

Seven Hills Charter Public School Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday March 2, 2010
6:00pm-8:00pm
Held in the Library at Seven Hills Charter Public School

Welcome

The meeting began at 6:00 PM. In attendance: Carlton Watson, Joanne Newcombe, Melissa Haffty, Joseph Hungler, Suzanne Buglione, Kevin Bradley, Krista Piazza, Cindy Krackovic, Kevin Petrocino (Mayer Hoffman McCann), Kathy Holton (SHCPS Choir Director), Rene Underwood (Grade 2 teacher), Donna Clark-Cranham (Grade 2 teacher), Josh Coyne (Technology Department Lead), Mike Belanger (Technology Integration Specialist), and Michelle Hennessy (Assistant Academy Director). Beth Gills recorded meeting minutes.

Minutes:

Minutes of the February 2, 2010 SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval

Meeting minutes approved: Joanne Newcombe

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. Mayer Hoffman McCann, P.C.: Audit Report

Presented by Kevin Petrocino. Mr. Petrocino reviewed the attached Combined Financial Statements and Required Supplemental Information and reported that Seven Hills is financially “healthy.” He noted that Cindy Krackovic and her team were always prepared and that communication during the process was very good. This preparedness and communication makes for a smooth process and timely field work. In response to questions about the relationship with the LFF, Mr. Petrocino clarified that the Foundation board is focused on fundraising, grants and scholarships and that as such must maintain a minimum threshold of public donations in order to stay “public.” Ms. Piazza explained that there is a 3-year plan in place to build on the minimum target including a partnership with Greater Community Foundation to develop scholarships. Mr. Petrocino will investigate whether these funds will credit LFF threshold, and this information will be made available to the LFF. Ms. Piazza acknowledged Ms. Krackovick, Mr. Petrocino and their teams for their successful working relationship and audit.

b. Integration of Arts and Technology

Ms. Holton presented the integration of Arts and showed a PowerPoint slide show. Copies are included in the Board packet. Ms. Holton provided examples of specific standards and how the Rainbow House is working with teachers to meet these standards. Two grants are currently in place for FY2010: Massachusetts Cultural Council and Kids Consortium in support of the

“Recycle-Sing-A” program at the Ecotarium. Other projects include the “H’Arts and Hope for Haiti,” Special Area Best Practices as well as several performances around the Worcester area.

Mr. Coyne and Mr. Belanger presented the integration of Technology. Video and PowerPoint presentations reviewed how technology is supporting instruction and professional development and providing online resources for students, staff and parents. Mr. Bradley inquired about parent access and Mr. Coyne explained that approx. 2/3 of our parents are actively accessing the Seven Hills system. Mr. Coyne and Mr. Belanger reviewed the “Acceptable Use Policy” and directed the Board members to the forum where ideas/comments are shared. Mr. Coyne explained that a variety of people are involved in the forum including teachers, administration, students, parents, staff; it is open to anyone with an existing account. Mr. Coyne will provide the Board members with account information so that they may participate in the forum. The forum covers a variety of topics including general discussion, great news, technology, student support, etc. Mr. Coyne reported that it is a useful tool but under-utilized. Ms. Buglione and Mr. Hungler inquired about internet safety and determining critical literacy. Mr. Belanger uses NetSmarts.org as part of his internet safety curriculum. He also discussed teaching responsible social networking as part of the tech class but not allowing students to access school supported sites like this outside of this highly supervised environment. Mr. Hungler also inquired about Seven Hills rules about social networking and online chatting. The school uses Think.com which is restricted to our school community only, and until further monitoring can be put in place has been taken down for the time being. It has provided some revealing information. Mr. Hungler expressed his support of the schools technology and believes the school provides a safe, closely-monitored environment for students to explore social networking.

2) Board Report:

- a. Board Work Plan: Sub-Committee updates and procedure for information sharing. The minute taker from the subcommittee meetings will email the minutes to all participants. In addition Cindy Krackovic will save in the subcommittee sub-folder in the BOT shared folder on our website.

Effective Instruction: Joanne Newcombe, Beverley Bell, Jessica Fede

- *Leadership Model*
- *Teacher Recruitment and Retention*
- *Professional Development*
- *Connection to Other Schools*
- *Continuum of School Services*
- *Charter School Promotion*
- *Homework*

The committee is developing an interview protocol. Joanne Newcombe plans to visit the school the week of march 15, 2010 to interview staff in order to provide feedback around the new leadership model. Collect data on staffs understanding of the leadership model and feedback on strengths and weaknesses. This information will be presented to administration with feedback on potential modifications.

