



September 14, 2020
Quarterly Board Meeting
Montessori School of Englewood

Location: Telephonic

Present:

Board Members: Thom Hale, Mike Sculnick, Joe Motto, Karen Anderson, Peter Cunningham, Ebonie Townsend, Peter Talmers, Tanesha Peeples, Marcus Robinson, Jim Sulzer, Marvin Hoffman

Administration: Rita Nolan, Nyela Wells, Maggie Mikuzis

University of Chicago Booth School of Business Fellows: Deanna Wiblitzhouser, Aaras Shah

Roll call and minutes taken by: Joe Motto

I. Call to Order

Hale called the meeting to order.

II. CPS Office of Inspector General Investigation

Hale and Motto led discussion concerning the information request we received from CPS OIG. As has been reported in the press, CPS OIG has made inquiries of charter schools, including MSE, concerning the receipt and expenditure of PPP loan funds. We made a production of documents in response to the request and await further developments. It is not known yet what CPS aims to accomplish or what outcomes it might seek relating to its investigation.

III. Finance

Sculnick led discussion on school finances. Through our first month of operation in the new year, we are running a \$26k surplus. We had a \$216k deficit for the year just-ended, driven by significant cleaning and repair expenses; direct student costs; and other miscellany higher than budgeted. On an accumulated basis, we had at year-end positive total net assets of ~\$150k.



We are complying with the terms of our CPS remediation, but the fact that we ran a deficit might impact our remediation status for the coming year.

Fundraising efforts have been largely displaced due to COVID, but we will need to ramp back up.

IV. Executive Director's Report

Nolan circulated in advance and led discussion, with Wells and Mikuzis, of the Executive Director's report (Ex. A) and various items of interest at the school. We are extremely proud of our staff, which worked 24/7 over the summer to prepare for the Fall 2020 semester in the COVID environment. We opened full remote learning on September 8, 2020. Among a number of "tech" highlights (including pod orientation and Chrome book restoration), we have configured and deployed over 270 computers to student families over the last three weeks. Thus far, online learning has been a huge success; rigorous and well-attended. Our national summer school initiative was also very successful and thus we decided to bring it into the fall based on staff feedback.

Among many facilities/sanitation updates are the following:

- Installation of eco-Friendly sanitizers on each floor.
- Permanent hand sanitizers in each classroom and office.
- Faucets changed to 30 seconds for hand washing.
- Air vents were cleaned and installed with UV filters.
- UV filters ordered for each classroom
- All CDC recommended products ordered.
- All PPE products have been ordered.
- Elevator inspection passed.
- New signage for Head Start.
- Boiler inspection passed.



- Renovated front office in-house.
- We received pro bono rodent abatement services.

The Trotter Project, World Central Kitchen, and CHI-Fresh have provided over 20,000 meals to our families and community.

V. Head Start

Nolan discussed Head Start items of note and delivered the September 2020 Head Start report, *see* Ex. B.

We have been awarded 80 Head Start slots for the 2020/2021 school year. New Head Start personnel include Abebi Espanoza, Owen Monroe, and Yolanda Jackson.

The Board discussed an application for Supplemental Funding to off-set the cost of 27 children that were not part of our original budget, as well as a request for Supplemental Funding for playground equipment and Montessori training for six Montessori training slots for the summer of 2021 as stated in the report, totaling \$152,597.40.

Robinson made a motion to approve and authorize the applications for the Supplemental Funding. Sulzer seconded. All present voted in favor; none opposed. The motion passed.

Hale made a motion to accept the Head Start September 2020 Report. Motto seconded. All present voted in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

VI. New Business

Various other additional business was discussed, including the upcoming Slalom program concerning Realizing Racial Equality.

VII. Public Participation

Opportunity was given for public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



The next quarterly meeting of the board will be on Saturday, November 7, 2020, at 9:00 a.m., via teleconference.

Exhibit A



THE Montessori School
of Englewood | A Chicago Public
Charter School

6936 South Hermitage Avenue | Chicago, Illinois 60636

Board Report- Quarter One

The Montessori School of Englewood is focused on student centricity by locating the students within the context of their own culture by placing their identity in the center of the educational and historical narrative rather than on the periphery. This focus applies to students from any culture.

