

Annual Meeting

5/22/25 @ 7:00 P.M.



Bluffview
Montessori
School

1321 Gilmore Avenue
Winona, MN 55987
(507) 452-2807
May 22, 2025



Bluffview Montessori

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Bluffview Montessori

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Review and approve agenda
3. Review and approve May 23, 2024, Annual Meeting Minutes
4. Annual Reports:
 - a. Head of School: Henry Schantzen
 - b. Treasurer: Shelly Merchlewitz
 - c. Governance: Henry Schantzen
 - d. Human Resources: Renee Knutson
 - e. Building and Grounds: Henry Schantzen
 - f. MNMTSS: Overview and Committee reports
 - g. Authorizer Scorecard: Volunteers of America
5. Announcement and introduction of elected Board of Directors members
6. Open Forum
7. Adjourn



May 23, 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present - Meghan Booth, Shelly Merchlewitz, Crystal Hegge, Mariah White, Jessica McIlrath

Absent - Marcy Faircloth, Anna Aarre

Non-Board Members Present - Henry Schantzen, Cindy Smith, Katie Kinneberg, Kim Bell

Call to Order at 7:04 pm

1. Review and approve agenda
Move to approve - Shelly Merchlewitz, Second - Crystal Hegge
Unanimously Approved
2. Review and approve May 11, 2023, Annual Meeting Minutes
Move to approve - Shelly Merchlewitz, Second - Crystal Hegge
Unanimously Approved
3. Annual Reports:
 - a. Head of School: Henry Schantzen
 - i. finished year one of a three year MnMTSS Grant
 - ii. completed the Non-Exclusionary Discipline Grant and applied and received a second grant for the 24-25 school year
 - iii. Phase one of professional development planned for 24-25 in accordance with READ Act legislation.
 1. CORE Curriculum was chosen for Bluffview Teachers
 - iv. PLT will be automated through SMARTemployee system
 1. Accrual will begin for contract staff such as subs and after school care staff in line with ESST law
 - b. Treasurer: Shelly Merchlewitz
 - i. Fund Balance of 39%
 - ii. Staff increase of 2%
 - iii. We had a clean audit for the 22-23 Fiscal Year
 - c. Governance: Henry Schantzen



- i. Kim Bell will be replacing Mariah White in a Teacher Seat (Montessori Training not required)
 - ii. Stephanie Schartel Dunn will be replacing Crystal Hegge in the Parent Seat
 - d. Human Resources: Renee Knutson
 - i. MACS and MSBA memberships.
 - ii. Family Handbook went through a major Revision.
 - iii. Four new policies were created and approved.
 - iv. Concern around ESST requirements around unemployment for hourly staff in the summer should the legislature funding for this run out and need to be paid out of Bluffview's budget.
 - e. Building and Grounds: Henry Schantzen
 - i. All inspections are complete and corrective actions have been taken.
 - ii. Fire Marshall inspection in the fall.
 - iii. Lighting upgrades changing to LEDs is complete and should save approximately \$1000 a month in utilities moving forward.
 - iv. All sprinkler heads in the original building were replaced in the hall.
 - v. MACS legislative bill for building ownership for charter schools failed in this session. Will try again with a revised version next year.
 - vi. OWA Architects is working on new plans for kitchen, art room, and gym in order to begin looking for grants and funding for these projects.
 - f. MNMTSS: Overview and Committee reports
 - i. Restructured committee structures in accordance with MDE MnMTSS Framework
 - ii. Behavior
 - 1. update Virtues schedule and books
 - 2. updated office referrals
 - 3. tracked behaviors around work refusal in the spring in testing of educlimber system
 - iii. Academic Practices
 - iv. Data
 - 1. Worked with educlimber system
 - 2. Reviewed MCA and Fastbridge Data in relation to benchmarks
 - 3. Goal to focus on math instruction to general classroom teachers



v. Family and Community

1. focus to increase parent involvement including hosting educational parent learning sessions

Move to approve annual meeting reports - Crystal Hegge, Move to approve - Shelly Merchlewitz

Unanimously Approved

4. Announcement and introduction of elected Board of Directors members
 - a. Stephanie Schartel Dunn, parent
 - b. Kim Bell, teacher

Move to approve - Shelly Merchlewitz, Second - Crystal Hegge

Unanimously Approved

5. Open Forum
6. Adjourn

Move to adjourn - Crystal Hegge, Second - Meghan Booth

Unanimously Approved

Adjourned at 7:38 pm



[Annual Reports](#)

[Head of School](#)

Bluffview Montessori Vision Statement

Empowered learners unfolding their full potential as whole and unique persons in a global community.

