

Our Community School  
Board Meeting – March 5, 2009

In attendance: Scott Miller, Jana Harper, Susan Friedman, Heather Ashton, Bill Maxwell, Danielle Quinto, John Foley, Carolina Goodman, Katherine Geeslin, Bobby Blatt, David Marsh

Non-voting members: Chris Ferris, Principal

Non-board members: Laura Bauer (Ex Ed), Jose Parada (community member)

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm by Board Chair, Scott Miller

Jana moved to approve the minutes. Bill seconded. The motion passed.

Scott explained a procedure he learned at the Annenberg workshop, called a “consent agenda” that he would like to implement in future meetings. A list of items will be sent to board members prior to the meeting and approved during the meeting without discussion. Items can be removed from the consent agenda if discussion is necessary. David seconded. The motion carried.

The Finance Committee recommends that OCS hire Vicenti, Lloyd, Stutzman, the same auditors we had last year. Their fee would not change. Carolina moved to rehire Vicenti, Lloyd, Stutzman. Bill seconded. The motion carried. (See attached.)

Jana reported that Big Night Out met the goal of \$10,000. Rotarians want to buy the banner to honor Bill Powers as the OCS Civic Champion award. 70 people who were not OCS community members attended BNO. The Annual Support Campaign, which included the emergency fundraising we did in December, is \$10,000 above the budgeted amount. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade field trip fundraisers raised more than we had expected. Recycling has brought in \$330 so far. Scrip has raised \$13,000 to date; we had expected \$8000 for the whole year. In spite of the financial climate, we are doing well with fundraising. (See attached.)

Chris announced the submission of a PEP grant, which is a consortium of five charter schools that will work with CSUN’s Kinesiology Department and the Youth Policy Institute to provide fitness education and assessment. (See attached.)

The Board considered a Loan Agreement for \$50,000 (4.4% interest) from an anonymous donor will assist OCS with cash flow, because of delayed funding from the State. OCS will be able to repay this loan by June. \_\_\_\_ moved and \_\_\_\_ seconded. The motion carried. (See attached.)

Laura gave the Board an update on our budget and spending. Our ADA is now at par. OCS fundraising exceeded budget BEFORE BNO (net positive \$30,000; add \$10,000 for

BNO). The school's administration, teachers and staff have done a great job at controlling spending. We enjoy vendor cooperation. OCS has not received the expected \$230,000 from the state, but by the end of the fiscal year, we expect \$30,000 left over. We appreciate Laura's good guidance. Scott will write a letter to the community to thank all stakeholders for working together to get through these hard financial times. The letter will be mailed with benchmark assessments. Laura suggests an article be written about how the community supported this school. Note that OCS teachers have shouldered much of the burden and must be included in decision making before making further cuts. Bobbie reminds everyone of the importance of confidentiality. The state has announced that we will receive \$20,000 less next year. There has been a cut to SB740 translates to 4.5% per pupil.

Grand Friends Day achieved its goal of developing relationships with grandparents and other friends. John expressed a wish that teachers receive RSVP information next year so that teachers could help with getting a Grand Friends for each child. The costume day made it more hectic than it needed to be. Carolina suggested faculty members help organized next year's event.

After Scott attended the Annenberg workshop, he researched the foundation and wrote a letter of intent in order to help OCS's board move from a founding board to a fundraising board. Researched grant maker and their Board members. However, Annenberg has lost half of their endowment and are not funding new projects. A discussion ensued as to the fundraising responsibility of the board. Jana pointed out that the main task of most boards is to get money for the organization; OCS's board does have fiduciary responsibility, but is more multi-purpose. Recognizing the need for board members to play to our individual strengths, all of us can develop our abilities to fundraise by networking, building relationships (plant seeds), collecting contact information, etc. We also need to seek new Board members who are able to make personal donations or who have the contacts with those who can. Perhaps the advisory board could be that kind of a Board. Carolina reported that foundations and corporate giving only make up 20% of the nation's philanthropy; individual donors make up 80% of the nations fundraising. Scott pointed out there are two issues: 1) how we raise funds; and 2) how do we feel about being fundraisers. We need a comprehensive strategy (multiple methods) Build on our niche: saving public education for the middle class; state award winner; progressive; entertainment industry people. Do we need a stronger arts program to attract this population? Focus on spreading the message that it is an investment when one gives to California schools. The Board will schedule a summit/retreat on fundraising.

Chris pointed out that next year's budget should include money for Development, e.g. partnering with New Visions.

Facilities

- Devonshire – We hope to hear from LAUSD that we will be able to occupy the Devonshire campus in the Fall of 2010; sharing the space with long-term lease; an RFP process is like applying for a grant (sole occupant); it may be possible to renovate the site with bond money. By April 1, we should know if we will receive a portable classroom paid by LAUSD.
- Prop 39 – We expected an offer in February; we wrote to LAUSD to acknowledge that the deadline had passed and document the history.
- Bill working with the Valley Green Team – solar panels, gardens. LAUSD green standards. Could OCS be a model?
- Plan B – don't increase enrollment, get a long-term lease, renovate this site.
- Plan C – buy land and build new.
- Plan D – LAUSD build a school for us
- Regarding possible relocation to Devonshire. 1/3 of two classes come from south/east.
- It is important to be thorough about expanding; there were issues with growth this year that could have been avoided, e.g. parking lot, larger staff made it more difficult to preserve close interaction, split lunches.
- Could Chris meet with private school admissions offices to encourage families who were not accepted to consider OCS.
- Note that Chime moved farther from its original site and kept most of their families.
- Would OCS consider providing a bus?
- Survey families so that OCS will know how many openings we have.
- Create a committee to investigate whether or not we go to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Do the research; learn from the past; how do we help people be okay with change?

#### Program

- WASC preparation is on schedule. Chris and Carolina will be attending another WASC workshop on March 13.
- Charter Renewal – The charter does not have to include boiler-plate language. There will be an MOU that will have this language. In order to address the LAUSD special ed encroachment, we hope that charter schools can create a partnership to handle a charter SELPA.

Scott pointed out that the board is doing well. He asked how we can improve. Are we living our philosophy of community representation? Should the PTSA president will be a non-voting member of Board? John moved / Jana seconded. Big changes are coming with facilities, WASC, Charter Renewal, and budget. We will need stronger communication with community members (town meetings, focus group). David suggests that board meetings designate an overarching topic to connect the work of all the board committees. It would be helpful for board members give feedback to Scott for agenda. Scott reminded us that one of the sections of our Strategic Plan is Community Unity. The motion carried with one “nay”.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolina Goodman  
Board Secretary