Within this context, we will be focusing on:

- Infusing the curriculum with an authentic, inclusive, and accurate history that is reflective of our school community
- TMSOE will emphasize student-led learning, practical life skills, social justice, citizenship, and personal growth.

Operations

COVID-19 Response:

Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak when school was still in session, TMSOE purchased in February two hand sanitizer stations per floor (Six were placed in the building). Starting in mid-February, one maintenance crew member was designated explicitly to sanitizing “hotspots” in the building where most individuals gather.

The building received a deep clean in August.

Projects completed for sanitization:

- Eco-Friendly sanitizers on each floor. Each maintenance closet contains three types of disinfectants that are explicitly measured for cleaning instructions.
- Permanent hand sanitizers out of each classroom and office
- Faucets changed to 30 seconds for hand washing.
- Air vents were cleaned and installed with UV filters.
- UV filters ordered for each classroom
- All CDC recommended products ordered.
- All PPE products have been ordered.

Order Costs for COVID-19 response

ECO Proportioning System including disinfectants and bottles for two months(For Pre-K and Charter):
\$5,428.24

Preschool Supplies (PPE, additional cleaning supplies): \$5,744.00

Preschool Computers: \$6,300 (28 devices)

Charter Computers: \$42,400 (172 devices)

Total cost: \$59,728.24

Other projects completed:

- The heating system and boiler tested for winter(compliant)
- Elevator inspection(passed)
- Front office renovated (completed)
- In the process of installing new steam coils
- The first and second floors hallways and ceilings were painted, and the plaster was patched.

Middle School

- 63 students enrolled, in two homerooms
- Homeroom 302: Ms. Keisha and Mr. Ghazy. Ms. Keisha has 20+ years of teaching experience; Mr. Ghazy came to MSE middle of last year shortly before remote learning began. This team also teaches math and science.
- Homeroom 308: Mr. Rick, Ms. Dyson, and Mr. Daniel. I (Mr. Rick) has 20+ years of teaching experience and is new to the school. He heads up the Middle School and teaches history/civics. Dyson and Mr. Daniel are experienced educators and teach language arts, writing, and African American studies.
- Students each take language arts, science, math, history/civics, and either African-American studies or a writing focus class. The students also have an art class with Ms. Uneq'ka.
- The SpEd, MTSS, and ESL teams have been working very closely with all classes daily.
- Overview: Online classes are going very well here at the start of the year. Reports are that teachers and students have become much more comfortable with the medium than last spring. The middle school team worked 24/7 up to and through Labor Day weekend to ensure equitable access to technology by the first day of school. This included calls, texts, and emails to families to address a wide range of challenges: obtaining a working computer, getting online, signing up for all of their classes, and establishing lines of communication. As a result of that work, online classes' attendance is near 100%, although the team is aware that they need to be diligent to keep this going.
- Communication and lessons are posted daily on Classroom.com. Teachers and students are well-versed in this platform.
- Where applicable, the NSSI curriculum is being used, continuing from summer school. This program provides ample support and guidance and aligns with the work students did before remote learning began.

Upper Elementary

- The week before the beginning of the new school year, upper elementary teachers held several “meet and greeted,” both in-person and online. Students received school supplies and instructions on how to use the remote learning platforms. Those who lacked the required Chromebooks received one. By the end of the week, all but two of our 62 students had picked up their items.
- While the first day of school began with various calls for password information and confusion about getting on Google Meet, things have happily settled down. With our parents’ patience and cooperation and the help of office and family engagement staff, nearly all of our students are participating in their scheduled classes. Online classroom norms and etiquette are being established, and our “new normal” is becoming just that. Teachers are adjusting to new ways to provide information and guide learning. They are even learning how to give Montessori lessons via the internet.