The Bluffview school-wide theme this year was *Change Sings* by Amanda Gorman. In this stirring, much-anticipated picture book by presidential inaugural poet and activist Amanda Gorman, it is clear that anything is possible when our voices join together. As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes—big or small—in the world, in their communities, and most importantly, in themselves. Dr. Montessori was an advocate for student led change as well. In her 1946 London Lectures, she stated that “we must look to the children as a vehicle for bringing change to humanity.” This quote implies that children possess the potential to bring about positive change to the world, founded in an education that fosters empathy, critical thinking, and a sense of personal responsibility.

As an institution, Bluffview staff is always working to make positive, impactful shifts and adaptations in the way we go about serving our students. This year we have continued with several grants that are aiding in this work. An ongoing shift is our focus on MnMTSS (Minnesota Multi-Tiered Systems of Support). The MnMTSS leadership team has led the charge on this process by reorganizing our committees into teacher-led, co-chaired committees that focus on behavior, academics, data, and family and community engagement (each submitted a report below). Part of the leadership team has recently completed working through a series of 15 MDE (MN Department of Education) driven webinars as we work to refine our practices. This includes a second administration of a formal assessment of where the school’s processes are now, the beginning stages of drafting a school-wide MnMTSS handbook, and the creation of a second tier of action plans that will be evaluated annually for growth. In collaboration with that work, Bluffview is in the third year of working through a Non-Exclusionary Discipline grant. This has allowed the whole school to engage in Restorative Practices training with MDE, which has led to

implementing these practices throughout the school. This process focuses on working to build up the school community's culture through communication and connection. Bluffview also has completed its second year of a strategic planning committee grant called the Comprehensive Arts Planning Program through Perpich Center for Arts Education. This is a small grant, but it is guiding our committee through drafting a three-year strategic plan for arts programming. The committee has identified 5 strategic directions, and has completed several of the the first year's action items including a job description for an Art's Champion volunteer, enhancing programming (received a grant for many band instruments, submitted a grant for 16 iPads for media arts), and expanding the school's art program visibility in the community.

Several laws have had significant impacts on Bluffview. The Read Act may have been the most impactful. The goal of the Read Act is to increase reading proficiency across the state by beefing up the literacy instruction knowledge of all teachers, curriculum directors, and others that have any function relative to literacy education. This year, all 'phase one' staff completed the professional development platform (CORE OL & LA) that was chosen by Bluffview. MDE (MN Dept. of Ed.) selected 3 options for all schools to choose from, each of which required, at minimum, 50 hours of engagement by staff. The state paid for the actual professional development platforms. The state also created a small amount of funding through two streams of revenue that were only available this fiscal year. Bluffview administration and board members agreed that the work would have to be done primarily outside of normal working hours as we don't have the ability to significantly change our calendar. Due to that reality, Bluffview tapped into its endowment to add extra stipend monies for the completion of CORE, giving all participants \$1750.00 upon proof of successful completion. We are happy to report that 100% of our staff successfully completed the training. The Read Act is also impactful in requiring changes to the BMS Local Literacy Plan. We were already using FastBridge for our screening program, and administering it three times per year. Beginning next school year, all schools with grades 4-12 will be required to administer a second screener called Capti ReadBasix for dyslexia screening. Very limited information is available yet, but it appears that any Bluffview student in grades 4-8 that doesn't meet the 40th %ile or better on the fall

screening will have to take the Capti assessment to screen for tendencies of dyslexia. The other law that is on the horizon is the Paid Leave program. This will allow staff to take 12 weeks of paid family leave and 12 weeks of paid medical leave per year, capped at 20 weeks in a single year. Administration is working to plan for the implementation of this law effective Jan 1, 2026, assuming it remains unchanged in the current legislative session. Another law is that charter schools are now required to engage in some sort of informational outreach on the services they provide to the greater community, specifically underserved communities. This law also requires that we report those efforts in this document. Therefore, this years outreach was very minimal in that we only posted the required information in the Winona Post newspaper, which is a free publication to any and all individuals that seek it out. Next year, we will have redrafted brochures to share widely though the community, and are exploring other ways to effectively share information about the school. This is yet another unfunded Minnesota mandate that will undoubtedly have some expenditures tied to it. The last one, which has been a huge undertaking and struggle is the new charter procurement law. We have to bid out all contracts valued at \$25,000 or more, following the guidelines in policy 797. This includes contracts for Bluffview like janitorial services, financial management, and special education services with our special education cooperative as examples.

