

August 8, 2018

Dear Scott and Kierstin,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us yesterday and to share your concerns. During our meeting, you let us know that, if all of the parents' demands were not met within 24 hours of our meeting, two things would happen: 1) newspapers would be told about this situation, from one point of view, and that it could include a (outrageous and unsubstantiated) racial claim of discrimination against Mari, and that 2) a written summary of a confidential personnel meeting, from one person's point of view, would be shared with all parents.

Interestingly, just 30 minutes prior to your arrival, I sent out an email with a response to parents to the three requests. In our meeting I elaborated on this email, and assured you that we are more committed than ever to coming together as a community to understand the changes our school has been facing in the last two years, understand the governance changes and why the ED and FA job descriptions and duties are as such. I told you that we have already reached out to several organizations who deal with organizational trauma and we are in discussions with these companies now. We also discussed that there is a long history behind the recent governance changes at our school, and this is reflective of what is happening in Waldorf schools across the country who have run inefficiently and ineffectively for many years. Many people I have spoken to, across the country, are in agreement that while consensus has many benefits, it does not lead to agility in an organization.

Speaking of agility, we discussed the fact that, even in the face of multiple changes at our school, we hired roughly twenty people and instituted several new programs throughout the school. I guarantee you that this amount of positive change in such a short time frame could never have happened with the old model of governance.

One of the requirements of the parents that you mentioned is that they know all the information about Mari's review and departure. While we can certainly share the general process, and we have done so several times, we cannot share confidential personnel information. In my thirty years in corporations and schools, I have never seen a professional organization that would do such a thing. So, we cannot meet that demand of the parents. You asked if we have asked Mari to come back, and I let you know that since Mari's declination of our 3-day offer, I have spent my time searching for a new teacher for the children, because I felt that was a priority. (We have found a teacher and this will be announced shortly.) Also, please note that we did reach out to Mari to let her know we would be open to sitting down with her upon her return. You mentioned that Mari is communicating with people via email, and stated that email is certainly a possible avenue of communication, but I reminded you that it is not appropriate for this type of sensitive content - face to face is much more effective. Also, emails are not confidential, as we have clearly seen through recent events. Finally, I mentioned that I wrote the tribute to Mari in the newsletter, honoring her many years of service here. I highly recommend you, and the entire group you mention, read this and the entire newsletter and you will clearly see that we are moving in an overall positive direction as a school.

I asked what the group was hoping to accomplish with their plans, and how they could envision that this plan would benefit the school? You were not able to answer that, and I venture to guess that is because there really is no foreseeable positive outcome. You mentioned you were growing weary of what is happening, and stated your commitment to the school, and Kierstin restated her love for it as well, and that she hopes to someday work with us.

Scott and Kierstin, it seems clear that it is time for us to come together to begin a series of discussions about our school and where it is headed. You mentioned that the group was hoping that our last meeting would be that type of discussion. The hostility and negative energy in the room was palpable, and it was very hard to navigate through that with open hearts and minds, but we did our very best. A reminder to you and the group is that we are indeed planning to have a series of discussions this year around the direction of our school, its governance, and processes and procedures. And as I am writing this to you, I can also say that Caroline and I are working hard to put into place many things at our school that have not been in place in order to put more systems in place to further support our school.

Finally, please note that the ED and FA do not have “veto” power, but we have been given the authority to make the best decision on behalf of the school if the FMG is divided, which it was. As administrators of the school, it is our job to take into account all of the information that comes to us, assimilate it, and do what we think is best, which we did in this case. I will also point out that this was the only decision, out of hundreds made at the school this year and nine performance reviews, in which we had to take this type of action. Further, after extensive review of my records and taking a step back at the entire picture, my confidence is strengthened to know that we made the best decision possible, given the entire systems view of the situation at our school.

In closing, I urge your group to consider the damage and untruthfulness of their actions. They simply lack all of the facts, and I cannot, under any circumstances, understand how their actions are a show of integrity for the school OR for their personal situations. I hope everyone can consider joining a community meeting in which we come together rather than apart.

Sincerely,

Dianne and Caroline