

Seeking Outstanding Board Members City Garden Montessori School

Dear Community Member,

City Garden Montessori School operates both a tuition-free, public charter elementary school and a sliding scale fee-based Primary, or preschool, program. City Garden is a neighborhood school, serving children and families in the Botanical Heights, Forest Park Southeast, Shaw, and portions of the Southwest Garden and Tiffany neighborhoods in the City of St. Louis. The preschool was founded in 1995, and the elementary charter school was founded in 2008 under the sponsorship of Saint Louis University.

The mission of City Garden Montessori School is to provide a high-quality education to a diverse student population following the philosophy of Maria Montessori, and to cultivate young people who value and respect themselves, others, the environment, and the world community.

The vision of City Garden is that, in the process of nurturing our students to be competent, creative, lifelong learners who practice compassion, respect, nonviolence and sustainability, we will strengthen families, the neighborhoods we serve, and the City of St. Louis as a whole.

City Garden is currently seeking new board members. The following pages outline the duties and responsibilities, desired qualifications and characteristics, descriptions of City Garden's governance structure and the Board and Committee calendar, which will give you a sense of the time commitment.

If you are interested in being considered for board membership, please [CLICK HERE](#) and complete the interest survey.

If you know someone who would be interested in board membership, please send an email with that person's contact information, and a brief statement as to why you would like to nominate him/her to serve, to christie@citygardenschool.org.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at christie@citygardenschool.org.

Thank you for your interest in City Garden Montessori School!

*Christie Huck
Executive Director*

City Garden Montessori School Board of Directors

Description of Duties

1. **Determine mission and purpose.**

It is the board's responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.

2. **Select the executive director.**

Boards must reach consensus on the executive director's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.

3. **Support and evaluate the executive director.**

The board should ensure that the executive director has the ethical and professional support and evaluation he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.

4. **Ensure effective planning, oversight and evaluation.**

The board must actively participate in an overall strategic planning process, establishment and oversight of committees, and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals. The board's responsibility is to determine which programs align with the organization's mission and vision, ensure they are adequately resourced and evaluate their effectiveness.

5. **Ensure adequate financial resources, protect assets and provide proper financial oversight.**

One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

6. **Build and maintain a competent board.**

The board has a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.

7. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity.**

The board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.

8. **Ensure that the partnership with our charter sponsor remains in good standing.**

The board will be responsible to Saint Louis University to monitor the progress of the annual accountability plan, conduct a yearly board evaluation, and maintain compliance with the charter.

9. **Enhance the organization's public standing.**

The board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

Individual Board Member Duties

Each director is responsible for actively participating in the work of the City Garden Montessori School Board of Directors and the life of the organization. Each director is expected to affirm and strive to fulfill the performance expectations outlined below. These expectations are to be clearly articulated prior to nominating any candidate as a board member. The City Garden Board will nominate the candidate only after s/he has agreed to fulfill these expectations. In addition to the responsibilities below, individual board members are expected to help each other fulfill the tasks outlined in the collective job Description of the Board of Directors.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of City Garden Montessori School.
2. Work with fellow board members to fulfill the obligations of board membership.
3. Behave in ways that clearly contribute to the effective operations of the Board of Directors:
 - Focus on the good of the organization and group, not on a personal agenda.
 - Support board decisions once they are made.
 - Participate in an honest appraisal of one's own performance and that of the board.
 - Build awareness of and vigilance towards governance matters rather than management.
4. Regularly attend board and committee meetings in accordance with the absenteeism policy. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. If unable to attend, notify the board or committee chair.
5. Be prepared to contribute approximately 8-10 hours per month toward board service which includes:
 - Attending a month board meeting (2 hours)
 - Participating on a board committee (2 hours)
 - Reading materials, preparing for meetings (1 hour)
 - Attending events at the school, assisting with fundraising and other ambassador tasks as needed (1-2 hours)
6. Build the Board. This includes both finding great board members and fostering a culture of excellence within the board. Board members should lead by example- attending, committing, delivering and performing.
7. Keep informed about the organization and its issues by reviewing materials, participating in discussions, and asking strategic questions.
8. Actively participate in one or more fundraising event(s) annually.
9. Give an annual financial contribution and support capital campaigns at a level that is personally meaningful.

