



Park City Prep Charter School

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Board of Directors Meeting – November 9, 2011

Minutes

Called to order at 6:03.

Attending: Lorraine Moore, Bruce Ravage, Paul Conti, Lauryn Conti, Micah Uhrlass, John Bryk, Tanya Hughes, Tiffany Johnson.

Absent: Alonda Johnson, Vince Galasso, Warren Blunt.

- Public Session
- Approval of October 5, 2011 Minutes

Correction: Joe Lutz must be changed to Jo Lutz in October's minutes (in Public Session section).

The minutes were approved.

- Financial Report: October 2011
 - Narrative
 - Balance Sheet
 - Profit & Loss
 - Investment Accounts

Everything was noted to be in order. The Board asked visiting accountant Paul Conti to clarify an accounting term in line 2310 – deferred contract revenue, which he did.

In certain areas we expended more money than was budgeted. This was explained as a result of the timing, in that the timing of expenses does not always coincide with the income. Paul asked questioned about budgeting throughout the year. Bruce explained that a “good amount saved for rainy days.” He also noted the advantages of renting over purchasing a new building.

- Director's Update
 - Common Core Standards
 - Previously, the CT Core curriculum framework guided instructional curriculum. Curriculum has been written to meet those criteria; however, recently, CT adopted the Common Core Standards. Curriculum now has to be aligned to these Common Core Standards. Standardized tests in 2014-2015 to reflect Common Core Standards. CMTs will still be administered through 2014. Common Core is more rigorous than previous standards. State has provided

CROSSWALKS LINKING CURRENT FRAMEWORKS AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS. There are fewer standards, but more in-depth, application-based tests. Will be asking LA and Math Consultants to help us bridge current curriculum and Common Core. Each standard in future grades signifies that students will have mastered previous standards. Grade 6 teachers will have to play “catch up” with incoming students. We will have to scaffold instruction to help students meet the new standards. John suggested that incoming students attend “summer school” to orient them to the school and allow them to catch up on anything that hasn’t been mastered. Bruce explained that we will have to start with a curriculum in place, but we first have to align curriculum to the new standards. The Common Core for LA and Math are already developed. Social studies and science will be next. There will be a significant emphasis on informational reading. Our LA consultant is already working on this with teachers in the content areas.

- Charter School Funding Outlook
 - Funding is bleak. Not lobbying for more money, but focusing on modifying the funding formula. Joining forces with reformists and, hopefully, with the new, reform-minded commissioner and governor, we will see positive changes to redress the disparity in funding for charter schools. The only increase in funding in the past four years was \$100 extra per child. We have been able to weather this storm because our relatively inexperienced teachers are not at the highest ends of the pay scale and we had increased enrollment in each of our first five years. If we decide to move into a new building, or salaries increase, we have some money set aside. Bruce made a request in regards to our projected growth. He recommended adding a grade 5, adding one section each year until there are four sections in grade 5. Tiffany suggested starting with grade 3 since they take the science CMT’s in grade 5. Bruce suggested that by starting at grade 5, we would have an additional year to groom the students for increased progress by the end of grade 8. Paul asked about how we go about getting funding outside state funds. Bruce said that we can be as creative as we like within the parameters of the law, and that many charter schools do have other streams of revenue through active fund-raising.
- Charter School Network Update
 - The focus this year is on lobbying for more equitable funding. We contribute \$20 per student to fund salary and operating costs of the Network. Bruce would like to see a greater return on our investment than has been the case thus far.
 - Made up of 18 Charter Schools and others who are reform-minded. The Network is trying to mobilize people who believe in charter school reform.
- Old Business
 - Updated School Calendar - Error in calendar was corrected to indicate that we are open on Veteran’s Day
 - Charter Renewal Appeal
 - Bruce provided a copy at the last meeting. Have since forwarded letter on to Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. Still being reviewed. Made AYP in math and Safe Harbor in LA. Made improvements in Language Arts. Credit wasn’t given to growth made between 5th and 6th grade.
 - Annual Report
 - Balance sheet missing.
 - Audit of 2010-2011 will be completed in December.
 - Micah questioned the math extra help, which was explained as having been done during the students’ activity period.

- Curriculum Development Update
 - Will align ELA curriculum to Common Core Standards.
 - Tiffany has been working on the Science Curriculum since the previous summer and has time in schedule to work on it during the school year. The goal is to have it completed by the end of summer of 2012, if not sooner.
- Professional Development Update
 - Have a Consultant in LA and Math coming in on a weekly basis, as well as another in LA, focused on informational reading in science, social studies and math.
 - We are continuing to get data team facilitation training (four days), at no cost to us, through the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI).
 - Differentiated Instruction; integrally connected to Common Core Standards; Tiffany gave intro during Staff Orientation. We are receiving two full days of training through CALI, as well.
 - We are spending approximately \$100K on consultants this year, other than those through CALI.
 - Consultants are highly impressed with our teachers. They have said that they never experience teachers so dedicated and eager to learn, caring for children, and willing to try new ideas, as those at Park City Prep.
- New Building Search
 - The building we were interested in occupying is no longer available and is not able to meet our needs.
 - A vacated Bridgeport public school may be available in the near future, which we will consider.
- New Business
 - Policies
 - Approval of Policy Series 6000 (Instruction) was approved by the Board.
 - Had to put back in the “Green Cleaning” program, with which we are in compliance.
 - The grading scale needed to be amended to reflect that a grade less than 64 percent is failing.
 - Review of Policy Series 5000 (Students) - 5000s Series will be ready for review by next Board meeting.
 - Finance Committee
 - At our renewal visit, the auditor cited that we need to have more people on Finance Committee, including the Treasurer of the Board. Paul Conti, who works as accountant in Fairfield, specializing in non-profits, expressed an interest in joining, which was approved by the Board.
 - We are looking to move some of our investments from banks with lower interest rates to others offering higher ones.
 - Bruce has also spoken with People’s Bank about doing “more” for us, such as giving us a better rate of return, sponsoring field trips and giving scholarships to our graduates for high school.

- Development/Marketing
 - Development person could be beneficial to the school. Bruce met with Bill Lechner, who had been involved with charter schools and was a former student mentor, and has planned to meet with him again.
 - Micah has been in contact with CT Teach For America and will try to have a discussion with the director about fundraising, as well.
 - Paul asked about the value of getting a grant writer, which may be another way to get additional funds.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Tiffany Johnson