



**THREE  
RIVERS  
MONTESSORI**

**17267 YALE ST. NW  
ELK RIVER, MN 55330**

# **THREE RIVERS MONTESSORI**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- BOARD RELATIONS HANDBOOK**



***“EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL  
THROUGH AUTHENTIC MONTESSORI LEARNING”***



# Three Rivers Montessori Governance Model

## THE BOARD GOVERNS

*Sets expectations and parameters*



## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MANAGES

*Provides leadership and supervision*

# Table of Contents

<b>Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Three Rivers Montessori Governance Model .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Purpose .....</b>	<b>4</b>
The Board and Executive Director .....	4
The Board Members .....	5
The Executive Director .....	6
Task Rubric .....	7
<b>Board and Executive Director Communication Protocols .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Treatment of Board Members .....	8
<b>Normal Communication .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Agenda and Board Decisions .....	8
Executive Director Report .....	9
On the Same Page (OSP) .....	9
General Information .....	8
<b>Emergency Communication Standards .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Three Rivers Montessori Committees .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Required Readings .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TRM Organizational Chart .....</b>	<b>12</b>

# Background

The Board and the Executive Director are committed to the most effective and efficient working relationship possible for the governance team. The following protocols guide the board and Executive Director's work, so everyone can devote their full energy to focusing on carrying out the mission and vision of TRM for the benefit of our students.

## Purpose

The Three Rivers Montessori School Board is the policy-making body, doing its work in meetings of the Board in public. To effectively meet Three Rivers Montessori's challenges, the Board and Executive Director must collaborate together as a leadership team. To ensure the collective effectiveness of the team, operating procedures and protocols must be in place. Below are general protocols that will take a joined effort and those that are specific for the Board and for the Executive Director. These guidelines are intended as a supplement to the Board of Director Bylaws and Board Handbook.

### **The Board and Executive Director will:**

1. Ensure the mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan are foundational to the decision-making process.
2. Keep Montessori learning and high achievement for each and every student as the primary focus.
3. Value, support, and advocate for charter schools.
4. Operate openly with the Core Values of TRM in mind: Integrity, Stewardship, Compassion, and Montessori Focus.
5. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility, dignity, and respect, while honoring the right to disagree with each other.
6. Recognize and respect difference of perspective, culture, and communication style on the Board and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
7. Discuss public matters in publicly announced Board meetings.
8. Focus on policymaking and strategic planning.
9. Ensure opportunities for a diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations and evaluate Three Rivers Montessori's performance.
10. Set and monitor measurable outcomes for annual goals that are aligned with TRM's Authorizer, Osprey Wilds.
11. Communicate the common vision and annual, measurable goals.
12. Honor the value that Board decisions are best developed with people closest to an issue or situation wherever possible.
13. Understand the distinction between Board and staff roles.
14. Identify and focus on Board meeting agenda items.
15. Participate in training and commit the time and resources necessary to be informed and effective leaders
16. Govern within Board-adopted policies and administrative regulations.

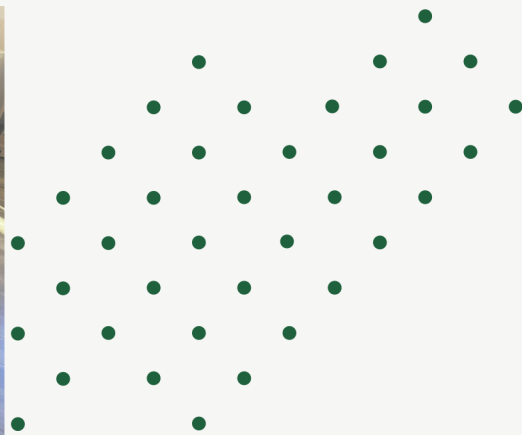
## Board Members will:

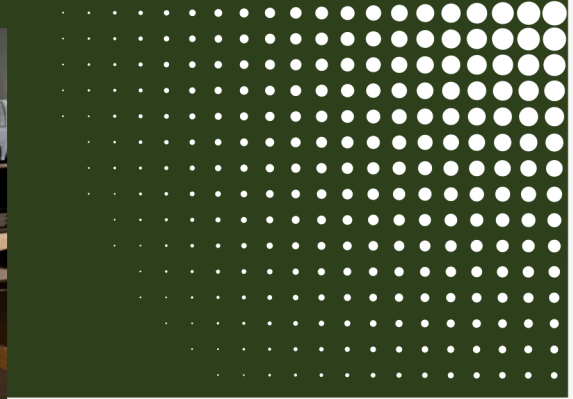
1. Establish a clear strategic plan for Three Rivers Montessori.
2. Understand authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individual board members.  
Recognize decisions are made only at properly scheduled meetings.
3. Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and to vote their convictions.
4. Attend regularly scheduled Board meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible; participate in scheduling special meetings and/or work sessions for planning and training purposes.
5. Acknowledge individual requests for reports and projects shall be directed, usually, to the Executive Director.
6. Participate in establishing annual expectations and goals for the Executive Director.
7. Objectively evaluate the Executive Director's performance and provide appropriate feedback which focuses on recognition and growth.
8. Evaluate its protocols annually, taking collective responsibility for the Board's effectiveness.
9. Communicate directly with the Executive Director as appropriate whenever a staff member, student, parent, or community member raises a question or concern; and direct people to communicate to the appropriate person; closest to the situation.
10. Contact the Executive Director whenever contacted by the media regarding an incident, event, or agenda item.
11. Communicate directly with the Executive Director and/or the Board Chair prior to board meetings to address questions and/or concerns about agenda items.
12. Communicate one-on-one with the Executive Director when an individual concern arises so issues do not fester.
13. Recognize the individual role of constituents and special interest groups, while understanding the importance of using one's best judgement to represent all members of the community.
14. As time permits, visit the school sites and attend school functions, ensuring instruction is not interrupted.
15. Periodically participate in Three Rivers Montessori community functions.