10. Use personal and professional contacts and expertise for the benefit of City Garden Montessori School; offer specialized assistance to the organization.
11. Actively promote City Garden Montessori School in St. Louis in the St. Louis region. Go to industry events, find and meet influencers, introduce the organization and our goals, and make more “friends of City Garden.”
12. Fulfill all of the legal duties of charter school board of directors, pursuant to Missouri Revised Statute 160, including acting as an authority in instances of suspension or expulsion.
13. Inform the Board of Directors of City Garden Montessori School of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the board related to the situation.
14. File an annual report with the Missouri Ethics Commission (required by all individuals in public leadership positions) and obtain a federal fingerprint background check.
15. Work with administration to ensure that the accountability plan developed by our charter sponsor is fulfilled.

The Characteristics of Board Members

The following have been identified as ideal attributes of City Garden Board members, in order to foster the effective governance of City Garden Montessori School:

- Passion for City Garden’s mission and commitment to upholding the mission and vision.
- Understanding of and commitment to Anti-Bias/ Anti-Racism values and organizational work.
- Understanding of and commitment to Montessori philosophy and pedagogy.
- Understanding of and commitment to being a public charter school, and the organization’s responsibility to a wide variety of stakeholders as such.
- Ability to see the “big picture” and to make decisions for the whole of the organization.
- Ability to look toward the future.
- Strong sense of professionalism.
- Ability to set aside personal interests, exhibits a sense of “egolessness.”
- Gets along well with others.
- Diplomatic.
- Strong and effective communicator.
- Ability to be discrete and hold things in confidence.
- Has a positive attitude, is proactive.
- Organized.
- Ability to receive feedback.
- Ability to give feedback effectively.
- Flexible.
- Dependable.
- Brings needed expertise to the group.
- Astute awareness and respect of the group dynamic through:
 - Observation
 - Cooperation
 - Encouragement
 - Clarification

City Garden's Governance Structure

Board of Directors

City Garden is technically its own small "school district," or Local Education Agency (LEA), as well as a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency. The Board of Directors is the ultimate legal and fiscal authority for City Garden Montessori School, as both an LEA and a nonprofit organization. City Garden has most of the legal compliance and reporting requirements of school districts throughout the state, as well as the legal and compliance requirements of a nonprofit organization.

The Board's duty is to guide the mission and vision of the school, to ensure that City Garden is fulfilling its mission and vision, to ensure that the school has adequate resources available to support and implement the mission and vision, to ensure that the school's resources are appropriately managed and distributed, to set and approve policy that supports the structure and mission of the school and to safeguard the school in regards to legal and political matters that impact the school's operation and/or ability to implement the mission. The Board does not interact or oversee the daily operations of the school, but rather guides and makes decisions regarding "overarching" issues that impact the school and organization as a whole.

Committees of the Board

The monthly board meetings are the regular, official business meetings of the board, where organizational decisions are made and committee reports are given. Much of the board work occurs in committees, which are responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Time Commitment

We ask committee members for a time commitment, including but not limited to meetings (1-2 hour for meeting, 1 hour of preparation, per month), communication between committee meetings (1-2 hours per month), and School/Community events (3-4 times per year). Committee members can expect to contribute approximately 3-5 hours per month toward committee service. City Garden's board currently has the following committees:

Governance Committee:

The Governance Committee is responsible for ensuring that City Garden, and its board, are effectively governed. The duties of the Governance Committee include:

- Establishing and recommending board policies and procedures.
- Reviewing and updating legal documents, such as the organizational Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest policy, the school's Charter, the school's Accountability Plan with Saint Louis University.
- Ensuring that the board is in compliance with all federal, state and local mandates, such as the Missouri Sunshine Law, Missouri Ethics Commission requirements, etc.
- Establishing and recommending effective board and committee recruitment policies and procedures, and ensuring that these policies and procedures are followed.
- Recruiting and vetting new board and committee members and nominating board leadership annually.
- Coordinating the orientation of new board members.
- Coordinating board professional development.
- Coordinating evaluations of board members and board leadership.
- Ensuring effective communication among board members, between the board and the school community and with the external community.
- Supports and ensures all Board Committees comply with the SLU Accountability report.

Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee ensures organizational fiscal responsibility and accountability. The duties of the Finance Committee include:

- Reviewing and approving the school's budget.
- Reviewing/ monitoring revenues and expenditures.
- Establishing and recommending fiscal policies and procedures.
- Monitoring the annual fiscal/ organizational audit and preparation of the 990 to the IRS.
- Providing oversight and support to the executive director and the finance/ business office staff.
- Supports and ensures compliance with the SLU Accountability report, specifically the Fiscal health requirements.

Development Committee:

The Development Committee is responsible for guiding and overseeing resource development (fundraising) for the school. The duties of the Development Committee include:

- Reviewing and approving the school's annual development plan.
- Reviewing/ monitoring resource development outcomes.
- Establishing/ recommending policies and procedures regarding resource development.
- Overseeing the implementation of resource development activities and programming, including parent giving, major donor cultivation, corporate and foundation contributions, the annual gala, events, communications, stewardship and tracking of donations and donor information.
- Soliciting volunteer time, determining volunteer projects, and maintaining a volunteer pool to deploy during fundraising preparations and events.
- Providing oversight and support to the executive director, director of development and development staff.

Building and Grounds Committee:

The Building and Grounds Committee is responsible for ensuring that City Garden has adequate/ effective facilities and grounds to implement the school's mission and programming. The duties of the Building and Grounds Committee include:

- Establishing and recommending annual facilities planning that supports program implementation.
- Reviewing and monitoring legal matters pertaining to facility needs, i.e., lease agreements, occupancy requirements, warranty agreements, liability matters, etc.
- Developing, reviewing and recommending any significant changes to the building or grounds, i.e., design and build-out of the outdoor space, the kitchen space, etc.
- Reviewing and monitoring building and grounds maintenance.
- Evaluating and re-bidding vendor contracts as needed.
- Developing and monitoring organizational commitment to environmental sustainability as it pertains to the built environment and operational practices.
- Developing ongoing maintenance/capital improvement plan.
- Providing oversight and support to the executive director and facilities staff.

Anti-Bias/ Anti-Racism Committee

The Anti-Bias/ Anti-Racism (ABAR) Committee of the Board is responsible for ensuring that City Garden is fulfilling its commitment to being an anti-biased/ anti-racist institution, and guiding the organization in implementing this component of its mission.

Specifically, the ABAR Board Committee will:

- Analyze City Garden’s governance components—its policies, structures and processes—through an ABAR lens and identify and prioritize areas to revise and change.
- Develop a process for organizational evaluation related to anti-bias/ anti-racism.
- Work with administration and faculty to analyze school wide data and outcomes to assess additional areas for development, in order to strengthen the school’s ABAR commitment.
- Develop a mechanism for staff, parents and students to share and/ or report incidents of discrimination and microaggressions, as well as a process to respond to such incidents.
- Identify and assemble resources (organizations, curricula, books, websites, individuals, etc.) to support City Garden’s implementation of ABAR principles.
- Stay abreast of the work of the faculty ABAR committee and the PAC Diversity Committee, working in collaboration with these committees to fulfill City Garden’s ABAR commitment.
- Work with administration to guide City Garden’s role within the larger (external) community to lead and/ or promote anti-bias/ anti-racism education, training and dialogue.

Coalition for Neighborhood Diversity and Housing Justice

City Garden intentionally placed itself within the neighborhoods that we serve because of their economic and racial diversity. City Garden serves the geographic area between Grand and Kingshighway, from Magnolia to Highway 64/40. This encompasses the Botanical Heights, Shaw, Forest Park Southeast and parts of the Tiffany and Southwest Garden neighborhoods.

As our neighborhoods change, City Garden wants to know how this is impacting our families and neighbors. It is important to us that our families continue to have access to high quality housing, at an affordable price.

