

Little Blessings Preschool

Agenda

Monday,

May 18 6:30 pm

Library Verona Campus

Attending: Emily Thomson, Deni Naumann, Rick Blum, Heidi Anderson, Marie DeStadler, Paul Bekx, Kelsie Rice, Linda Hayes

Quick recap

This was a quarterly meeting of the Little Blessings preschool committee where directors Heidi and Linda provided updates on staffing changes and program operations at both Madison and Verona campuses. Heidi reported that Dia and Preet had left their positions, leaving the Madison campus struggling to hire quality teachers, though they secured Kristen Kohlnhofer who will start in the fall. Linda announced two new teachers joining the Verona campus and discussed challenges with 4K program enrollment due to confusion with the school district's open enrollment process. The committee approved their newly developed purpose statement and discussed recruiting more parent representatives to join the committee, deciding to hold the next meeting on September 14th and future meetings on November 23rd, February 22nd, 2027, and May 24th. 2027.

Welcome, Short Devotion and Prayer (Emily)

Approval Feb Minutes

Emily asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Paul move, Kelsie seconds. Motion approved.

The group approved February's meeting minutes...

Formal Approval LBPS Committee Purpose Statement

Heidi moves, Marie seconds. Motion approved.

...and formally adopted the Little Blessings purpose statement, with Heidi making the motion and Kelsie seconding both actions.

Madison Campus Update (Heidi)

Heidi reported staffing challenges at the Madison campus, including the departure of Dia in December and Preet's resignation effective May 29th, with ongoing difficulties in hiring quality candidates. The campus will operate reduced summer hours from 8 AM to 3 PM around school schedules, down from the previous 10-hour day model, as most students are morning-only attendees with only 2 out of 5 students staying all day. Heidi interviewed a potential new teacher, Kristen Kohlnhofer, who will start in the fall, and Linda provided positive feedback about Kristen's substitute teaching performance, noting she was well-received by both students and staff.

Summer Staffing and Recruitment Plans

The team discussed recruitment challenges for summer staffing, with Heidi being the only teacher needed and seeking afternoon help to cover nap time or a high school program aide. Rick announced plans for an EDDM postcard campaign targeting 3,000 homes within a 2-mile radius of Madison to promote the school, which will be delivered within the next two weeks. The group explored potential summer help options, including reaching out to Verona Area High School's preschool program for high school students interested in teaching, and Marie suggested checking the UW job board for part-time summer workers.

Staffing and Recruitment Planning

The team discussed hiring challenges and staffing arrangements, with Kristen agreeing to help for the first two weeks of June while Heidi transitions to reduced hours. They explored potential recruitment options including MATC and discussed program hours, confirming that current families are comfortable with the 3 PM end time. Heidi reported that while they received approval for one 4K grant student, they are still accepting more 4K students who would need to pay tuition themselves, and they plan to implement a new curriculum to better demonstrate their educational goals to the state.

Kids Kingdom Program Updates

Rick suggested that Heidi call the number on a postcard to investigate the effectiveness of their free tuition promotion for the Kids Kingdom program, as they are competing against other programs offering similar incentives. Rick also informed the group that Life 102.5 radio station rejected their advertising due to concerns about the program's inclusivity and LGBTQ-friendly website content.

Verona Campus Update (Linda)

Linda announced two new teachers joining their campus, Marie deStadler and Christiana Garlick, and mentioned ongoing discussions with Jennifer Skibba regarding unclear aspects of the Verona Schools' open enrollment process for the 4K program. The enrollment challenges affecting current families at Little Blessings are due to unexpected high open enrollment numbers at the Madison School District, which may impact tuition-free status for some legacy families. She expressed frustration about the situation, noting poor communication from the school district and the burden falling on directors who must handle upset families.

Linda also updated on staffing changes, including Kelly reducing her hours and leaving the classroom, requiring the hiring of two new teachers for Monday-Tuesday classes, while Hannah is leaving due to family issues. The school has full enrollment with 14 students in the LAMS class, 16 in the Lions class, and early numbers for 4K and extended day programs.

Financial Update (Rick)

They addressed playground resurfacing delays, with Rick explaining that while they're seeking bids, the project won't be completed in the next fiscal year due to cost concerns and contractor availability. The committee agreed to implement cow mats as a temporary solution to address safety concerns under swings and slides, with Linda planning to install a new sandbox in August. Rick also announced upcoming changes to the committee's composition, noting that this would be Denny's last meeting and that Marie would be transitioning to employee status, while Emily's involvement would likely end after her one-year commitment.

Little Blessings Board Recruitment Strategy

The group discussed recruiting parents to join the Little Blessings board, with Paul emphasizing the importance of parent involvement since children and parents would be most affected by decisions. The team agreed to create a welcome letter with the purpose statement and meeting dates to distribute to parents at the beginning of the school year and during the August open houses. They decided to maintain quarterly meetings on Mondays at 6:30 PM, with the next meeting potentially scheduled for September 14th to allow time for recruiting new board members.

Committee Meeting Schedule Finalization

The committee discussed and finalized meeting dates for the upcoming year, settling on September 14, November 23, February 22, and May 24. They also addressed committee

member changes, noting that Marie would transition to a different role while remaining involved as a teacher. The conversation ended with a prayer led by Rick for the committee members and their ongoing work.

Next steps

Heidi

- [Distribute the welcome letter to parents in multiple ways \(online and in person\) at the beginning of the school year.](#)
- [Consider adjusting the Madison campus end time to 3:30 PM based on family needs once student enrollment is finalized.](#)
- [Call the number on the Kids Kingdom postcard to inquire about their 4K program and response to free tuition promotion.](#)
- [Explore the Verona Area High School preschool program as a potential resource for summer help at Madison.](#)
- [Ensure program closure for a couple of weeks in late July/early August for planned time off.](#)

Linda

- [Distribute the welcome letter to parents at the Verona campus open house on August 27th.](#)
- [Obtain and install cow mats at the Verona playground, targeting late summer \(August\) for installation.](#)
- [Install the new sandbox at the Verona playground in late summer \(August\), after cow mats are in place.](#)
- [Monitor and communicate with Jennifer Skiba regarding the 4K open enrollment issues in Verona and their impact on legacy families.](#)

Rick

- [Draft a welcome letter to parents inviting them to join the committee, including the purpose statement and the meeting dates, and provide it to Heidi and Linda early enough for distribution at the beginning of the school year.](#)
- [Order and hang the vinyl banner designed by Eric on the side building at Madison.](#)

- Proceed with the EDDM postcard drop to approximately 3,000 homes within a 2-mile radius of Madison (postcards ordered, expected drop in next two weeks).
- Recruit a new board member to replace Denny on the committee, to be assigned by August.
- Recruit parent representatives to replace Marie on the committee, with recommendations from Heidi and Linda.
- Explore MATC job board as a potential resource for hiring part-time summer help at Madison.