

Park City Prep Charter School

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Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2009

ATTENDANCE: Bruce Ravage, John Bryk, Cheri Amado, Kristin Telles, Nate Kantor

Guests/staff: Albertha J. Brown, Jillian Crisci, Darin Offerdahl, G. Martin Henry Jr., Debbie Boland, Michelle Hyland

Excused: Vince Galasso, Tiffany Johnson, Valerie Koch

Absent: Warrant Blunt, Ron Muhammad

Meeting called to order at 6:23pm by Board President John Bryk.

Public Speakers - 6:00-6:30pm

Auditors G. Martin Henry, Jr. and Darin Offerdahl from Henry, Raymond & Thompson, LLC, of Hamden, CT, discussed the audit report prepared by the previous auditor. Deficiencies in the processes related to bank reconciliation, the need to review bank statements and the need to make sure the bank reconciliation makes sense were discussed. It was noted that the audit will be initialed and dated after a satisfactory review of the report. It was noted by the auditors that old items need to be reviewed and reconciled as needed. The auditors reported that they would submit a proposal to the school to continue their services by the following Friday.

Approval of Minutes (November 20, 2008 & January 22, 2009)

It was noted that the minutes from November and January were emailed to the Board.

It was moved and seconded to approve minutes. Motion carried.

Financial Update

Finance Committee report

- The Finance Committee met before the Board meeting – Debbie Boland from Sum Solutions stated that she would prepare financial updates on a regular basis.
- It was noted that 2 new accounts will be opened to reduce risk of school funds. The funds will be moved from People's Securities to the new accounts. The securities will now fall under the \$500,000 amount that is presently insured by the federal government.
It was moved by Board member Nate Kantor to move the funds to other banks as stated by the Director Bruce Ravage. Seconded by Kristin Telles. Motion passed.
- The Director was instructed to move the funds to new accounts in the next seven days.
- It was noted that there is a cost overrun on teacher's salaries due to the timing of the payroll period.

2008 Audit – It was noted that the audit had been sent to Board members in the mail.

Director's Update

Business presentation from SumSolutions – Debbie Boland

- Debbie Boland explained her role and noted that Lisa Gomulinski, from the same firm, is at the school from 9am-2pm doing daily. It was noted that weekly tasks including check writing and payroll is done on Thursdays. It was further noted that the monthly close, reporting and higher level accounting will be done by her, including bank reconciliations and providing oversight. Debbie Boland noted that she would be on site, as needed, on Thursday's as well as other days that

she may be needed. Debbie Boland also explained the policy of the Sum Solutions account with Park City Prep.

High school acceptances

- Director Bruce Ravage stated that he anticipated as much as 90% of 8th graders would be accepted at one or more private schools or public choice schools.
- It was noted that schools like Notre Dame are not giving as much financial aid as they had given in the past.
- It was noted that one girl is being considered for Miss Porter's School.
- It was noted that some students can get into the local Central High School magnet program, but others would be wait-listed due to admission by lottery.
- It was also noted that students might attend RCA in Trumbull, The Agriscience program at Trumbull High and the Center for Global Studies in McMahan High School.
- Other students may attend St. Joseph's, Christian Heritage and Laurelton Hall. Six boys will also attend Fairfield Prep with 90% paid tuition.
- Bruce showed to the Board the acceptance announcement that student Joshue Guevara received from The Hotchkiss School.
- Bruce stated that it is unclear at this time how American Recovery & Reinvestment Acts stimulus funds will benefit the schools. It was stated that ARRA funds would likely enhance Title I funding.
- Director Ravage discussed the of growth charter schools, noting that the State may allocate and fund additional seats to schools in the plan already to add additional grades (some schools are multi-year projects).

EETT grant

It was noted that the school received a federal grant integrating technology across the curriculum. The grant will fund hardware & professional development. Cooperative Education services wrote the grant and 3 teachers worked with the Director. There was discussion that the school may hire someone that can research more grants.

Visits to Achievement First schools

Director Bruce Ravage visited the New Haven area Achievement First schools with Albertha Brown and Michelle Hyland, spending significant time in the classrooms. Director Ravage reported that they spent approximately half a day each at Amistad Academy and Elm City Prep. It was noted that both schools have similar demographics to our school, and further noted that the schools have built a culture of excellence, have a rigorous teacher selection process and pay teachers extra for coaching and summer sessions.

