



Discovery Woods - District # 4198
Board of Directors Board Meeting
5:00-6:30 p.m. at 604 N 7th Street, Brainerd, MN 56401
Date: January 15, 2026

Mission: To provide Brainerd Lakes Area families a choice for quality elementary education centered around the individual needs of the child, with a focus on the environment.

Board of Directors' Purpose

To provide leadership, set policy, and develop accountability practices that will ensure high student achievement.

Called to order at 5:05pm by Emma Needham

Present: Ashley Gangestad, Dawn Snook, Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht , Emma Needham , Matt Hastert

Absent: Chasidi Grant, Denise Belden

Ex-Officio: Kara DeVriendt

Guests: Jess Hulitt, Ryan Schmidt, Mindy Wachter

1. Community Forum - (3 minutes)-
2. Charter School Finance Committee Report
 - i. Audit Report - **Ryan J. Schmidt, CPA** | *Partner* - Schlenner Wenner & Co
 1. FY25 audit report was presented. They collect information about our financial records to get a clean opinion. The audit went smoothly. Motion to accept the audit report. M/S Dawn/Matt Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - ii. November [Financials](#) and [Supplement](#)
 1. Jess Hulitt presented the November financials. Motion to accept the November financials and supplement. M/S Rebekah/Dawn Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - iii. [December Financial Committee Mtg. Minutes](#)
 - iv. December [Financials](#) and [Supplement](#)
 1. Jess Hulitt presented the December financials and supplement. The format of the financials did change due to the authorizer requirements. Motion to accept the December financials and supplement. M/S Rebekah/Emma M/S Dawn/Matt Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 2. Separate the HVAC and the renovations so we can do the HVAC this summer. We need new numbers for Mindy. Move the repair and maintenance of the boiler to the building fund. Priority for the HVAC system.
 - v. [January Financial Committee Mtg. Minutes](#)
 1. The contracted services have gone up. It was from Charter Source.
3. Minutes from Prior Meeting: [November 20, 2025](#)
 - a. Motion to approve the November meeting minutes. M/S Emma/Rebekah. Motion passed.
4. Board Training - [Board Self-Evaluation Sounding Board](#)
 - a. A [Google Form](#) for board self-evaluation was created several years ago, and we continue to use it for reporting purposes in the annual report.
 - i. Check for needed modifications before this year's self-evaluation.
 - ii. We have it on the board calendar for February. It can be done at any time now

5. Old and/or Unfinished Business:

- a. Approve [Strategic Plan](#)
 - i. Motion to table until the next work meeting on Thursday, January 22nd. M/S Rebekah/Emma Motion passed.
 - 1. Note: Logo change on the Strategic Plan - will follow up on board role in logo
 - 2. A goal for increasing enrollment. A longer goal for several years.
 - 3. A marketing plan is critical. On Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms.
- b. Closed on the purchase of building 12/30/25
 - i. Met with Sean Elder from TenSquare to discuss phase II, which includes the building renovations.
 - 1. Looking at separating the building renovation and HVAC costs. Will receive follow-up with numbers from TenSquare sent to CreativePlanning.

6. School Director's report:

- a. Personnel:
 - i. Hires -
 - 1. EA, Samantha McCormack (start date 11/24/25)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Samantha McCormack. M/S Rebekah/Emma. Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 2. EA, Melissa Johnson (start date 11/25/25)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Melissa Johnson. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 3. EA, Ann Rudolph (start date 1/5/26)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Ann Rudolph. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 4. EA, Jessica Meyer (start date 1/5/26)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Jessica Meyer. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 5. EA, Shane Tilbury (start date 1/12/26)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Shane Tilbury. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 6. EA, Isabel Franzen (start date 1/12/26)
 - a. Motion to approve the hire of Melissa Johnson. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - ii. Separations -
 - 1. EA, Samantha Thompson
 - a. Motion to approve the separation of Samantha Thompson. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 2. EA, Samantha McCormack
 - a. Motion to approve the separation of Samantha McCormack. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - 3. EA, [Mary Doucette](#) - going on medical leave (will return)
 - a. We did hire someone to cover her medical leave.