Bluffview did take part in legislative outreach this year as well. The Head of School testified again this year to the Senate Education Finance Committee as a member of the MN Association of Charter Schools (MACS) Governance Committee. The Governor's proposed budget included cuts to charter school specific special education funding and charter school long term maintenance funding (LTMF) as outlined in the Building and Grounds report. These two cuts would have taken over \$40,000 in revenue away from Bluffview Montessori. MACS has been a great leader in this fight, and led a large-scale communication effort to terminate these reductions. Legislators reported that they received a surprisingly large amount of pushback to these charter cuts. At the time of this draft, those cuts were not present in the House or Senate education bills. The problem on the horizon is that Minnesota, in the next



biennium, is anticipating a \$5-6 billion shortfall. That could create a lot of issues for all schools in the coming years. Much work needs to be done legislatively.

The last point for this report is that we would like you to take a moment to review the Authorizer Scorecard at the end of this report. Charters have received a lot of bad press recently, as have their authorizers. At Bluffview, we work extremely hard to ensure compliance and transparency at all times. The Scorecard demonstrates our commitment to ensuring school compliance.

All that said, we will continue to move forward with the Bluffview Vision at the forefront of our planning. The work of growing the school culture through engagement with our wonderful partners, students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders will continue to be a point of emphasis next year, as will a renewed push for fiscal equity for Bluffview and all other MN charter schools that now serve 67,000 students and growing by the year. Thank you for your continued support and partnership!

Sincerely,

Henry Schantzen

Treasurer

Bluffview Montessori continues to partner with Creative Planning as our financial manager. In addition to compiling our monthly financial reports, creating budget projections, managing payroll and accounts payable, and working in an advisory position to help the Board make sound financial decisions for our school, they inform us of updates from the state and federal levels regarding revenues and legislative changes. They are, in large part, responsible for the clean audit issued to Bluffview by CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) for FY 2024.

One of the primary functions of the Board of Directors is to ensure the financial health of the school while working to maintain a balanced budget. In FY 2024, Bluffview had a 36.8% fund balance for all funds. During FY 2025, BMS has a projected fund balance of 30.7% of our expenditures. We are obligated to have a fund balance of at least 20%. We, as a Board, have a goal of 30%. The state's annual holdback of our funding is currently set at 10%. As of April 30th, we have received 68% of our FY 2024-25 holdback. Our working budget has a projected cumulative fund balance of \$1,102,440. Staff will see a 2% pay increase for the 2025-2026 school year. One significant reason for maintaining a strong fund balance is to insulate the school against external influences as much as possible in times of financial shortfalls.

Enrollment is the main source of the school's income (approximately 92%) and is one thing the Board looks at during each monthly meeting. This year our Average Daily Membership dropped from 213 students in 2024 to 208 in 2025. For 2025-26, we have waitlists for K, 2nd, 4th, 5th grade and 6th grades. We have an opening in 1st grade. Maintaining and increasing our enrollment continues to be a priority, especially for the tuition based preschool and Erdkinder programs.

As a charter school, we have to lease our building so we were unable to use any federal funds for the maintenance of or improvement to our building. Unexpected costs were incurred when we had to add a new rear gate, replace the water softener, the water heater and retaining wall in the Children's



house playground. We also had the expense of providing bussing for our first week of school to be able to start right after Labor Day.

We received money from the state to help with costs related to the Read Act. Nineteen staff members went through mandated training from September through February.

Mr. Dubis was able to secure grants for purchasing new instruments.

The Board, along with our partners Creative Planning, the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, and our Authorizer (Volunteers of America), continues to research and assess viable financial options for Bluffview, such as the Winona Foundation, Qcomp, and Winona County ARP funds. We are always returning to our vision for guidance as we work to provide the best possible services for our students and their families.

