

Seven Hills Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Retreat
February 6, 2007
5:00 PM Crowne Plaza

Welcome

Meeting began at 5:25 PM. In attendance: Carleton Watson, Krista Piazza, Rebecca Blodgett, Lee Cordaro, Jim Duggin, Donna Lemoyne, Dorothy Escribano, Andrew Feeland, Cindy Krackovic, Chris Bogden. Minutes taken by Beth Gillis.

Minutes

Minutes of the January 16, 2007 SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval.

Motion to Approve: Lee Cordaro

Second: Dorothy Escribano

All members voted in favor of the motion.

Public Comments

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

1) Board Report – Reflection and Strategic Planning presented by Chris Bogden.

A. Seven Hills Charter Public School 2007

Where have we been? Seven Hills Charter Public School opened in 1996 and has successfully renewed our charter twice. Demographic has changed over the past 10 years and the free/reduced lunch has grown from 30% in 1996 to almost 75%. Leadership has greatly evolved since the schools inception.

Who do we serve? Seven Hills' current population represents a higher number of minorities and ESL families than in years past. The board is proud of the school's role in the community, however, all agreed that efforts should be made to expand our audience in support of the founding board member's plan for diversity.

The following suggestions were offered by the board members :

1. Lottery packets will be sent to area childcare providers and community organizations.
2. Schedule more community-based events to improve visibility.
3. Build relationships to become a "feeder" school for competitive high schools. Define a "successful" placement and then track how many students Seven Hills placed there.
4. Compile alumni data to determine percentage of high school graduates.

Are we successful? How do we know? All board members agreed that a close review of the mission statement would help identify areas of success and those needing improvement. However, the school has achieved in the following areas:

- Renewed Charter
- Comparisons to Worcester
- Large Waiting List
- MCAS score improvement
- Graduate's HS placement and success

The board agreed to take the initiative to establish “feeder” relationships with area high schools to aid our efforts for success. Alumni data is also needed to determine how many Seven Hills’ students graduate from high school.

What sets us apart?

- Ability to change in response to a need.
- Differentiated curriculum and instructional models.
- Character education.
- Student to Teacher ratios.
- Commitment to the Arts.
- Integration of technology.

2007 Political Environment – Seven Hills cannot succeed without a lobbying presence but the school needs to be more personally aware of the political environment and community. We need to actively cultivate relationships with local and state politicians as well as keeping parents aware of the political urgency without making them uneasy about our stability. Additionally, Seven Hills needs to build funding streams that do not rely solely on state allocations such as Endowments, Grants and Corporate Partnerships.

B. What challenges do we face?

Math & Science – Teaching ability is key to student’s success in math and science. Professional development of current staff is needed to improve ability to teach these areas. Staff must receive more training; not just pedagogy. Also, creative solutions must be identified to recruit teachers who meet our standards in teaching math and science. The school needs to align with colleges with elementary education programs and science-based camps such as Camp Kieve and Nature’s Classroom to recruit teachers.

Elementary ELA - Sustain and monitor current initiatives curriculum/ program implementations. Assess impact in 2+ years.

Staffing (How do we attract and retain) – Develop relationships with local colleges and universities for teacher recruitment. Benefits, contracts and raises have all been used to aid in the retention of teachers. Advance school initiatives for course reimbursement.

Facility – Primary concern is identifying quality space for academics, curriculum planning, pullouts and behavioral issues. Addressing the “small,” easy to attain items, such as updating furnishings, is key to keeping frustration to a minimum. Space is a financial issue and

Seven Hills cannot afford to add costs without adding enrollment. Enrollment cannot increase because our space is maximized. Possible strategy to improving space is to form an alliance with a local organization and move the after-school program off-site.

Family Support – All board members agreed that family support is necessary to ensuring student success. Initiatives to get families involved have been poorly attended in the past. Connection to families may be more difficult since Seven Hills is not a neighborhood school. Suggestions from the board to improve family support included:

- Shifting focus from “school participation” to “student support.”
- Parent to Parent Network; create family directory
- Communication

Dissemination of Best Practices – Tabled until next meeting.

C. Next Meeting Agenda will include:

Where do we want to channel our resources:

Role of the Foundation

Succession Planning (Administration and Board)

2) Financial Report – See Attachments

- a) Personnel Update (No Changes)
- b) Enrollment Report as of Feb. 1, 2007 Enrolled 667, ADM 685, waitlist 135
Lottery March 8, 2007
- c) Cash Balances 12/31/06 – Reflects Bank of America and DCU accounts.
- d) Balance Sheet, P/L 12/31/06
- e) Budget to Actual Second Quarter 12/31/06
- f) Budget Priorities, Timeline – March Agenda

Accept: Donna Lemoyne

Second: Jim Diggins

All members voted in favor of the motion.

Motion to adjourn: Jim Diggins

Second: Donna Lemoyne

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 6, 2007

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Elizabeth A. Gillis

Administrative Assistant