

Our Community School
Board of Directors Meeting
July 31, 2008

Board members present: Heather Ashton, Bobby Blatt, Chris Ferris, Susan Freidman, Katherine Geeslin, Carolina Goodman, David Marsh, Bill Maxwell, Scott Miller, Louis Pugliese, Danielle Quinto

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

Minutes were approved as corrected. Carolina will email minutes to Board members, who will read the minutes and communicate any changes to Carolina before the next meeting.

No community speakers.

Bobby led the group in establishing norms for how we will work together:

- Stay on topic
- Time to finish thoughts (non-interrupted)
- listen for understanding
- Passionate honesty
- Assume the best of everyone at the table (intent)
- Value the richness of the diversity at the table (talent)
- Be aware of how much time you are taking; make space for those who haven't yet spoken.
- Have a sense of humor; enjoy the people you are with (support people, not just the task)
- Suspend judgment and hear it out. (Look for how it can work, rather than how it can't work.)
- Freedom to move around.
- Risk-free, open forum, value discussion
- Once a decision has been made, the Board speaks with one voice.
- Focus on the solution rather than your personal preference.
- Come to the meeting prepared.
- Act like the mission and vision of the school really matters

Other suggestions that don't fit into "norms" to be discussed at another time:

- Meeting flow: 1) what's urgent, 2) what's of interest, etc.
- Confidentiality – What does this mean when our meetings are public?

Scott read a letter to community members who attend meetings for the purpose of addressing the Board. Board members gave feedback. Scott will revise the letter and email the final version to Board members.

In order to launch the school year, the OCS mission, vision, and desired future were read aloud.

Discussion:

- The Mission is what we hope to accomplish. We worked hard not to use educational jargon.
- The Vision speaks of balance. States our desire to share our success, in defining what education is -- beyond passing a test.
- Our Desired Future underscores our commitment to maintain diversity. Perhaps we could clarify this by creating categories: Sustainability is about WASC and Charter Renewal; the rest is about student results. Last two are about how OCS faculty and staff members work together (instruction and professional development). How do facility issues match up in Phase 1 and Phase 2?
- Environmental responsibility seems to be a core value, but does not appear in mission or vision. It is implied in the mission.
- Board assignment for next time: Read Phase 2 and be prepared to discuss next time.
- Committee are the work places; Action Plans drive the work.

Scott added a new procedure for each meeting, which is to define which items that are meant to be handled in committees. See attached. Scott moved to approve the list from our last meeting. Danielle seconded. The motion passed

Scott created new Board Manuals and distributed updates to be inserted.

Carolina moved to approve calendar of Board and Committee meetings. Danielle seconded. The motion passed.

Committee Assignments for Board members: (non-Board members are not listed below)

Development: Jana (chair), Carolina, Danielle

Facilities: Scott (temporary chair), Bill (assistant chair), Louis, Chris

Finance: Katherine (chair), Chris

Governance: Scott (temporary chair), Susan (assistant chair), Katherine, Heather

Program: Chris (chair), Carolina (assistant chair), David, John, Bobby (on call)

Wellness: Bill (assistant chair), Heather

Louis points out that our By-Laws may state that each Board member is required to serve on two committees. Either change this or enforce it.

Heather registered disappointment that the Program committee meets at 3:15 so that Board members who are teachers from other schools would not be able to attend. Chris explained that this time ensures that more OCS teachers will attend in order to address WASC accreditation and charter renewal.

Susan suggested meeting times allow attendance by people who work full-time. Chris suggested a 7:30 AM time, but only one committee has chosen to meet then.

Scott explained a helpful tool in the Board Manual that where members can record their contributions at Board and Committee meetings. This tool will facilitate Board evaluation.

Principal's Report:

- Enrollment update: We are fully enrolled, except 3rd grade and 6th grade; past experience indicates that we will get more 6th grade students. Bill asked how many families left the school. Chris agreed that this data would be useful.

