



JRCS Board of Stewards Handbook and Member Agreement

Mission Statement

At Juniper Ridge Community School, thoughtful, committed teachers and attentive, involved families join to inspire children to participate in their own education, by cultivating compassion and caring for themselves, each other, and the natural world. Students emerge from Juniper Ridge as confident, self-reliant individuals, who mindfully enrich their own lives, preserve and protect the earth, and productively contribute to broad and diverse communities.

Vision Statement

At JRCS, committed teachers and families join to awaken children to the joy of learning through nature, the living arts, and the practical application of academics. Integrating these elements into the daily rhythm encourages the development of the whole child: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. Students will emerge from Juniper Ridge as highly-educated self-reliant individuals, who mindfully enrich their own lives, preserve the earth, and contribute to diverse communities.

Policy Statement and Decision Making

Mesa County Valley School District 51 (MCVSD) has granted a charter to Juniper Ridge Community School (JRCS). The Board of Stewards of JRCS oversees this charter. All decisions by the Board of Stewards and the JRCS Administrative Director shall be made within the parameters and uphold the principles of the vision and mission statements. Decisions shall be made first considering the vision and mission statements and then considering the stakeholders (parents and their students), always keeping in mind that parents should have a meaningful voice in their child's education.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance for members of the Board of Stewards (the "Board"), JRCS staff, students and the community at large regarding the manner by which the Board typically operates and carries out the authority delegated to it by law, recognizing that the JRCS Board of Stewards Bylaws exist as the governing document of the school. This handbook is not intended to mandate any process that is binding upon the Board unless that process is otherwise required by law. References to legal authority and/or Board Policies which apply to specific subjects are included as appropriate.

Meetings and Manner of Acting of the Board of Stewards

The Board of Stewards shall meet at least once per month, at the JRCS offices on the third Tuesday of the month, to discuss JRCS, operations, to hear reports and updates from Board members and committees, and to consider written requests and concerns from parents, students and teachers. A quorum must be present in order to conduct business. Each Board member's opinion will carry equal weight during discussion and in reaching a decision using the unanimous consensus model. All actions taken by the Board will require a consensus.

If the board is unable to hold a regularly scheduled meeting, needs to change the location of a meeting, or needs to reschedule a meeting, then notification needs to be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

Emergency meetings, in addition to regular monthly meetings, can be requested in writing, twenty-four (24) hours before the proposed meeting. If an emergency meeting cannot be accomplished, a committee consisting of the Board Chair, the Administrative Director and the Director of Curriculum will be available to resolve the emergency.

For voting purposes, a quorum shall consist of a 2/3 majority of the total number of members who are eligible to vote. In the case of the removal of an officer or board member, all members must be present.

Attendance at Board meetings is expected. If a member must miss a meeting due to extenuating circumstances, s/he must give the Chair twenty-four (24) hours advance notice. Failure to follow this procedure may be grounds for immediate removal from the Board. Any member missing two consecutive regular meetings or four meetings annually may be removed from the board. JRCS's Administrative Director will attend all Board meetings in an advisory, non-voting role.

Full and timely notice of meetings will be given to the public by the Board. All meeting dates, times, locations, and agendas will be publicly posted no less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting in a designated public place, as well as on the school website.

The JRCS Board of Stewards will be utilizing a consensus decision-making model, provided that a quorum is present. In case of the removal of a board member, all members of the Board must be present.

Members of the Board hold a position of trust, created in the interest of the common good and for the benefit of JRCS. It is the intent of this Section to maintain public confidence and prevent the use of public office for private gain. Board members will disclose any known or potential conflicts of interest in writing to the Board prior to the time set for reaching a decision on any such transaction and will not participate in the discussion on the matter or attempt to influence the decisions of other Board members in deciding on the matter. The written disclosures will be attached to the minutes of the meeting in which Board action will occur relating to the matter disclosed. Failure by a Board member to bring notice of a potential conflict of interest to the attention of the Board in this manner may constitute cause for removal of the member from the Board.

The Chair of the Board, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, will designate a facilitator and agenda collector for all regular and special meetings of the Board. The conduct of the meetings shall be in accordance with established consensus procedure. Except as otherwise specified by state law, or by Board policies pertaining to its own operating procedure, the JRCS Board will be governed by consensus.

The JRCS Board will comply with the Colorado Open Meeting Law (Colorado Statutes 24.6.401) in every respect.

Board of Stewards Composition

The JRCS Board of Stewards will consist of voting members; no less than five (5) and no more than eleven (11).

The JRCS Administrative Director, Director of Curriculum and one teacher representative will participate in the JRCS Board meetings as ex-officio members. The teacher representative will be elected by the teaching staff and serve a one year term.