Sincerely,

Shelly Merchlewitz



Governance

The Governance Committee is responsible for:

- Promoting an active Board recruitment process for the school
- Orienting and mentoring new Board members
- Working with the Board Chair and Head of school to promote ongoing leadership and governance education and the continued growth of all Board members
- Periodically assessing processes for individual Board members and the Board as a whole
- Conducting the annual election of Directors and filling Board vacancies

There was not an election this year due to the fact that no directors' terms expired. However, Marcy Faircloth officially resigned her seat effective 5/11/25. The Board is now needing to appoint a new community member.

Sincerely,

Henry Schantzen



Human Resources

The Human Resources Committee met every other month. During this time, about 50 policies were revised, reviewed, and approved. Some had very minor changes, while others were quite substantive. Bluffview maintains its MACS and MSBA membership in order to ensure its policies remain up to date, especially related to changes in state statutes.

The family and staff handbooks were updated. The MSBA Model Student Handbook was utilized to ensure it contained all necessary policies and information, again to abide by state statutes.

Nine non-instructional employees applied and received unemployment during summer 2024. This was due to the changes in Minnesota's Unemployment Insurance Program that began May 2023. Employees considered "between terms" by the state, even if they were returning to the same or similar position in the fall, are eligible for unemployment.

Another big change occurred with Minnesota's Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) Law. Effective January 1, 2024, after 80 hours worked in a year, employees must accrue at least one hour of earned sick and safe time for every 30 hours they work, up to at least 48 hours a year. For employees at a .5 FTE or more, Bluffview's Paid Leave Time (PLT) is more generous than that required of the ESST Law, so no changes needed to be made. However, employees less than .5 FTE now earn 1 hour of PLT for every 30 hours worked after 80 hours each year. Earned sick and safe time accrual aligns with Bluffview's fiscal year, July 1 - June 30 annually.

It was a struggle to find a Middle School English Teacher and an E2 Teacher this past year. Two of the other Erdkinder teachers shared teaching English for the first semester until a new teacher started in January. A qualified E2 teacher was recruited and hired in October. A challenge to recruiting new staff and retaining current staff is that salaries tend to be on the lower side and we do not offer health insurance as we are not financially able to provide it.

Sincerely,

Renee Knutson

Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds Committee is tasked with planning, discussing, and presenting recommendations to the Board of Directors on all Building and Grounds-related projects associated with Bluffview Montessori and the BMS Building Corporation. All three members of the BMS Building Corporation Board of Directors (Henry Schantzen, Anna Aarre, Meghan Booth) attend this committee's monthly meetings.

1. All inspections are up to date, including but not limited to:
 - a. Summit: fire suppression completed-annual inspection
 - b. Mississippi Welders: anse unit in the kitchen and fire extinguishers
 - c. Full fire marshall inspection occurred in October. There were some deficiencies, but all were corrected within the required timelines
 - d. Kitchen inspections all passed, and the preventative maintenance schedule was executed
 - e. Custom Alarm: alarm system has been tested and is working. They did inform us in May that the control panel is now outdated meaning if it fails we will not be able to secure new parts, so a new one will be installed in July (approx \$4,000)
 - f. Preventative maintenance schedules for HVAC each fall and spring were executed
 - g. Emergency lights are checked monthly and logged, replaced or repaired as needed. The fire marshall pointed out that the Erdkinder rotunda double door needs to be tested monthly as well, so that was added to the inspection recording binder.
2. Last year Key Electric and Xcel Energy put together a proposal to upgrade all the lights in the school. The proposal was for \$42,000, \$12,000 of which was a rebate. The BMS Building Corporation used money from the long-term maintenance fund that is held by UMB Bank to pay for that up front. The school is indeed realizing approximately \$1,000 per month in energy savings each month. That,

coupled with the savings from the solar garden enrollment, will save the school approximately \$15,000 this year.