4. Board Member, Melina Kramer
 - a. Motion to approve the separation of Melina Kramer. M/S Rebekah/Emma Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
- b. Authorizer Update
 - i. Annual Report Feedback
 1. "This is a very thorough and well-written report that details the unique characteristics of the school."
 2. "It is a strong report that effectively showcases the school's unique offerings and overall dynamic while meeting the requirements set forth by the state and Osprey Wilds. The report is compliant, and no revisions are required at this time."
 3. Board Self-Evaluation - "Future reports need to list the date of assessment and ensure that an annual assessment of the board's performance is conducted and the results are reported in the school's annual report."
 - a. All board members need to complete the Google Form so that results are easily accessible and reportable.
 - c. Security Update
 - i. Phase I completed (replaced existing system)
 1. Replaced the existing system with a new system.
 - ii. Phase II scheduled for March (add key card entry for two doors without)
 1. They will need to do some wiring.
 2. Should the board members have key cards? We decided that board members should not have key cards. It is a liability issue.
 - d. Aftercare fee adjustment for SY '26-27
 - i. **Reason:** The Aftercare Program fees currently vary by age group and attendance schedule. The Aftercare Program currently spends more money on staffing and supplies than it earns from fees. This adjustment will simplify billing, ensure consistency for families & staff, and support ongoing staffing and program costs.
 1. **Current Rates:** Preschool families may select a monthly plan of \$70 per month for five days per week or \$50 per month for three days per week. School-age students are billed at \$10 per day.
 2. **New Rates:** Aftercare Program fees will be standardized at a rate of \$10 per child per day, regardless of grade level, age, or attendance schedule.
 - a. Compared to: Fun and Friends after-school care for 5 days is \$60/week, & the YMCA After School Program is \$65/week.
 - ii. If you are taking a spot, you should have to pay for it. It has to cover the costs for after-school care. Have a prepay flat monthly full-time rate. Have an emergency care rate.
 - iii. Motion to table the aftercare rates till the next meeting. M/S Rebekah/Emma. Motion passed.
 - e. Preschool Program updates for SY '26-27
 - i. Full-time options only
 1. Motion to have full-time only in the preschool program. M/S Rebekah/Dawn. Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.
 - ii. Fee increasing from \$600/mth to \$700/mth
 1. Still very competitive locally (compare to ISD 181 preschool program @ \$1308/mth, St. Francis School Preschool @ \$722/mth, and the YMCA @

\$1040/mth)

iii. [Updated Enrollment Packet](#)

- iv. Have a gradual fee increase for the preschool program. Increase to \$750 for next year. Motion to increase the fee for the preschool program to \$750 per month. M/S Rebekah/Dawn. Matt-yes, Emma-yes, Ashley-yes, Dawn-yes, Rebekah-yes. Motion passed.

f. Technology Safeguards Update

i. "Break Glass Account"

1. A super security account.

ii. Go Guardian

1. We upped the safeguards.

iii. The Technology Coordinator position needs a job description and a task list.

g. Enrollment:

Enrollment Year End 2024-2025:

Current numbers for 2025-2026:

PK	19	PK	20
K	8	K	13
1	11	1	8
2	12	2	8
3	17	3	9
4	10	4	10
5	11	5	10
6	12	6	6
Total = 100 K-6 = 81 PreK = 19		Total = 84 K-6 = 64 PreK = 20	

7. [School Journalist Policy](#)

- a. Motion to adopt the school journalist policy. M/S Emma/Dawn motion passed.

8. [Aftercare Policy](#)

- a. Motion to table the aftercare policy. M/S Emma/Dawn motion passed.

9. **Call to Order of Closed Session**

- a. Confirmation that the meeting has been properly closed under Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 2(a) and § 121A.47, subd. 5 Motion to close the meeting under Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 2(a) and § 121A.47, subd. 5 M/S.

- i. Roll call of board members and attendees allowed in closed session

- ii. Motion to close the meeting. M/S Emma/Rebekah/ Motion passed.

- iii. Matt Hastert, Emma Needham, Ashley Gangestad, Dawn Snook,
Rebekah Kent-Ehlebracht , Kara DeVriendt

b. Statement of Purpose

- i. The chair summarizes that the closed session concerns a proposed pupil dismissal/expulsion and involves private educational data.
- ii. Motion to reopen the board meeting. M/S Emma/Dawn Motion passed.

10. Review board goals and Calendar

- a. [Board Goals 2025-2026](#)
- b. [Board Calendar:](#)

Last Month:

DECEMBER

- ☒ Review and accept the audit
- ☒ Check-in Board training
- ☒ Review the annual policy review schedule

Current Month:

JANUARY

- ☐ Executive Director completes self-assessment
 - ☐ Create/Update Form
- ☒ Review the school leader's progress against goals
 - ☒ Charter Source Goals
- ☒ Send employee survey (Administrative Team)
- ☒ Review the board's progress against goals
- ☒ Policy review

Next Month:

FEBRUARY

- ☐ Complete annual board self-assessment
- ☒ ~~Policy review~~
- ☐ Review progress against contractual academic/environmental goals and outstanding obligations

Next Board Meeting: February 19, 2026

Next Board Work Meeting: January 22, 2026

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm M/S Emma/Rebekah

Board minutes submitted by Ashley Gangestad