The initial terms of Board members will be spaced out so that no more than 30% of the members' terms will expire at the same time, allowing for 60% of the board to remain the same at any given renewal election.

The elections for the Board of Stewards (excluding year 1, which will be appointed by the interim-board) for the parent, non-parent and at-large prospects will be selected by the existing Board of Stewards. The Board of Stewards will consider people who have a strong passion for Waldorf education along with other valuable qualifications.

The board will strive to be comprised of five (5) parent members and six (6) non-parent members. The board will strive to have a balance of parents to non-parent members with neither side being above 60% or below 40%. The intention of the non-parent members will be to have the local community represented by business people and educators both in the private and public sectors.

When an individual becomes a member of the JRCS Board of Stewards, s/he will be provided with the following materials: The JRCS charter application; the JRCS charter contract with District 51; the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, the board handbook. It is also an expectation that new board members read *Understanding Waldorf* by Jack Petrash.

Board Behavioral Expectations

Board members shall exemplify integrity, honesty and respect. Commitment to the Mission and Vision of JRCS and the charter school movement shall be top priority for any board member. Board members shall have a firm belief in the philosophical and pedagogical approach of Waldorf education as reflected in the Mission and Vision of JRCS and shall provide sustained guidance and oversight to the Administrative Director for successful and effective operation of the School. Board members shall actively pursue deepening their knowledge of Waldorf methods, charter school development and education reform through suggested readings, workshops, and/or conferences.

A diversity of opinions and solutions are necessary for the effective governance of JRCS and a professional demeanor is expected at all board meetings. Board members shall respect and listen to ideas being presented by other board members. Issues being discussed shall not be personalized and directed toward any other board member, staff member, parent or anyone else. Discernment should be used in interpersonal relationships and communications. Confidentiality is expected in all situations.

Board members shall demonstrate initiative in remaining informed about the School's activities and progress through regular attendance at Board meetings and other planned meetings and through reading School reports and recommended publications. Board members shall fulfill their responsibilities on the board, board committees or subcommittees to their fullest capability.

All board members should attend at least two Parent Council meetings per year to show support and encouragement for that vital aspect of the School. All Board members are required to attend a yearly board conference during which the goals of the Board are defined, a Board self-evaluation critiqued and other pertinent topics are discussed. Board members should commit to periodic and pre-arranged school visits to have a feel for the School. They may visit classrooms, talk with the staff and become familiar with current school concerns.

Each board member shall commit to supporting the School thru fundraising efforts and should be the School's best public relations representatives.

A board member is prohibited from using his/her position of authority while acting in a parent or volunteer role at the School. Board members shall foster good relationships with the School Director and staff on a personal level. With humility, each board member will serve the best interests of the School.

When receiving criticisms from parents or other interested parties about staff or other board members, the board member shall direct the speaker to the board member/staff member which the situation involves. Board members will never speak negatively about staff or other board members to the school community or parties outside the school community.

Any board member finding him/herself involved in an irreconcilable conflict shall put the mission and vision of the School first and foremost or resign from the Board if unable to do so.

Board members shall abide by the Open Meetings Law [C.R.S. 24-6-401 through 402]. The Open Meetings Law states that anyone discussing Board business, policy, actions, resolutions, etc. amongst 3 or more board members, except at meetings for which notice has been properly posted at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, is illegal. "Meeting" with another board member is defined as communication through person, telephone, or any other means.

Confidentiality law is also outlined in this section of the statute. Personnel matters, individual students, and negotiations are confidential by law and may be conducted in executive session.

Board Responsibilities

The following content sets forth the general duties and responsibilities of the JRCS Board of Stewards:

1. The Board of Stewards will supervise the Administrative Director of the school in setting and enforcing school policy and adhering to the Waldorf tradition.
2. The Board will approve an annual budget.
3. The Board will oversee complete and accurate accounting records.
4. The Board will oversee the establishment and publication of the school calendar.

5. The Board will maintain any records required by law or provided for by the Charter Contract.
6. The Board will negotiate and approve any changes to or renewals of the facilities, its use and maintenance.
7. The Board will meet at regular monthly meetings, subject to the provisions of the Colorado Sunshine Act of 1972. They will provide an opportunity for public input and will maintain minutes of its proceedings. In addition, the Board may convene work sessions or executive sessions as it deems appropriate.
8. Board members may also be asked to serve on standing committees such as the Finance Committee, The School Accountability Committee, and the Rewriting of the Charter Committee. Other possible ad hoc committees are as follows: Resource Development, Operational, Marketing/Educational, Hiring, Facility, Grievance Personnel, Membership, Executive, Care Group. Different committees may be called as needed.
9. The Board will adopt and administer a grievance policy and procedure. The Board will approve an admissions policy, and assure compliance with all aspects of such policy.
10. The Board shall enforce all contract issues, including employment, leases, and charter agreements with the District or State.
11. The Board will implement and monitor a code of conduct and discipline policy consistent with applicable law and the Charter Contract.
12. The Board will perform such other duties as appropriate and necessary to the safe and effective operation of JRCS, and which promote JRCS's commitment to educational excellence and student character development.
13. The Board will be committed to the continuing education of its members. Principles of Waldorf education may be learned through guest speakers, book groups, or other appropriated continuing education activities.