6th grade

- Thanks to the help of the tech department, all sixth-graders who needed a Chromebook received one. We held a staggered, outdoor parent orientation with almost 100% attendance where families could pick up computers, school supplies and talk with teachers about the schedule and curriculum for remote learning. Parents also met with Bilingual or MTSS representatives at these orientation sessions to discuss supports for individual students.
- Online instruction is going well. We have 30 students, and attendance is hovering at or above 90% for the first week; absences are mostly due to new enrollment or students experiencing trouble with wifi or computer glitches, which we’ve been able to address on an individual basis.
- Children are participating well in class and working hard to finish their assignments. They seem to enjoy the NSSI curriculum, which MSE piloted in the summer, and we’re continuing into the fall for remote learning. The curriculum is common-core aligned (based on Eureka math, which we’ve used for the upper grades at MSE, and Wit and Wisdom reading, published by the same group as Eureka). The math work focuses heavily on word problems, and the reading class is a novel study. We just began diving into some short stories, including titles by Langston Hughes and Shirley Jackson, and the quality and scope of the class discussions have been awe-inspiring! Students are eager to be back in school and are ready to jump into learning. We sent home materials to allow for some hands-on science experiments through the Mystery Science program in science. Our first experiment about salt crystals was a big hit. It has been friendly to incorporate hands-on experiences into a very computer-heavy day with more advanced planning. We’re also excited that all elementary and middle school classes will have art instruction twice a week with Ms. Uneqka.

Lower Elementary

- 133 students enrolled in 1st-3rd grade
- 201: Ms.Nour (2nd) and Ms.Stephanie (1st) ELL class
- 200: Ms.Raven and Ms.Ashlee
- 212: Ms.Shenetta and Ms.Glenn
- 208: Ms.Johori and Ms.Emily
- Special Education: Ms.Courtney and Ms.Sarah
- All levels had an outdoor parent orientation meeting.
- Big focus on Montessori work and independent follow up appointment. Sent home manipulatives/worksheets for the first two weeks to be returned, then will refill bags. Each lesson has a specific follow up that students can complete (sort, etc.) independently (rather than relying on computers).
- Using Sarah Cotner phonics curriculum, writers and readers workshop (Lucy Caulkins), and balanced literacy from NCQ literacy (including IRA).
- Attendance is also just above 90%. Teachers are keeping close tabs on attendance, and the level head keeps the principal/director apprised through the Elementary Student spreadsheet.

Kindergarten

- 38 Kindergartens enrolled - 19 in each room.
- Room 106: Ms. Trinida Langdon, 2nd-year Kindergarten teacher at MSE. Ms. Langdon Has over ten years of teaching experience.
- Room 206: Ms. Katie O'Sullivan, 7th year teaching Kindergarten - 1st year at MSE. Ms. O'Sullivan has a Masters in Education, as well as a SPED certification.
- Class communication is being given on Google Classroom; live instruction is happening on Google Meets.
- Students receive two weeks of hard copy work in their student binder that correlates to class lessons. Families are to turn in hard copy work and pick up a new book every other Friday.
- Live instruction is being given from 8:30 to - noon. After 12, teachers have office hours so parents can contact them with any issues they have. They also have enrichment hours where they meet in small groups with students who may need extra support.
- Curriculum Being Used:Montessori: Heavy focus on Grace and Courtesy and Practical Life
 - Social/Emotional: Second Step and Mindful Schools
 - Writing: Lucy Calkins
 - Phonemic Awareness: ABC Bootcamp (26-day routine) and Haggerty
 - Math: Scope and Sequence-based on Common Core Standards
 - Social Science/Science: Montessori works, as well as scope and sequence based on Common Core Standards
 - Interactive Read Alouds: Each month focuses on a different literary theme (illustration

and text, setting and story elements, characters, main idea, and details, etc.)

Primary

The Montessori School of Englewood, contracted an early childhood advocate consultant Dana Garner to provide professional development to the Head Start staff. Ms. Garner, formerly the Executive Director for their Early Head Start and Head Start program for Trinity United Church of Christ, was well received. The training lasted for five days and covered the Head Start Performance Standards and the Department of Support Services and Chicago Early Learning Standards. Other professional development (PD) topics covered during this week included: Board and Policy Committee training on Shared Governance, the Importance of Data and Making Data-Informed Decisions, Parent and Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services, Creative Curriculum, Infusing Educational Approaches, and Organizational Philosophies Relating to Curricula and Education Pedagogy, How to Effectively Complete the ESI's and ASQ-SE's, Disabilities and Mental Health, Head Start services competencies: Tools to Support the Health Component for Staff, Understanding Family and Community Engagement Framework, Building and Developing an Intentional Family Partnership Agreement, Providing Families Strong Referrals, Creating Purposeful and Impactful Community Partnership Agreements; COVID-19 training; and, Leadership Training.