New special education teacher – it was noted by the Director that we have hired an excellent Special Education teacher to provide the additional special education services our students require beyond those already provided by our other special education teacher.

CMT's – It was noted that the school just completed the mastery tests and results will be forthcoming.

Recycling program/new waste disposal contract

School Counselor Michelle Hyland noted that we have implemented a recycling program, which also lowers the overall cost of waste disposal.

Supplemental reading program: Accelerated Reader

It was noted that the school is using *Accelerated Math*, which enables students to progress at their own individual pace. We will now like to implement an *Accelerated Reader* program at the school.

School Improvement Plan

School Director Bruce Ravage discussed written feedback from Alan Kramer regarding the school improvement plan. The Director mentioned that our plan was approved by the CSDE. It was further noted that the school would analyze data on how students are performing and modify instruction as required.

Updated response to Review of School Fundamentals (RSF) – Bruce Ravage discussed items that needed to be addressed by the earlier assessment. Bruce provided a corrective action update related to the school improvement plan. It was noted that the school is obligated to hire a certified English teacher next year and that Christine English will spearhead the development of our new English curriculum at the school.

Building a Culture of Excellence: School Improvements for 2009-2010

School Director Bruce Ravage handed out the proposed school improvements document, which outlined:

- Organizational & personnel changes
- Extra hours added to the school day, and a plan to have three grade 6 teachers next year.
- The plan for ordering books to help with the *Accelerated Reader* pilot program
- The need for every teacher to contribute towards improvement in CMTs to have uniformity of instruction
- The need to spend money in the summer and to compensate staff for time and effort.
- The need to incorporate the best practices throughout all classrooms.
- Changes to improve school climate and culture will be spearheaded by Albertha Brown and Michelle Hyland.
- It was noted that there is a need to overhaul the afterschool program. The director noted that the school may charge a fee going forward. The new proposed program will consist of clubs, tutorials, technology, science, art and chess, among other offerings.
- All teachers will be involved in improving students' performance in reading through a variety of new instructional programs.
- Longer school day & doubling math science instruction.

New teacher for 2009-2010 The Director mentioned that the school would need to hire a 14th teacher.

Recruitment of students for 2009-2010 – The Director noted that the school will fill all seats and that he is talking to parents and the community to recruit students.

Enrollment projection for next year/approval – The Director noted that enrollment is projected to be the same. Seats for 22 more students have been requested, but are subject to approval from the State Legislature, which we may not know until the end of the legislative session this May or June.

Additional space

The Director noted that there is additional space available in the present location for next fall and that he had already negotiated with the building management for the work to be completed before classes start in the fall.

Vacant schools visit – The Director noted that the most viable site is the old Barnum School on Noble Avenue. The Board reviewed the handout about the school, which is lacking a gym and auditorium. It was noted that Charter School Property Solutions (CSPS) would respond to the RFP. Bruce wants CSPS to provide us details on what our costs would be and confirm that it would be leased to us with an option to buy. There was also discussion of the use of solar power in the new school.

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) conference

It was noted that science teachers Tiffany Johnson and Vicky Boudreau are attending the NSTA conference in New Orleans at this time.

Old Business

Director's job description & evaluation process

Bruce is putting something together for next Board meeting to review for the evaluation process for the Director.

Curriculum development project - Esther Bobowick (CES)

This program, which was mentioned at a prior Board meeting, is getting started. The status will be provided at future Board meetings.

New Business

New proposed accounting firm (Dworken, Hillman, LaMorte & Sterczala)

This new firm was used before by the Director, when he was director at Side by Side Charter School. Jennifer Bull will prepare a quote. It was noted that there may be increased costs but it will include doing the end of year ED001C report for the CSDE. It was requested that the Board make a decision soon. The Finance Committee will meet for that purpose and Jennifer Bull and William Lesko will come in and do a presentation based on request from Board member Nate Kantor. It was noted that costs would be in line with current costs.

Staff absence/leave policy – it was noted that the school needs to have an approved policy in place. Bruce reviewed other school policies and asked Alberta Brown, Michelle, Kristen Telles and Tiffany Johnson to review before bringing to the Board for final approval. There was collective input from many parties to establish this policy and important items such as pregnancy, personal days and sick days were discussed. It was noted that the personal business day section should be corrected to use the same language stated in the policy.

It was moved and properly seconded to approve policy. Motion passed.

The Board went into executive session at 8:45pm.

*It was moved and properly seconded to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

**Cheri L. Amado
Board Secretary**