Board Governance

JRCS is an entity separate from the school district in the area of governance. This unique characteristic of charters shall be guarded by each board member.

JRCS shall be governed by a Board of Stewards. The Administrative Director of JRCS shall answer directly to the Board. The Board of Stewards shall govern the School by establishing the policies and general direction of the School and providing financial oversight while the Administrative Director and School personnel shall manage the School by implementing the policies and day to day operation of the School.

Board members will not question any decision made by the School Director in any public arena. If a Board member questions a decision, he/she shall immediately take that concern or disagreement to the School Director in a confidential and diplomatic format. Likewise, the School Director shall agree to the same commitment. Respect for each other shall remain constant.

Grievances

When parents or other parties approach a board member with a grievance about School personnel or another board member, the board member shall redirect the aggrieved party to the JRCS Grievance Process provided in the staff and student Handbooks as well as this Handbook. Board members shall never speak negatively about School personnel or other board members to the School community or parties outside the School community.

Grievances shall be resolved by those between whom they exist. Board members will commit to resolving grievances directly with each other or with the appropriate school personnel and not share the grievance with anyone outside of the grievance (except as necessary to follow JRCS' approved Grievance Process) including, but not limited to, other parents, other school personnel, or the media.

Grievance Procedures

JRCS strives to be proactive in promoting positive working relationships between all members of the School's community including staff members, administration, the Board, students, family members and visitors.

The following policies apply to grievances of any type that may include but are not limited to: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) violations; harassment claims; conflict with staff members, students, family members, and/or visitors, etc. The grievance procedures detail how adult members of the School community (all faculty, family members, administrators, Board members) are expected to express grievances about other members of the community.

The Grievance Policy provides a means by which conflicts can be resolved. Parents, students, teachers or staff may initiate this process. Whenever possible, involved parties are encouraged to resolve conflicts directly. If, however, a conflict arises that cannot be resolved among the interested parties, the following steps will be followed:

The parties will make every attempt to solve the issue themselves, communicating the concern directly to the teacher or parent(s) in question. An appointment should be set up where the concern can be expressed in private. Care should be taken to express concerns calmly and respectfully so that an environment conducive to resolution can exist. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction may serve as a mediating facilitator if needed. Parties will document concern and resolution and file it with the Administrative Director.

If the parties are unable to come to a resolution, they may file their concern in writing with the Administrative Director. The Administrative Director will schedule a meeting between these parties, which will be held at a location agreeable to both parties. The Administrative Director will either ask the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to become involved or the Administrative Director will become directly involved. Documentation will be recorded as to issue and resolution.

In cases where the concern has been addressed with the Administrative Director and any party remains dissatisfied with the decisions made to resolve the conflict at this level, or the concern is with the Administrative Director, that party may take their concerns to the JRCS Board of Stewards, who then may assign a mediator or pass it along to the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee is comprised of no less than two members of the JRCS Board of Stewards. Such a complaint will be made in writing as outlined above, and the complaint shall be submitted to the Chair Person of the JRCS Board of Stewards. A recommendation for resolution will be made to the JRCS Board of Stewards for their consideration at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Stewards.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board of Stewards and/or the Board Chair responding prior to its next regular public meeting.

Upon receipt of the written grievance, the Grievance Committee will review the grievance and within 10 days schedule a meeting with the grievant. After this meeting takes place, the Grievance Committee will research the grievance, and get back to the grievant with their findings and recommendations for resolution of the grievance. The final forum for conflict resolution, after a grievant has followed the steps outlined above, will be at the level of the Grievance Committee, a committee of the Board of Stewards. This committee's decision shall be final.

Indemnification

The corporation shall, to the extent legally permissible, indemnify each person who may serve or who has served at any time as an officer, steward, or employee of the corporation against all expenses and liabilities including counsel fees, judgments, fines, excise taxes, penalties and threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding in which s/he may become involved by reason of his/her service in such capacity. There shall be no indemnification provided for any proceeding not to have acted in good faith in the reasonable belief that such action was in the best interests of the corporation. Any compromise of settlement payment shall be approved by the majority vote of a quorum of directors who are not at the same time parties to the proceeding.