

**Seven Hills Charter Public School Board of Trustees**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday January 26, 2009**  
**12:00-2:00pm**  
**Held in the Large Conference Room at Seven Hills Charter Public School**

Welcome

Meeting began at 12:00 PM. In attendance: Carlton Watson, Marianna Islam, Kevin Bradley, Beverly Bell, Robert Ramirez, Suzanne Buglione, Joseph Hungler, Krista Piazza, Shelly Hinds, Michelle Hennessy.

Minutes

Minutes of the November 2, 2009 SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval. (provided at 12/1/2009 meeting)

Minutes of the November 23, 2009 SHCPS Board Retreat presented for approval. (provided at the 12/1/09 meeting)

Minutes of the December 1, 2009 SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval.

Minutes of the December 18, 2009 SHCPS Board of Trustees Special Meeting presented for approval.

Mr. Watson asked that the meeting minutes reflect that the vote is to approve the “official” meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes: Suzanne Buglione

Second: Kevin Bradley

All voted in favor

Public Comments

*The BOT has allotted 15 minutes to those individuals from the community or staff who have notified the Board in advance that they would like to speak on a topic that may or may not be on the agenda.*

**1) Presentations:**

- a. Site Visit February 9, 2010 preparation discussion (board member meeting time 9:00am): Site Visit Protocol provided on secure BOT site, and 2009-2010 School Improvement Plan. Ms. Piazza reported that the site visit has been changed to 2 days; February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Piazza reviewed the preparation questions and encouraged board members to share feedback to questions and seek clarification if there were any areas where they did not feel well informed. Mr. Watson shared his prior experiences with site visits and explained to the Board that the interview will focus on consistent responses regarding the school’s goals and mission, the responsibility of Board members as stewards of the school, and the Board’s vision for the community. The emphasis will be on student achievement and actions we are taking for school improvement. Review the Reflections on Essential Conditions, School Improvement Plan and Board Work Plans (subcommittee establishment) to prepare.

The Board reviewed the mission statement and discussed key points around defining “high quality” education. Members sited “well rounded” programming as key. Well rounded was defined as the marriage between academic rigor and personal development (nurturing relationships, talents and interests). Examples included a strong show of support for the arts and character education. Board

members shared specific examples of things the school does to promote diversity and focus on the “student, worker and citizen.” Examples included three tiered programming for academic (student) and emotional support (citizenship); technology and workplace skill development, SHELL, (worker), core values, code of conduct exercises and character education lessons (citizenship)

The Board discussed the school’s challenge to attract high caliber candidates for teaching positions. The LFF scholarship program was discussed, along with current recruitment processes. A BOT subcommittee is investigating this area further and will be reviewing information regarding staff turn over, exit interview procedures (should not be the supervisor) and strategies for attracting highly qualified candidates. Ms. Bell offered to review national statistics relative to urban attrition rates. Ms. Buglione will provide information to the board about Worcester State’s program for making staff “bachelor prepared.”

Ms. Piazza reported that Seven Hill’s other challenge is addressing staff underperformance and presented the school’s plan to hire Instructional Coaches to assist in this area where school mentor and supervision programs have not been successful. The reason for employing a coach rather than just replacing a teacher is because it is very difficult for any teacher to take over a classroom mid year without time to get settled in to routines and relationships first and it is difficult for children and parents to deal with changes in teachers unless they have confidence in a replacement first. Mr. Watson believes this plan will motivate underperforming teachers and provide an easy transition for students if changes in employment must be made. Ms. Piazza reported that this plan will also free up the efforts of the Superintendent and Assistant Academy Director to attend to other teachers seeking more involvement and feedback. Board members expressed concern about a potential conflict between coaches serving to support teachers but also to take over a job if necessary. This is an area that the administrative team discussed thoroughly as well and understands the concern. They will continue to evaluate the position job description and methodology for communicating the role to others in order to do everything possible to ensure a positive experience. The first priority is not allowing students to miss any more prime opportunities to learn. They need better instruction. We won’t move a teacher out of a position this year if the teacher is working as part of a team to instruct the class. The teacher and Coach will continue to work together throughout the year. We will only remove a teacher from the partnership if s/he is not engaged at all in the improvement process. The coach position was developed to get qualified teachers on board now for positions for next year. They have a chance to try out the school and we have a chance to try out them for any positions that may become available in the fall. This is not only a corrective action tactic to support underperforming classrooms but also a recruitment tactic to get a jump on the selection process. We didn’t want candidates who were just looking for administrative roles or for long term coaching roles (although we will continue to investigate this) but we want people who are committed to teaching. In response to the salary rate for the Instruction Coach, Ms. Piazza responded that the pay structure is the same as teachers. Ms. Buglione provided suggestions for documentation processes and shared a “floater teacher” strategy used at Head Start.” - The Floater would provide modeling and support, as well as back up substitute teaching, but would not be hired strictly to replace another teacher. Ms. Piazza saw merit in this model as a recruitment strategy and will investigate it further but also sees a need at this time for more urgent support tied to specific classes to ensure that the students learn. If the support person is floating, it dilutes the support needed in a specific site. However, the position could certainly be called that and described that way with the floating assignment being in specific places for marked periods of time. Additional consideration will be given to this proposal and it will be revisited at the next Board meeting.