3. We tried a new student pick-up and drop-off plan this year. Buses enter from the Mall, come down the fire lane, and pick up by fire lane entrance to the parking lot. This has been a great improvement for pick up time in particular, minimizing traffic conflicts between cars and buses. This required the addition of sidewalks on both sides of the firelane by the white fence, and a new gate at the rear (Mall) entrance to the fire lane. After some research, Fence Bros installed a solar powered gate with a key code and a timer. The timer opens and closes the gate automatically for the buses. Several signs were added as well. The gate has been a bit of a challenge as it's been clipped twice, breaking the laser eye box both times, but overall it has functioned well relative to its primary purpose-opening for buses, closing for recess and P.E. times in the yard.
4. As of our April Financial Report, the BMS Building Corporation capital improvement fund has \$105,360.00 in it. It grows by \$25,000 each year, assuming it is not needed. The purpose of this fund is to have a reserve for large building projects. There is approximately \$65,000 in the BMS Building Corp checking account as well. This is hugely important because:
 - a. Big ticket item: The roof on the main building is going to be replaced this summer. It was thought that we could make it another year, but this spring there were 2 storms that removed shingles from the south side of the roof. Further inspection by a licensed contractor made it clear that the roof could not wait. s2s Architects is leading this project with the HOS, to ensure the work is done well. The window for completion will be June 15-August 22, 2025. This will include a public bidding process. The initial rough estimate for the roof based on square footage was approximately \$150,000.
 - b. Potential Legislation Alert: As it stands, charter schools still may not own their own building, so we have this absurd workaround called the BMS Building Corporation that we manage and control, thereby allowing the school to lease the facility from it. In the



Governor's budget, it was moved that charter schools lose/have taken away their long term maintenance funding (LTMF). That would have been a \$27,000 annual loss (\$132 per student) for Bluffview. For perspective, the entire reason we can afford the roof replacement is due to this funding source, in that we shelter \$25,000 of it annually for building projects. The Head of School (HOS) testified at a MN Senate Education Finance Committee meeting this spring, along with a large communication campaign led by the MN Association of Charter Schools to fight that proposal. To date, that effort appears to have paid off as the cuts to the LTMF are not present in the House or Senate Education Bills. That could easily change, so we are watching that process.

5. The HOS led a procurement process to review our janitorial services. It was determined that, comparing 3 bids, it was prudent to change to Arnolds janitorial services. This will result in some savings for the school annually.
6. This fall, it became apparent that our garbage contractor had added fees that were not agreed upon, or deemed necessary by administration. We undertook a procurement process for that service, and ended up selecting Miller Scrap and Disposal as they offered significant savings with a reasonable and predictable fee schedule.
7. The compressor for the dry suppression system was replaced. It was observed as having a slowly growing oil leak in the head, and it appeared the belt drive wheel was not moving properly. It was more cost effective to replace the unit.
8. A ceiling mounted projector was installed in E2C, which was the last of the E2 rooms without one.
9. During a cold snap in January, it was observed that the walk-in cooler was going below freezing-it was determined that the insulation was compromised through the use of a 'heat gun' that showed the temps of the walls inside the box. The floor was the biggest issue. A halogen light was added to the cooler box during cold snaps to maintain proper temperatures. This is a short



term solution. We need to figure out a long term solution for the kitchen, including a new walk in-a roughly \$25,000 cost.

10. The large cluster of maple trees was removed from the berm. They were too packed in, and were a 'poor quality' tree that broke off easily at their size. Was easiest to simply remove them and grind out the stumps.

With all the information above, it is clear that more work needs to be done to secure funding for an expansion of the kitchen if we are to keep making food in house, a second gym to alleviate the pressures on the current gym, and an art room to allow for a sped resource room in the current computer lab, moving those devices to the current art room. The question is "where do we find that sort of funding?"

Sincerely,

Henry Schantzen

MNMTSS Overview and Committee Reports

MnMTSS Overview and Leadership Committee Description

The State of Minnesota defines MnMTSS as a “systemic, continuous improvement framework for ensuring positive social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes for every student.”¹ MnMTSS provides students with tiered practices of support, depending on the student’s academic, social, and behavioral needs. MnMTSS envisions a holistic approach to student support through a school’s academic practices, its family and community engagement, its use of assessment and data, and the emotional and behavioral support provided to all students.

MnMTSS at Bluffview is in its second year of a significant school committee restructuring. This was a year of learning for many of the teacher leaders and administration involved in the MnMTSS process. Our ADSIS reading interventionist, Erdkinder team lead, a special education teacher, and both school administrators participated in a nine-session cohort with MDE on the implementation of MnMTSS. Additionally, both school administrators and Bluffview’s ADSIS math interventionist participated in multiple sessions on establishing effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 teams and programming. Through this process, school staff participated in the system reflection process called SEMI-DLT, a process that allowed staff to determine a primary summer goal to complete the MnMTSS handbook.

