Board training occurs and/or member training is documented. (4)	Items for ongoing training were discussed. There was a member-facilitated “board training” on the topic of Montessori methods. The 2024-2025 board development plan was adopted.
N	The board engages in reflection or self-evaluation at the end of the meeting. (5)	Not observed. This is data point for Governance Standard 5 which requires the board to complete an annual formal evaluation. Numerous charter boards end the board meeting with a self-reflection to measure the extent to which board members feel they are sufficiently trained and prepared for the meeting and conduct business according to statute, standards, and bylaws.
Y	MN Stat 13D meeting conditions are met. (6)	
NA	If it is a special or emergency meeting, MN Stat13D conditions are met. (6)	
NA	If the meeting is closed or a portion of the meeting is closed, it met MN Stat 13D conditions - a public body shall state on the record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed. (6)	
<b><i>Continuous Improvement Items</i></b>		
Y	Board member conduct is professional. Board members are engaged and strategic in their discourse.	Board discussion was observed to be very casual and hard to hear. Motions were not always clear.
Y	All board members were on time and appeared prepared.	
Y	Board minutes and motions are easily understood and communicate the essence of topics. First and last names are recorded, not just first names.	
Y	The board stays on topic with minimal side or off topic talk. (6)	
Y	Committee reports are written, thorough and understandable.	
Y	The board focuses on governing and avoids micromanaging school administration.	