Remaining Site Visit questions and comments are included in the packet and will be further discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Watson reviewed the timeline and process for the Superintendent evaluation.

Ms. Piazza shared information about the Draft Self Evaluation Rubric shared at a DESE meeting last week. Although it is still a work in progress, it is a helpful tool for us to use to reflect upon our current practices and needs. A retreat will be held on the weekend of Feb. 27,28 to work on this. It is open to staff and board. (Parents and students will be the next step). RSVP to Jessica Minor at x1231 if you are interested in attending. Details on time and location will follow.

## **2) Board Report:**

- a. Board Work Plan: Summary and retreat notes provided at 12/1/09 meeting. Sub-Committees to provide individual plan outlines.
- b. Notes were provided in the packets and additional discussion will be held at the February meeting. The Family Partnership Sub-Committee is recruiting members (staff, families, community) to attend their information session in February. The Recruitment and Instructional Leadership Sub-Committees are collecting data to utilize as part of an informal program evaluation.
- c. Charter School Administrative and Governance Guide, provided on our BOT website.
- d. Updated BOT contact summary provided to trustees to assist with sub-committee work.
- e. Orientation Evaluation Summary: (done on-line)
- f. Update on recruitment.
  - Melissa Haffty approval letter from DESE received.
  - Marianna Islam approval letter from DESE received.

## **3) Old Business:**

- a. Legislative Update on Education Reform Bill and Race To The Top: Information provided as hand out. Reviewed by Ms. Piazza
- b. Increase to Occupancy for lease with Learning First Foundation: Worksheet provided:

Motion to approve lease: Joseph Hungler  
Second: Kevin Bradley  
All voted in favor

- c. H1N1 vaccine update – Second dosages will be provided at the January 30<sup>th</sup> Clinic at SHCPS.
- d. November Leadership Summit Presentation made available on line at the MCCPSE website.

## **5) New Business:**

- a) Honor Roll Policy: see handout

Motion to approve honor roll policy: Kevin Bradley  
Second: Marianna Islam  
All voted in favor

Ms. Piazza reviewed the proposal and explained steps taken to proactively address the concern. The Board agreed that the awards would be retroactive to Term 1. Letters and ribbons will be sent home with recipients. Ms. Piazza pointed out that some teachers wanted to alter the Model Citizenship Award criteria because a student may have been restricted from receiving the award due to not achieving a 3 or 4 in effort or conduct in a single special area class even though s/he displays consistently high levels of effort and conduct in the core class where s/he spends the majority of

every day. Ms. Piazza shared her opinion that a Model Citizen must display the school's values across all settings and that we need to support special area teachers by holding students to high standards in their classes as in all classes. The Board discussed the issue and agreed to keep the policy as it currently stands.

- b) Memorandum of Understanding: Race to the Top (Discussion). Reviewed by Ms. Piazza.
- c) NAEYC (application for re-accreditation approved, candidacy pending). Reviewed by Ms. Piazza.
- d) Kathy Holton, Seven Hills' Music Director, is taking an active role in relief for Haiti. She has organized a city-wide event to be held at Hanover Theater on February 26, 2010. There will be over 20 performers including Seven Hills' Show Choir. More information will follow. All school fundraisers in support of the Haitian relief efforts will go to the Red Cross.

#### **6) Financial Report**

- a) Personnel Update: Provided, there were no questions.
- b) Enrollment Report as of 12/21/09: 672 enrolled, waitlist 469, 673 ADM
- c) Cash Balances: November 2009, there were no questions.
- d) November 2009 Balance Sheet and P/L, there were no questions.

#### **7) School Communication: Also visit [www.sevenhillscharter.org](http://www.sevenhillscharter.org)**

- a) Weekly Staff Notes: November, accessed via link provided
- b) Weekly Newsletter: visit [www.sevenhillscharter.org](http://www.sevenhillscharter.org)

Motion to Adjourn: Joseph Hungler  
Second: Suzanne Buglione  
Meeting adjourned at: 1:50 PM

Next meeting: February 2, 2010

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Elizabeth Gillis