

Our Community School  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
November 29, 2007

Board members present: Chris Ferris, Ken Rickerman, Scott Miller, Carolina Goodman, Katherine Geeslin, Mark Youngs, John Foley, Danielle Quinto, Al Erdynast, Louis Pugliese

Non-members present: Nikki Bauer, Susan Cohen, Allen Gewertz, Beth Wolfsbauer (notetaker), Suzy Ohanian, Dora Esten

The meeting was called to order at 5:46pm. There were no community speakers.

Minutes were read and corrected. Danielle Quinto moved to approve minutes, Katherine Geeslin second. Minutes approved.

Finance Committee:

- Laura Bauer from EdEx gave a summary of her written report, which will be inserted in the official Board notebook along with the minutes of this meeting. OCS will receive an additional \$40k from our Implementation Grant. STRS has not been paid yet, LACOE is often late and the teachers are concerned. Cash seems high because we received more money than expected earlier. After Care is doing well (\$15,000 over budget). The State is paying OCS for Special Ed services even though that money was supposed to go directly to LAUSD. OCS pays 64% in salary and benefits; 66% is the average. We will be moving to a new pay date schedule -- the teachers will get three checks in the month of December and receive their final checks on June 30<sup>th</sup> instead of July 5<sup>th</sup>. We are also under spending in some other areas, e.g. materials and supplies; Chris has been informed and knows where the spending can begin. Some vendors have not yet billed us. All of these reasons make it look like we have more cash than we actually do. Laura will check that the lease agreement was revised.
- Finance Committee Chair, Ken Rickerman, reported that OCS has secured a \$100,000 line of credit at California Credit Union to cover any cash-flow problems the school may encounter while waiting for State funds. The Committee continues to work with the Development Committee to generate revenue and with the Facilities Committee to analyze expansion options. The Finance Committee is working on resolving the issue of Beth and Alma's retirement fund oversight.
- Discussion: Al Erdynast asked for a clarification for having to raise \$150K to balance the budget. Laura explained that the State pays in arrears, which causes a shortfall. Also, the school needs a substantial "ending cash balance" in order to begin each academic year. Al also suggested that the line item for classroom budgets might need to be increased because this might cause resentment if faculty members are paying large amounts of their personal money. Chris pointed out that not every teacher spent their \$300 allotment. This is something to explore. Teachers are allowed to turn in their receipts as in-kind contributions to the Annual Giving Campaign. Laura will research the accounting procedures for in-kind contributions..
- John moved to approve the revised budget; Al second; motion carried.

Expansion discussion:

- Chris distributed the budget projections for the various models of growth that are being considered for the future of OCS:

- 1) Add one class each year until we reach 14 classes
  - 2) Add two classes the first year and one more in subsequent years until we reach 14 classes
  - 3) Add two classes and move them through the grades without expanding each year.
  - 4) Add three classes and move them through the grades without expanding.
- Chris said that it would benefit the school programmatically to have 14 classrooms, but she has anxiety about outgrowing our present site when we have not demonstrated the ability to fundraise at the level necessary to support such growth.
  - Carolina added that it will cost \$7,000,000 to build a new school. We need a stronger board with the expertise and fundraising capacity to run a capital campaign.
  - Kellie pointed out that we are actually more financially sound than what we thought we were at the last Board meeting, so it doesn't seem to be as urgent to expand for the 08/09 school year.
  - John and Danielle wondered if expansion doesn't financially help us, it doesn't seem like a good idea to add more classes. Although, it would be great to be able to eliminate split grade classes, which are difficult because of requirements state testing.
  - Kellie says that the strategic planning process will be informed by our decision to remain at nine classes or to expand to fourteen..
  - Louis suggested that if we are financially solvent now, we need to create a budget that supports the addition of full-time teacher assistants in every classroom. There was much agreement with this goal, but we will need to do a better job of fundraising to make this a reality.
  - Mark reminded us that if we expand, we MUST have an answer in 3 years for physical space as this facility will be over capacity.
  - Scott said this whole discussion is a part of strategic planning. We have a dream scenario -- 2 classrooms for each grade; 2 adults in every room. OCS has the opportunity to get portables and a bathroom for free. So maybe we should add 20 students in 08/09 and plan for the 14-classroom model on a specific time schedule.

#### Facilities Committee:

- Louis reported that the Committee has been meeting and talking as if we really are going to grow as a school. LAUSD portables are available at no cost, and some of the furniture may be included as well. OCS has to pay for the installation. If we leased portables (about \$6500/month), installation is included and 50% of it is reimbursable. Louis, Chris, and Mark will be meeting with City Hall officials on 12/3/07 to discuss permits and what obstacles we may face. At this point, we have no estimates for installing portable classrooms and bathroom. OCS now has a case number with LAUSD for expediting plan checks, permits, etc.
- Scott moved to hold special Board meeting next Thursday 12/6 from 6pm-8pm. Danielle second. Motion carried

#### Development Committee:

- Carolina reported that Annual Giving is currently higher than last spring. We have collected \$4,600 (22% faculty/staff, 25% board, 20% families). This does not include pledges. Katherine believes that the Annual Giving Campaign is subtle and could be pushed more. Allen Gewertz resents the posters that advertise percentage of family

participation; he would like to see the amount raised. Carolina clarified that foundations favor schools that demonstrate a high percentage of support from their families; the percentage of participation is more important than the amount raised.

- Board members need to be an example to the rest of the community in participating in the OCS scrip program.
- Board members should try to attend school events, e.g. the Holiday Parade on Dec 2.
- Carolina will email board members a list of sponsors for the Kiwanis Courageous Citizens Awards. These include car dealerships, real estate businesses, builders, and lawyers. She reminded board members of their responsibility for developing relationships with the community outside of OCS families.
- OCS will be hosting a Walk-Run fundraiser in the fall. Ken estimates that we could bring in \$30K. This event will bring in corporate sponsorships as well.

#### Governance Committee:

- The Wiki has been changed to comply with the Brown Act. It is now called the "OCS Bulletin Board" and is public at all times.
- Scott says that the growth of the Board has been slow. We need to think of people who we would really want to put on the Board. It is not professional to approach someone and ask if they are interested and then turn them down in the end.
- Mission Statement: four models were distributed and briefly discussed. Scott will email a Board member who will type their version at the top before passing the email to another Board member. Scott will be the final person to receive it.

#### Principal's Report:

- Second Graders must be tested this year.
- Chris is building a relationship with the Unitarian Church ("The Onion") that has land potentially available for us to build a new campus.
- Kiwanis wants to host a fundraising event in our name. Met someone who can get older model computers from CSUN when the college upgrades their equipment.
- Charter School Office – If Greg McNair is leaving and Jose Cole-Guiterrez is stepping in, that would be a good thing for charter schools.
- Special Education model program has been successful so far. BTSA: we are funded by the State to have 6 of our teachers participate in this program to clear their credential. Carolina is the mentor, but it is not a conflict of interest according to our lawyer, because she is paid by the state.
- Schools Attuned provides a valuable process for evaluating students and creating plans for accommodations and interventions that support their growth.
- Carolina is going to a Green School Summit to gather information for OCS.

John requested we make fewer copies to save paper. Meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.