## The Executive Director will:

1. Help foster a collaborative and highly qualified board.
2. Treat all board members professionally.
3. Respect and acknowledge the Board's role in setting policy and overseeing the performance of the Executive Director.
4. Recognize that the Board/Executive Director governance relationship requires collaboration and trust in the Three Rivers Montessori Administrative Team.
5. Accept leadership responsibility and be the spokesperson regarding implementation of the vision, goals, and policies of Three Rivers Montessori.
6. Prepare preliminary goals annually for the Board's consideration.
7. Provide data and analysis of success indicators, milestones, and student performance to Board members to inform decisions and assess progress on annual goals.
8. Make personnel decisions and changes within the approved budget and inform the board of staffing on a regular basis.
9. Communicate with all Board members promptly, effectively, and, to the extent possible, equally.
10. Inform the board prior to critical information becoming public; apprise all board members in a timely manner of any major incident of which they may be called on to answer or explain.
11. Collaborate with the Board Chair to compose the Board agenda in a timely fashion to ensure Board review; clarify information prior to scheduled meetings or workshops.
12. Avoid bringing a matter to a public meeting that is a surprise to a Board member.
13. Respond to requests for additional information through a Board update or special report and include information as Board agenda items or at a Board workshop.
14. Present major decisions initially as a discussion item, then place it on the next board meeting agenda for action.
15. Communicate with individual Board members to determine if concerns exist prior to a problem developing.
16. Provide a written self-assessment prior to the Board's evaluation of the Executive Director's job performance.
17. Keep the Board informed regarding issues and/or situations that concern parents, students, staff, or community as appropriate.





<u>Task</u>	<u>School Board's Role</u>	<u>Executive Director's Role</u>
<b>Policy</b>	Adopts	Implements, Creates, and/or Suggests
<b>Board Meetings and Workshops</b>	Leads	Serves as a Resource Person
<b>Budgets/Finance/Audits</b>	Adopts and Monitors	Prepares, Administers, Monitors Details
<b>Instruction</b>	Establishes Criteria Monitors	Recommends, Oversees Implementation
<b>Personnel</b>	Adopts Staffing Budget (FTE's)	Develops, Interviews, Hires, Evaluates Within Approved Budget
<b>Facilities/Transportation /Food Service</b>	Develops Policy	Implements Policy, Writes Rules and Regulations, Makes Recommendations
<b>Community Relations</b>	Creates a Positive Image, is an Active Voice in the Larger Community	Creates Positive Environment, Directs Communication
<b>State Statutes and Compliance</b>	Keep Abreast of All Law Changes and Compliance Regulations from State and Authorizer	Implement All Law Changes and Compliance Regulations from State and Authorizer
<b>The Board and Executive Director</b>	Hires ED, Establishes Expectations, Evaluates the ED, Serves at the Behest of the Members of the School	Works Towards All the Board Establishes Goals and Serves the School

# Board and Executive Director Communication Protocols

## Treatment of Board Members

The Executive Director will treat all Board members equally, recognizing there is a unique relationship with the Board Chair and Board Committee Team members. The Executive Director may meet individually with each Board member within two months of their initial term and then Annually, as needed. Conversation topics may include, but are not limited to:

1. How is TRM excelling in meeting the mission, vision, and goals of the Strategic Plan?
2. What do you love about TRM?
3. What is an opportunity of growth for TRM?
4. What are your goals as a Board member in your first year and during your three year term?
5. How may I support you and/or the TRM School Board?

The relationship between the Executive Director and Board Chair requires special attention. A face-to-face meeting will take place by August 1st of each school year. Conversation topics may include, but are not limited to:

1. Due to the unique nature of your position as Board Chair, what kinds of key information do you want to stay informed about in relation to the operation of Three Rivers Montessori?
2. How do you want to work together to develop the Board agenda?
3. What is your preferred method for receiving information?
4. What kinds of information would you require me to contact you immediately? How do you want to handle the notification of other Board members related to crucial information?
5. What thoughts or ideas do you have for achieving healthy and collaborative two-way communication?
6. How can I support you in your role as Board Chair?