Parent and Family Partnerships: Suzanne Biglione, Kevin Bradley, Robert Ramirez

- *School Member Profiles*
- *Strategies for Engagement*

- *Effective use of Support Services*
- *Charter School Promotion*
- *Homework*

The committee reported that parents feel that there is an “information overload;” therefore a survey will be created to determine strategies for engaging students and asking for the best means of communication. A draft will be available at the next Board meeting. The survey will be administered by students and ask if parents are also interested in participating in groups. Parents indicated that they “stumble” upon other parents in social situations that have nothing to do with our school; it’s purely accidental. The committee wishes to review family zip codes and determine if there is an opportunity for parents to get to know each other by finding out who is in their neighborhood.

Student Motivation: Joe Hungler, Marianna Islam, Melissa Haffty

- *Homework*
- *Charter School Promotion*

Two 8th grade students and one reading teacher. Will follow up with lunchtime focus groups with small groups for better attendance. Survey sent out after data. Students provided insight into what type of questions to ask, so more students would be able to provide additional appropriate questions, to provide feedback for the direction the committee should take. It was a good starting point. Is the focus group directed to JA or are other grades involved? Ms. Underwood has expressed first-time struggles in PA motivation. The panel didn’t feel that low motivation was isolated in the JA but they have better ability to articulate. Mr. Hungler suggested that economic times might be reflected in students’ lack of motivation. Ms. Underwood feels that students are more self-centered and more motivated by prizes for completing the expectations. They want instant gratification and over-stimulated by videos, games, etc and cutting corners with writing skills due to texting. Ms. Buglione suggested that Student Motivation will connect with Parent/Family Partnerships, and eventually with Professional Development for learning ways to motivate students.

- b. Update on recruitment.
 1. Approval of Robert Ramirez
- c. May Board Retreat with independent consultant to facilitate

3) Old Business:

- a. Site Visit Feedback: Debriefing and review of preliminary verbal feedback
The DESE shared statements but with no room for conversation or questioning. They stated that the information shared was preliminary and may change once the final report is drafted. The final report will be available in 4-6 weeks. The school will have the opportunity to respond.
- b. Update on RTT: Letter and Executive Summary provided.

5) New Business:

- a) Staff Recruitment Flyer
Board members were asked to display/distribute the flyer. Updated flyer will sent electronically.
- b) New Charter School in Worcester. Ms. Piazza reported that the new Charter School is recruiting students from our school. Seven Hills is supporting the school as a high school alternative for our students. Ms. Buglione feels that we need to educate/advocate with city officials to correct misunderstandings and enlighten the public about charter schools. Events have been hosted to provide information to legislators. It is continuous work that requires more attention than intermittent events.
- c) New Charter School Legislation

Summary attached and reviewed by Ms. Piazza. She highlighted pros and cons of each of the legislative areas.

- d) MCCPSE 2009-2010 Schedule of Programs provided for the board members should they be interested in attending.

6) Financial Report

- a) Personnel Update: Reviewed, there were no questions.
- b) Enrollment Report as of 02/23/10: 671 enrolled, waitlist 146, 672.42 ADM (Feb 15th is final enrollment for March reporting and PP payment calculations) Ms. Krackovic noted that the reduction in the waitlist is a result of timing due to the waitlist roll over and upcoming lottery.
- c) Cash Balances: January 2010 presented, there were no questions.
- d) January 2010 Balance Sheet and P/L presented, there were no questions.
- e) Benefit Cost Analysis: Ms. Krackovic reviewed the analysis, and based on further research into the projected variance it was determined that not \$103K of additional benefits expense, rather an adjustment down to only an increase of \$57 K to the budget was required. The correction to the budget will be made.
- f) FY2010 Grants Overview: Presented, there were no questions.
- g) Budget Time Line: Ms. Krackovic noted that the time-line start of Feb/March is later than usual due to the timing of the site visit.

7) School Communication: Also visit www.sevenhillscharter.org

- a) Weekly Staff Notes: Accessed via link: <http://www.sevenhillscharter.org/botfiles/>
- b) Weekly Newsletter: visit www.sevenhillscharter.org under “family”

Meeting adjourned: 8:00 PM

Motion to Joseph Hungler

Second:Kevin Bradley