- In conjunction with the above training, the Head Start Leadership Team is receiving leadership and mentorship coaching.

Program Governance

- A Supplemental Funding grant was submitted to Head Start on 09/07/20, requesting \$123,750.00 to off-set cost for the 27 children that were not part of the original budget. We are awaiting their decision. **The application for additional funding needs to be voted on by the Board of Directors, approving the grant's purpose and the school's authority to apply on behalf of the Board.**
- We are also planning to request supplemental funding for playground equipment. We are currently in the process of securing three bids.
- We are requesting the BOD's approval to apply to DFSS for supplemental funding for playground equipment.

ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

- We have been awarded 80 Head Start slots for the 2020/2021 school year. We currently have 32 remote learners. We have two children with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan).

Human Resource Management

- We currently have three new employees:
Owen Mon- Teacher
Abebi Espinoza - Teacher
Yolanda Jackson - Teacher Assistant

Specialized Support

- We currently have 56 students with IEPs (total enrollment = 383), so approximately 15% of our student population has an IEP. We have several additional students in the referral process or who we suspect may need our services. We are working on streamlining the referral process and providing meaningful, documented interventions for struggling students but do not have an IEP.
- We are piloting FastBridge, universal screening, and intervention tools to have actionable data to start the school year. It includes CMBs (Curriculum-Based Measures) to understand our students' strengths and areas needing growth. We will be using this program to achieve our MTSS goals and help us set and monitor plans for our Diverse Learners. We can use this data to better predict high-stakes test results and implement interventions to help our students achieve more growth and raise those scores.
- We have hired a new Learning Specialist (Sarah Beckett) and have filled other positions internally, so we expect to cover all IEP minutes and provide top tier support to all of our Diverse Learners.
- We are continuing to use Stepping Stones for our related service providers (Nursing, OT, PT, Speech, and Social Work), and are using Charmanika Mosley's service agency for our Psych support. Charm has worked with our school previously and is knowledgeable about the unique needs of our student population.
- We are training our Primary Learning Specialists in Wilson Foundations and will have them pilot the phonics-based literacy program for our Diverse Learners. In the future, we are planning to use the program as a universal (Tier 1) MTSS intervention, and as a Tier 2 and 3 intervention (greater frequency and intensity).
- We have created a master spreadsheet consisting of General Education and Diverse Learners schedules. The entire school team has at-a-glance information on where each student is and when, and how their IEP minutes are being met.
- Tanita Barry, our Behavioral Interventionist and Family Services Liaison (and Paraprofessional Supervisor), is working to integrate those services with a remote learning model. She will be our Middle School and Upper Elementary contact person for providing support to families and students and is working with staff to coordinate outreach and interventions for students who are struggling with emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges during remote learning.

MTSS/Bilingual

The MTSS team attended parent orientation to introduce MTSS to all students and families. In the direction, parents filled out a survey to assess their needs and their students' needs in successful remote learning to create targeted Tier 1 interventions for the whole school community. These tier 1 interventions have also been cross-referenced with the teacher survey sent out to assess students' needs from the teacher's perspectives. In addition to this, parents scheduled universal screeners to determine if students require Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. We've been testing for two weeks, and we have completed 59 of the 220 students (27%) to be tested. Overall, the parents have received the MTSS process well, and they're excited to support their scholars through interventions. The testing period

ends on October 16th, and we intend to have at minimum 90% completion of the universal screener. After the testing session, the MTSS team will start Tier 2 intervention groups for K-8th based on the universal screener results.

The bilingual team has translated all schoolwide documents for parents to ensure equity of access to information. The bilingual team has returned all of the students' ACCESS scores. The ESL teachers conduct daily ESL language lessons for PreK- 8th grade remotely and in-person depending on the grade level. Pre-K is in person, and they receive push-in ESL minutes. The 1st & 2nd grade ELLs have been offered the opportunity to come into school 4 of the eight students accepted to go into the school, and they receive a push in minutes. The rest of the bilingual students are remote. They receive minutes pull out minutes based on collaborative lesson planning as the ESL teacher does a breakout session with the students to support their coursework from a language perspective based on their ACCESS scores. The bilingual team has received an anonymous donation.