- Classrooms, including our two new ones, are getting in shape for the new school year. **The church is leasing us storage for music equipment and allowing us to use the sanctuary for music classes and performances.** In addition, the church is giving us the use of chairs and tables. We are under budget for this!
- Staff development: Chris and six teachers are going to Responsive Classroom training; in August there will be two days of Singapore Math, partnering with Santa Clarita Valley and New Heights. Teachers and staff will also have CPR and First Aid classes. Faculty members will lead each other in professional development, e.g. Danielle on service learning, Staci on Reading Results. John on integrated curriculum.
- Joyce Johnson, our LAUSD Charter School representative, has written a thorough report. She notes our strong safety and facilities organization and writes that OCS is a model for professional development. As for improvements, she points out our need for more support for English Language Learners and to work with our landlord to fix things in a more timely way.
- Valerie has resigned. Craig's List gave us 150 resumes. Chris called 15. One interview that was impressive. Another tomorrow. Five on Monday. Looking for bilingual and/or marketing/event planning.
- Leadership Team: Scott, PTSA Chair, and Chris will be meeting regularly. Current families are now hosting new families to ease their transition and welcome them to OCS.
- Next meeting: approve Principal's goals for 2008-09 and the Leadership Team action plan.

Development Committee:

- 5K - Ken Rickerman has done an incredible job getting sponsors. We need more. Can the Board help? L.A. City approved our request to hold this event and waived the fees! We are working on publicizing the event, getting t-shirts and awards, looking for parking, connecting with other schools for the Kids Dash, recruiting volunteers to work on the day of the event, and organizing a Health Expo. Another way that Board members can help is to participate in a mock 5K/3K run/walk at our Welcome Picnic on August 28
- Worked with Chris and her staff to complete the OCS calendar and parent handbook.
- The Annual Giving Campaign is now being referred to as the Annual Support Campaign. The brochure and cover letter will be included with the family packet to be mailed next week. The kick off will take place at the Welcome Picnic. Board members are expected to gather at Chris's home to make follow up phone calls. Date to be arranged. Chris suggested that each board member ask friends and family to support OCS. She has made a personal goal of \$5,000.
- Carolina attended a grant writing workshop and learned that grant makers look to see that Board members contribute personally, as well as actively participate in fundraising. If a grant proposal is being considered, Board members need to be knowledgeable about the grant because they may receive a call from the grant maker to discuss how the grant would support the mission and vision of the school.

Facilities Committee

- Louis points out that it is difficult to create a site plan without a site. However, a site plan could be created with a 20,000 sq ft footprint and with a 50,000 sq ft footprint.
- We have formally declared our interest in sharing space on the Devonshire campus. Bobby advises that we work directly with Superintendent Jan Brown, rather than going around her.
- There are two real estate consultants interested in being on the OCS Advisory Council.

- Bill volunteers to lead the effort on researching green building practices.
- Louis mentioned the possibility of Zone M (light manufacturing) properties may be approved for schools.
- Louis attends the meetings of the Charter School Facilities Collaborative.
- The committee needs to begin looking at our lease agreement, which will need to be negotiated at the end of this school year.
- David moved to approve the Facilities Action Plan. Louis seconded. The motion passed.

Finance Committee

- ExEd reports that OCS ended the year with numbers coming in as expected.
- Currently we have \$82,000 cash on hand.
- SB740 funds of almost \$10,000 are still expected from 07-08.
- We did not have to access our line of credit as we had expected.
- The state budget has still not been approved.
- Louis requested that the Finance Committee identify the amount of money we have in reserve (surplus).
- We hope our fundraising is successful enough to keep Nikki and Tracie on staff to help with grantwriting and marketing.
- David suggested that we link the budget to our mission and vision, e.g. where does it reflect WASC preparation? The budget could reflect our efforts to improve, e.g. adoption of Singapore Math and professional development opportunities.

Governance Committee

- Scott distributed a written report to be discussed at our next meeting.

Program Committee

- This committee has not met yet. Will report at the next meeting.

Thank you to Scott for the food! The Board decided to take turns bringing food to Board meetings. Heather volunteered to do this for our next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.