Throughout the year, MnMTSS committees identified and addressed areas of growth, including the development of a child find form to clarify teacher access to the MnMTSS intervention process. Members of the MnMTSS leadership team also completed CORE in association with the READ Act and will use that information to further develop the school’s reading intervention process. MnMTSS leadership anticipate that the development of the handbook will further amplify areas of strength and growth as we revisit the flow of support in and out of the intervention process. Key areas have already

¹ *Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework*, Minnesota Department of Education, March 2022



been determined, such as the strengthening of our Tier 1 data sets in IXL and continued development of skills-based groups at our Tier 2 to better serve students who need supplementary support.

Thank you for the opportunity to report on our progress.

Sherry Lohmeyer

Emotional and Behavior Support Committee

The Emotional and Behavioral Support (EBS) Committee continues to ensure that social, emotional, and behavioral support for all students is adequately aligned and evidence-based. The committee completed various tasks this school year, including the implementation of PBIS, Restorative Practices, Peace Partners, and Montessori Virtues. SEL instructions are taught to promote the importance of understanding one's own emotions as well as those of others, with the overarching goal of being able to regulate them accordingly. The committee continues to focus on ensuring fidelity in SEL Instruction, guiding ADSIS, reviewing data surrounding behavior incidents, and offering support regarding classroom interventions

Accomplishments this year include:

- Reframed books/texts for the year 3 virtues
- Updated PBIS "compass" slips to target the specific virtues within the three-year cycle
- Identified key components of the Catalyst training that had high success rates with students regarding classroom management.
- Reviewed and revised what types of behaviors are considered major offenses and minor offenses
- Committee Chairs reviewed and approved the researched books for the virtues of year 3
- Reviewed how SAEBRS and Educlimber data can be used to identify students who may need additional support

- Created a Child Referral form that allowed the Child Find Committee to discuss students who may require ADSIS services or intervention implementations within the classroom.
- Determined PBIS events that occurred throughout the year.
- Generated ideas regarding successful work completion and work engagement
- Ordered, received, and distributed Virtues books to all CH, E1, and E2 classrooms in preparation for the 2025-2026 school year

The EBS committee will begin next year with a focus on the final virtues for the three-year cycle during the 2025-2026 school year. This will include updated texts reflecting the virtues and practices that we expect students and staff at Bluffview Montessori to uphold. Furthermore, we will continue to use data to drive our understanding of what our community needs and how we can better support them as a whole, as well as individuals. Emotional understanding and behavioral regulation are key to academic success, and our committee strives to make each student feel cared for and supported here at BMS.

Sincerely,

Brooke Kammerer and Josh Carlson

Assessment & Data Committee

The focus of the Assessment & Data Committee was to use accessible and integrated data to make decisions relating to students with academic, behavioral, and SEL outcomes across grade levels, content areas, and tiers. The data analyzed was from various sources such as MCAs, FastBridge math and reading assessments, and the FastBridge Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener. Performance of students receiving Tier II & Tier III support, and staff-created questionnaires were also analyzed.



The goals of this committee were to organize information and make it available to Bluffview's Child Find and Academic Practices committees, provide data to teachers for planning interventions for struggling students or for students who might need further challenging work, to highlight areas of concern for students or grade levels, and to review behavioral and intervention data.

- Reviewed the 2024 MCA score reports and identified areas of concern.
- Reviewed Math and Reading MCA data over the past 3 years to determine if there are any gaps in instruction
- Reviewed FastBridge Math and Reading scores for Fall and Winter. This committee plans to look at Numbers and Operations over multiple years.
- Plan to use IXL standards-based reports to monitor student progress at the Tier 1 level
- Reviewed incident reports school-wide to determine which behaviors occur most frequently and which grade levels are most impacted
- Looked at goal setting for meeting benchmarks
- Held a joint session with the Academic Practices Committee to determine which skills students need to increase and how to collect and analyze data. It was determined that writing is a skill that needs strengthening universally.
- Discussed ways to assess writing skills
- Created graphs of MCA data to present to respective grade-level teachers

Bluffview is committed to ensuring that at least 80% of students in each grade achieve proficiency on assessments, while providing targeted support to the remaining 20% who need additional assistance. This committee will explore assessment options that align with the Montessori classroom environment, with the goal of implementing selected tools during the 2025–2026 school year. Additionally, the committee will develop proficiency in using Educlimber to gather and analyze student data, which will be shared with teachers more regularly. MCA grade-level benchmarks will be provided to

teachers at the start of the school year to highlight specific strands needing reinforcement. One potential focus area for the committee is developing grade-level rubrics to assess students' writing skills.