Technology

- TMSOE opened with Full Remote Learning 9/8/20. Over **350** Students are now receiving 100% Online Digital Instruction.
- The Tech Team has configured and deployed over **270** Computers to Student families over the last three weeks. This is the culmination of 3 months' worth of planning and execution to make sure TMSOE is 1 to 1 in terms of Technology for the Fall 2020 Semester.
- **200** new computers were purchased since Aug 24, 2020
- Over **350** Student Account Logins have been created or modified to support Remote Learning.
- Significant enhancements are underway within TMSOE's Digital Landscape including:
 - The Development of a **TMSOE Online Instructional Platform** features a comprehensive catalog of all online Portals from K through 8. Examples of these Portals include:
 - SeeSaw
 - Lexia
 - Cadence/NSSI
 - Amplify Science
 - Dreambox
 - IXL
 - Class Dojo
 - Epic Education
 - NewsELA
 - TMSOE's G-Suite Administrative environment is being enhanced to allow the use of **tailored instructional tools and utilities** available as Extensions within Chrome. These tools expand digital interaction between Teacher and Student, including the ability for Teachers to **Remotely Access a student's Chromebook** to assist with an activity or exercise.
 - Teachers will soon create specific **Landing Web Pages** for their Class, which will significantly simplify how students navigate required work and daily exercises.
- A **Chromebook Triage Center** is being developed to potentially re-constitute damaged

Chromebooks and returns to active use. TMSOE has ~70 damaged Chromebooks in various levels of disrepair.

Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

- MSE hosted in-person parent orientation in small groups of pods to distribute technology, go over all questions regarding the internet via Chicago Connect, and materials.
- The Trotter Project, World Central Kitchen, and CHI-Fresh have provided over 20,000 meals to our families and community.
- The University of Illinois Master Gardeners sponsored by The Trotter Project has returned. The garden is in full bloom providing vegetables and fruits for our families and community.
- A private donor has committed to sponsoring 35 families in our student and transition living program to receive a monthly produce and protein basket for their family.
- 35 parents have signed up to join the Village Advisory Committee.
- Currently, over 50 students are signed up for Lawyers-Lend-a-Hand.
- The Rush Nurses began on 9/10. The nurses will be conducting interviews with members of leadership to discuss MSE's mission and vision. The first part of their focus will be with our preschool students in the garden discussing nutrition.
- FACE will continue home-visits to provide support for individual families.

Attendance for Week 1

Kindergarten-8th grade: 86.77%

Preschool: 79.82%

Grand Total: 86.02%

Enrollment

PE: 20

PK: 51

KDG:42

1st: 44

2nd: 40

3rd: 32

4th: 29

5th: 34

6th: 30

7th: 30

8th: 35

Total: 387

Demographics:

90.65% Black

8.31% Hispanic

1.04% White

Fundraising

Board of Directors: \$50,250.00

Individual donors: \$10,500.00

Corporate donors: \$9,415.12

Inkind: \$40,000

Committed: \$112,000

Respectfully, submitted

Exhibit B



THE **Montessori School**
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6936 South Hermitage Avenue | Chicago, Illinois 60636

Head Start Program - September, 2020

The Montessori School of Englewood's Head Start program is very excited about starting it's 2020/2021 school year. Prior to our start the Executive Director of the Montessori Network, Rita Nolan and Dr. Nyela Wells, Principal of the Montessori School of Englewood contracted a well known citywide early childhood advocate consultant, Dana Garner to provide professional development to the whole staff. This department has never invested in upfront intentional training to this extent. Ms. Garner, who was formerly the Executive Director for their Early Head Start and Head Start program for Trinity United Church of Christ. The professional development training was given to the Director (Samara Akins) and the Coordinators (LaToya Williamson (ERSEA and Family and Community Engagement), Tanya Williamson (Disabilities and Family Community Engagement), and Jone Arsenault (Education Coordinator).