## Normal Communication

### Agenda and Board Decisions

Any matters that will be decided by the board should be discussed at a public meeting. Items that require significant decisions will be introduced during the Board discussion section of the agenda. Prior to the Board meeting, the Executive Director will send all recommended discussion items and supporting material to the Board and collaborate with any Board related committees to set the discussion topics. Setting this is ultimately the responsibility of the Board Chair.

# Board and Executive Director Communication Contd.

## Executive Director Report

The Executive Director Report is given at all Board meetings. The Executive Director Report will include a wide range of topics throughout the year, including, but not limited to:

- Enrollment summary
- Staffing changes
- Governance
- Principal's/School Leader's reports
- Professional development updates
- Authorizer reports
- Any other pertinent school matters

The Executive Director report is sent to the Board with the board packet prior to the board meeting to address any questions Board Members may have prior to the meeting.

## On the Same Page (OSP)

OSP is an email communication that details recent happenings at Three Rivers Montessori that are important and need to be communicated prior to the next Board workshop or regular meeting. OSP's are generally sent out during breaks, in the Summer, or when there are large gaps between meetings. These are meant to be informational only. Any questions or comments must be directed back to the Executive Director only; Board members must NOT reply all as this would constitute quorum.

## General Information

The Executive Director will notify the Board via email whenever there is a situation that Board members would likely receive parent, staff, student, or media communications. These situations are outside the norm, may be disruptive to standard operating procedures, and are NOT an emergency:

- School closing due to inclement weather or outbreak of illness
- Staffing concerns
- Changes in finance or legislation
- Complaint that will go to the Board
- False fire alarms
- Bus accident with no injuries



# Board and Executive Director Communication Contd.

## Emergency Communication Standards

An emergency situation requires immediate contact with the Board Chair and then contact with the Board. Emergency situations require timely communication and fast decision making. A specific communication plan will be decided case by case with the collaboration between the Board Chair and Leadership Team. The situation will be placed in one of the three priority categories:

1. High = Immediate contact
2. Medium = Within three hours
3. Low = Same day

A preferred method of contact will be used for all situations as determined by the Leadership Team:

- Email
- Face-to-face
- Phone

Example: Bus accident involving injuries: High priority, immediate via phone, and follow up with details via email.

Situations that may require Emergency Communications:

- Bus accident involving injury
- Death or severe illness to an employee, parent, student, or Board member
- Major vandalism on school property
- Employee injured or killed while on duty
- Major crime by an employee
- Water main broken
- Heating system failure in the Winter
- Lock down situation
- Severe weather lockdown during arrival or dismissal



# Working Groups/Committees

Working groups of the Three Rivers Montessori Board of Directors are advisory groups created to support the mission of the school by focusing on certain key school functions. Working groups/committees are strategic in nature; have recurring matters to evaluate and recommend; and are Board of Directors charged. Committees are advisory. Such committees shall be subject to Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

When warranted, for specific short-term or special circumstances, the Board may create various ad-hoc committees to perform specific duties. These groups may be comprised of Board members, faculty, staff, and/or parents and will only exist until their specific tasks have been accomplished.

Committees and/or ad-hoc committees are generally operational and/or advisory in nature. In addition, each committee or working group shall operate under a Board-approved mandate, updated at least annually, establishing the goals it will pursue, and in the case of a committee, clearly delineating the scope of any decision-making authority that has been delegated to it by the Board of Directors.

Working groups/committees do fall under the Open Meeting Law and transparency and collaboration amongst stakeholder groups is highly recommended. Working groups/committees are ongoing and generally meet at least monthly, but may this may not always be the case. Each working group/committee has an assigned Board member and that Board member acts as the liaison between the working groups/committee and the Board. Working groups/committees have a mandate by the Board and can be found on the School Board section of the TRM website. Current committees include:

- The Finance Committee
- The Development Committee
  - Fundraising
  - Community Outreach
- The Review Committee
  - ED Review
  - Internal Policy Team (ie. the wellness policy)

## Required Readings

In order to fully embrace and ensure the execution of the Mission and Vision of Three Rivers Montessori, as well as the strategic plan set forth by the Board of Directors, the Executive Director shall be encouraged to read, understand, and participate in the following

- The Three Rivers Montessori Strategic Plan
- PD and Development Opportunities through the Montessori Center of Minnesota
- *The Tao of Montessori* by Catherine McTamaney
- *Powerful Literacy in the Montessori Classroom* by Susan Zoll, Natasha Feinberg, and Laura Saylor
- *The Montessori Assessment Playbook* by The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector



# Board of Directors