Sincerely,

Michaela Steinfeldt and Linda Salzmann

Academic Practices Committee

This school year the Academic Practices committee has focused on three main buckets of work: reviewing the Mentor/Mentee program (which is still in progress), work around writing and handwriting in preparation for Language Arts Alignment in the fall of '25, and review of potential digital record keeping tools to better communicate students' needs between teachers/grade levels. This school year Bluffview continued Homework Club as an academic support program after school. Homework club is targeted towards E2 and Erdkinder students who struggle with work completion during the school day and need more adult support to complete their work.

It was determined that English Language Arts alignment, since adoption of those updated standards comes before Math or Social Studies, would be addressed next by general education teachers. However, the READ Act was passed which replaced the "Read Well by 3rd Grade" legislation. The READ Act encompasses K-12 and requires that all educators who teach reading/literacy go through training by a MDE approved professional development program. It was decided that teachers should complete READ Act training before beginning alignment of standards since the former may impact how we do the latter. Bluffview opted to use CORE to meet this requirement and all staff that participated successfully completed that training. In the 25-26 school year, support staff (assistants and paras) will be required to complete 8 hours of training for the READ Act. Still to be determined is training for Erdkinder (secondary) teachers. The state has not released its plan for this phase of the READ Act yet.



In addition to work on curriculum at Bluffview, two teachers will begin Montessori Training in the fall of 2025. Nine staff attended the UWRF Montessori conference on 1/18/25 and two staff attended the National American Montessori Society (AMS) conference in Denver. In addition, two specialists attended conferences for their subject areas: Ms. B went to the National Art Educators Association conference, El went to a MN Shape conference. The Arts (Visual and Music) are finalizing their work on their standards as part of the Perpich grant that will continue next school year. Something of note in the Arts standards is the requirement that schools offer 3 types of Arts to students. Currently Bluffview only offers two and is looking to include Media Arts as an elective for Erdkinder to meet this requirement.

Staff as a whole participated in Catalyst (behavior management) training which included a two day training in August along with one additional training session during professional development days. In a survey, staff indicated that professional development around behavior/classroom management would be most beneficial, particularly for those in support positions such as classroom assistants. Upcoming staff professional development will focus on how to support neurodivergent learners and potentially training on dyslexia related to new requirements around dyslexia screening for 4th-12th grade.

Sincerely,
Meghan Booth & Kim Bell

Family and Engagement Committee

The Family and Community Engagement Committee (FCEC) had a productive second year operating in BMS's streamlined MnMTSS committee structure. The group consists of six Bluffview staff members and two Bluffview student parents. Meetings were held monthly.



There are six primary goal focuses of the FCEC:

1. Community Outreach & Public Relations
2. Volunteer Recruitment and Retention
3. Parent/Family Education Events
4. Increasing Attendance at Conferences
5. Staff and Student Wellness
6. Wellness Policy Review and Compliance

For the 2024-25 school year, the committee primarily focused on Staff/Student Wellness.

Staff and Student Wellness:

The FCEC began working towards enhancing the approach to staff and student wellness. The Committee reviewed last year's survey of both staff and families on their level of interest in wellness programming offered at Bluffview. This work was facilitated by Tina Smith with Ark Wellness, LLC. The committee launched its Working on Wellness Program (WOW) beginning in October, 2024. Monthly events were held at Bluffview which covered topics related to stress management and included sleep, nutrition, exercise and play, time management and setting boundaries, mindfulness and resilience, and rest and relaxation. The Committee also spearheaded a school-wide 28-day micro-habit challenge designed to show how simple changes can make big differences in life.