As such, City Garden has convened a *Coalition for Neighborhood Diversity and Housing Justice*. The goals of the coalition are to:

- Identify and assess the housing needs of City Garden families.
- Assess the current availability of affordable housing in the neighborhoods that City Garden serves.
- Convene parents, neighborhood residents, community partners and developers to seek input and to share information about the impacts of changes taking place in the neighborhoods City Garden serves.
- Facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan for retaining economic diversity and housing access in the neighborhoods City Garden serves.
- Identify current affordable housing resources that are available to parents and residents and develop strategies to share/ communicate these more widely.
- Identify policies/ structural issues that may present barriers to affordable housing in our area and/ or policies/ structural issues that might support affordable housing development in our area.
- Identify specific strategies in the target neighborhoods, and facilitate/ support action toward increased affordable housing in the neighborhoods City Garden serves.

City Garden Montessori School
Board Meetings and Board Committee Meetings
2016-17 School Year

August

8/11 – First Day of School

8/18 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee

8/22 (Monday this month only), 5:30 pm Finance Committee

September

9/7 – Board and Staff Meet and Greet 4:30-6:30 pm

9/7 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting

9/15 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee

9/15 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee

9/21, 8:30 am (change of day this month only) Governance Committee

9/21 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee

9/16 (3rd Friday): 9 am CG 101 Tour, 5:30 pm Colorbrave

October

10/5 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting

10/12 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee

10/19 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee

10/20 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee

10/20 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee

November

11/2 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting

11/9 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee

11/16 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee

11/16 (3rd Wed), 6:30pm Development/Finance Committee Meeting

11/17 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee

11/17 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee

11/11 to 13: Crossroads Antiracism Organization 2.5 Day Workshop

11/18 (3rd Friday): 9 am CG 101 Tour, 5:30 pm Colorbrave

December

12/3 (Sat), 8:30 am to 12:30 pm Board Retreat

12/7 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting

12/21 (3rd Wed), 12 pm noon Finance Committee

12/10 Saturday, 6:30pm: Staff and Board Holiday Party

12/9 (2nd Friday): 5:30 pm Colorbrave

January

1/4 (1st. Wed), Board Planning Meeting

1/11 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee

1/18 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee

1/18 (3rd Wed), 7 pm Development Committee

1/19 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee

1/19 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee

1/14 (Sat), Board Retreat

1/20 (3rd Friday): 5:30 pm Colorbrave

City Garden Montessori School
Board Meetings and Board Committee Meetings
2016-17 School Year

February

2/1 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting
2/8 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee
2/15 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee
2/15 (3rd Wed), 7 pm Development Committee
2/16 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee
2/16 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee
2/17 (3rd Friday): 9 am CG 101 Tour

March

No regular Board or Committee meetings (except Finance) this month

3/4 (Sat) Annual Gala Fundraiser

3/9 (Thurs) 6 pm, Thank You Letter Signing Party at CG

3/22 (4th Wed this month only): 12 noon Finance Committee –Conference Call

April

4/5 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting
4/12 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee
4/19 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee
4/19 (3rd Wed), 7 pm Development Committee
4/20 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee
4/20 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee
4/21 (3rd Friday): 9 am CG 101 Tour, 5:30 pm Colorbrave
4/13 TENTATIVE DATE (Thurs), 5:30pm Volunteer Appreciation Night

May

5/3 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Board of Directors Meeting
5/10 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee
5/17 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee
5/17 (3rd Wed), 7 pm Development Committee
5/18 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee
5/18 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee
5/16, 6:00 pm – 8th Grade Graduation
5/18 – Primary Graduation, Last Day of School (if no snow days)

June

6/7 (1st. Wed), 6:30 pm Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors
6/14 (2nd Wed), 8:30 am Governance Committee
6/16 (3rd Thurs), 8 am Building and Grounds Committee
6/16 (3rd Thurs), 6:00 pm ABAR Committee
6/21 (3rd Wed), 5:30 pm Finance Committee
6/21 (3rd Wed), 7 pm Development Committee