Upon the teachers return, over the course of 5 days a Head Start 101 training was implemented. This was to ensure that all staff learn and embrace the Head Start Performance Standards and the DFSS Chicago Early Learning Standards. Other professional development (PD) workshops that were given are as follows: Board and Policy Committee training on shared governance, the importance of data and making data-informed decisions, parent and family engagement in education and child development services, Creative Curriculum, infusing educational approaches and organizational philosophies relating to curricula and education pedagogy, how to effectively complete the ESI's and ASQ-SE's, disabilities and mental health, Head Start services competencies: Tools to Support the Health Component for Staff, Understanding Family and Community Engagement Framework, building and developing and intentional family partnership agreement, providing families strong referrals, creating intentional and impactful Community Partnership Agreements; COVID-19 training; and, providing leadership training.

In conjunction with all of the above training, the Head Start Leadership Team is receiving leadership and mentorship coaching.

Program Governance

- A Supplemental Fund grant was submitted requesting \$152,597.40 to purchase playground equipment , which includes installation and Montessori training for three teachers and three administrators. **This item needs to be voted on by the Board of Directors and Parent Policy Committee giving approval to write for funding.**

- We are currently in the process of securing three bids for the playground equipment and Montessori training. We are required, according to the Head Start Performance standard to get three quotes if we spend over \$10,000.
- We also wrote for and received a grant for \$10,000 from Head Start to provide workshops to parents and teachers on Trauma.
- During this month we will begin the process of election for new Head Start Program Policy Committee members.
- We will also hold a workshop on Program Governance with the Board of Directors and the Parent Policy Committee as mandated by the Head Start Performance Standards.

ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance)

We currently have been awarded 80 slots, of the 80 slots, 75 are filled. There are only 5 slots that are available. We currently have 32 remote learners and two remote teachers. We have 2 children with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan). We need 6 more to fulfill the 10% requirement. The following mechanisms are used for recruitment: word of mouth, brochures, and flyers. Our daily attendance thus far, which includes remote learners is 77%. This might be due to lack of technology and we are not fully enrolled. We anticipate our technical devices sometime during the week of September 14th. For those students that have been absent, we call twice and on the third absent, we conduct a home visit.

Out of the 3 year olds from last year that are now 4 year olds, 33 have returned.

Human Resource Management

We currently have three new employees:

- Owen Monroe - Teacher, Teach for America
- Abebi Espinoza - Teacher, Teach for America
- Yolanda Jackson - Teacher Assistant
- Leah Jowers - Executive Director of Head Start

There are two staffers that are working toward meeting the necessary requirements for their position:

McCall Long - Teacher Assistant - Working on completing her Early Childhood hours to qualify for her position. She should be finished by December, 2021.

Ethel Nelson - Teacher - Working on her qualifications in ECE hours and should be finished by December, 2020.

Accomplishment: Samara Akins - Director of Head Start, completed her Baccalaureate degree in ECE and has her level 5 credential in ECE and level 2 director's credential in Gateway.

EDUCATION/DISABILITIES

50% of our screening has been completed. Our set deadline for completion of the screenings and home visits is set for September 30th. All of the remote learner's have been completed. At present, we do not have any ELL or Diverse Learners that are remote learners. At present we have 2 identified diverse learners and 5 ELL students all of who are receiving their education in person.

In an effort to collaborate with the parents, the teachers are posting the lesson plans so that the parents can read them and if they have questions, can ask them prior to the lesson. To ensure that the ELL learners are being supported, we are working in collaboration with the Bilingual department and they are pulling our ELL students and providing lessons. They are also providing workshops to the staff to assist them with working with our ELL learners.

Family and Community Engagement

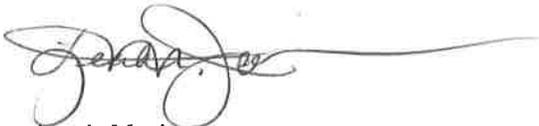
Thus far, we have the following community partnerships:

- Friends and Family Medical Center - referrals for physicals
- Mental Health - Ada S. McKinley
- Rush Nurses

We are currently working to secure partnership with dental clinics, nutritional specialists, homeless shelters, and food pantries.

To ensure that the remote learners are provided with nutritious meals, parents were informed at orientation and on the first day of remote learning that breakfast and lunch are available for pick-up every other day. On Monday they get enough for two days and on Wednesday, they get enough for three days. We also provide hot meals daily for the families and people in the community from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in conjunction with the Charter School.

Respectfully submitted,



Leah M. Jowers

Head Start Executive Director