Future Goals and Plans:

The Committee has plans to focus on continued wellness programming and more family education events in the 2025-26 school year. A variety of topics have been explored with the consensus centering on continued stress management practices and parent education revolving around social media and technology. In the works is a possible start-of-school "swap meet" event that would give the



Bluffview Montessori

BMS community the chance to share gently used clothes and school supplies. Another area of growth for the Committee is on volunteer recruitment and retention. Bluffview Montessori already has a strong presence in the area of volunteering yet there's always room for growth and inclusion. And lastly, we also will be working to ensure compliance with the triennial wellness policy review in early 2026 as required by MDE.

Sincerely,

Drew Althoff and Mariah White



Bluffview Montessori

Authorizer Scorecard: Volunteers of America

Legal and Contractual Compliance - Charter schools are required to follow many state and federal laws pertaining to all public schools and are expected to uphold all provisions of the charter school contract. VOA-MN expects compliance with legal and contractual obligations. Each VOA-MN authorized charter school shall maintain a Compliance Binder on site that includes VOA-MN defined evidence of compliance with state and federal statutes organized in the manner prescribed by VOA-MN. Additionally, VOA-MN authorized charter schools shall submit information to the authorizer in accordance with the VOA-MN prescribed Annual Submission Calendar. The management and operations of the school will be monitored by the authorizer and reported in the Formal Site Visit Report and additionally as needed. This section is not scored individually. The compliance binder and submission calendar are systems for ongoing monitoring of school performance and compliance and compliance requirements are imbedded in previous sections.

CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATION

VOA-MN schools must achieve at least a Satisfactory Rating (70% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area (Academic, Financial, Organizational Performance) to be eligible for a three-year contract renewal and at least an Exemplary Rating (80% of points possible) in the Performance Framework overall and meet the majority of standards in each performance area to be eligible for a five-year contract renewal. All contract renewals will be for either three or five years. Fewer than three years does not provide enough information on which to make a renewal decision.

2023 - 2024 SCHOOL YEAR PERFORMANCE (FY24)						
	Meets Standard Points	Partially Meets Standard Points	Does Not Meet Standard Points	Total Points	Weight	Percent
	2	1	0			
Academic	12	1	0	13/14	.50	47%
Finance	20	0	0	20/20	.20	20%
Governance	34	0	0	34/34	.15	15%
Mgmt/Operations	30	0	0	30/30	.15	15%
Grand Total	96	1	0	97/98	1.00	97%



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CONTRACT RENEWAL CALCULATIONS						
CHARTER CONTRACT TERM: July 1, 21 - June 30, 25						
		YR 1 Rating FY22	YR 2 Rating FY23	YR 3 Rating FY24	YR 4 Rating FY25	Average Rating
ACADEMIC (50%)		43%	43%	47%	%	44%
FINANCE (20%)		20%	20%	20%	%	20%
ORGANIZATION (30%)						
	BOARD GOVERNANCE (15%)	15%	15%	15%	%	15%
	MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS (15%)	15%	15%	15%	%	15%
	TOTAL	93%	93%	97%	%	94%
CUMULATIVE AVERAGE 94%						

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Stephanie Olsen, Program Manager
 Phillip Morris, Academic Performance Analyst
 Rochel Perna, Financial Analyst
 Roderick Haenke, Board Governance Analyst / Constituent Services
 Dawn Maslowski, Program Administrative Assistant

solsen@voamn.org
phillip.morris@voamn.org
rochel.perna@voamn.org
roderick.haenke@voamn.org
dawn.maslowski@voamn.org



2025 Annual Meeting Elected Board Members

No Board elections were required this year as all members have continuing terms. However, as noted in the Governance report, Marcy Faircloth resigned as of 5/11/25 as she is unable to attend May, June, or July meetings-it seemed the appropriate step.

Member Name	Board Position	Election Date Date Seated Term Expiration
Stephanie Schartel Dunn	Parent Member	July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027 MSBA Initial Training: 6/10/24
Kim Bell	Teacher Member	July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027 MSBA Initial Training: 8/6/24
Jessica McIlrath	Parent Member Secretary	July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026 MSBA Initial Training: 8/8/23
Meghan Booth	Teacher Member Chair	Appointed September 18, 2019 July 1, 2020-June 30, 2023 July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026
Shelly Merchlewitz	Teacher Member Treasurer	Appointed September 18, 2019 July 1, 2020-June 30, 2023 July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026
Anna Aarre	Teacher Member Vice Chair	Appointed August 18, 2022 July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026
Marcy Faircloth	Community Member	Appointed September 15, 2022 July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026