

Seven Hills Charter Public School Board of Trustees
Minutes
Tuesday September 1, 2009
6:00-8:00pm
Held at Seven Hills Charter Public School

Welcome: Carlton Watson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Present: Carlton Watson, Suzanne Buglione, Kevin Bradley, Joanne Newcombe, Beverly Bell, Michelle Hennessy, Judy Verdini, Lee Cordaro, Donna Lemoyne, Krista Piazza, Cynthia Krackovic, Henry Chamberlain, Donna Clark-Cranham, Renee Underwood, David Ishola.

Minutes

Minutes of the June 2, 2009, SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval.

Motion to approve: Lee Cordaro

Second: Donna Lemoyne

All in favor

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) Presentations:

- a. Student Achievement Summary: See attached presentation. Krista Piazza reviewed, and noted that this is raw data and has not yet been officially released. Release date expectation is mid September. Krista Piazza also reviewed the AYP report and noted that the formula to calculate this is in the process of being changed to reflect the growth measurements. Krista Piazza spoke to the efforts made with interventions last year in each of the corrective action categories (school leadership, mentoring, extended learning, curriculum and instruction, parent involvement). Although the school put extensive targeted tutoring and parent involvement plans in place, student and parent attendance at these programs was extremely limited so the programs did not make an impact. We need to look at other models for helping students and families access the supports we have in place for them outside of school hours. There were no further questions.
- b. Update on Administrative Structure: Krista Piazza spoke of our historical administrative model, and the changes put into place for the FY2010 year to bring the new and potential board members present up to date. Although this model (two Leads, Academy Director, Superintendent) was initially staffed, a last minute departure of our Student Support Manager/SPED Coordinator required a

another look at the structure based on the staff expertise. One of the Leads was moved into the SSM role, and with a hard look at the structure a determination to adjust the model with the existing staff, and still accomplish the goal of the new administrative structure was done. The new structure is Academy Director with 4-8 emphasis, Asst Academy Director with a K-3 emphasis, Superintendent was put into place.

- c. Annual Report: Beverly Bell raised the question of how we can have the demographics of SHCPS population be representative of the sending district when you are a lottery system. Krista Piazza spoke to how this is a state requirement, and it's intent is to prevent the cherry picking and any corruption that may exist. This disparity was noted in our site visit, and although does not meet the sending district demographics we were applauded for having this mix, as Charter Schools were intended to serve underserved populations. It was asked if we would keep this as an accountability measure mission, and Carlton Watson noted that it would continue as a point of measurement.

2) Board Report:

- a. Board Work Plan: School Improvement update plan and board work plan to be revised at the November retreat: Suzanne Buglione asked Carlton Watson to speak around the expectations of the "retreat". Carlton Watson noted that it is a longer meeting about 4 hours, and that academic accountability, organizational viability and faithfulness to the charter are areas of sub committee board involvement and where necessary a task force to address specific issues will be established. Individual board members are able to select the area they want to be more involved with. Krista Piazza noted that she will bring forward initiatives resulting from her meetings with staff and strategic directives. This will be in place of the November board meeting. Krista Piazza note that this is when "work plans" are created.
- b. Update on recruitment
 - a) Joanne Newcombe for consideration of school board trustee. (resume attached)
Motion to put forward her candidacy to the DOE for acceptance: Lee Cordaro
Second: Suzanne Buglione
All in Favor
 - b) Kevin Bradley for consideration of school board trustee. (resume attached)
Motion to put forward her candidacy to the DOE for acceptance: Donna Lemoyne
Second: Lee Cordaro
All in Favor
 - c) DOE approval of Suzanne Buglione attached.

- d) Resignation of Jim Diggins attached: Carlton Watson spoke of the sadness we feel with the resignation of the long time serving board member.
- e) Schedule board member orientation: Potential new board members to attend, Judy Verdini, David Ishola, Beverly Bell, to be held Tuesday September 15th from 5:00pm-8:30pm at Biagio's , 257 Park Ave. in Worcester. Cindy Krackovic will make reservations, and board manuals will be distributed.

3) Old Business:

- a. Update on purchase of laptops, utilized Tech Soup for purchase of the operating system (Windows), thus allowing for an increase from 69 units to 75units.
- b. Summer School Summary: Krista Piazza spoke to the attachment, and noted there was flexibility to include all students, but that heavy recruitment was done for those students that could most benefit. Not all targeted students attended the sessions but the attendance did create good groups sizes for instruction. A parent survey was done, and about 6 to date have been returned and the response was overwhelming positive. Holding some night summer programming, resulting from parental input received during the planning process last spring proved successful. Joanne Newcombe questioned if it was transporting the students as the reason for the evening success, Ms. Piazza noted that although this was a factor, accommodating camp schedules proved to be more the issue. Beverly Bell questioned if the geography made an impact, IE: most attended were in walking distance, but that was not the case. However, participation in summer programming has improved since the program was moved to the WPL a few years ago. This location is on a bus line and easier for families to access. The school used end of year benchmarking results as pretests for the participants in each of the courses and is in the process of collecting fall benchmarking results to monitor progress (or decreased summer regression trends) of those participants. Results will be available for the October meeting. Carlton Watson noted that over the years of doing the summer program we have refined it and it has become a very successful program run in conjunction with the Learning First Foundation.

5) New Business:

- a) Staff Manual policy updates: Ms. Piazza spoke to the changes as noted below.
 - 1. Acceptable Use Policy updated to include "minor training".
 - 2. Include wording under the confiscated electronic devices to remove any liability on SHCPS's part if device is lost or stolen as a result. Donna Lemoyne questioned the lack of liability to the school should an electronic device be confiscated and then not able to be made available to the parent upon pick up. Cynthia Krackovic spoke to the intent of the policy being to provide complete release of liability to the school, and that should there be any concern or issue around the integrity of an employee in the handling of this confiscated device that it would be handled as an internal staff issue with

an investigation, etc., but that the intent of the policy was not to address or deal with this.

3. Policy to address release of student directory information.
4. Policy on appliances in classrooms (compliance with Mass Bldg Code).
5. Update to wording around Special Education Observations, based on published advisory.
6. Wellness Policy Updated to change wording around food for rewards in classroom from discouraged to not allowed, and to include not ordering out without permission from the principal.

Ms. Piazza spoke some about how we are prepared to handle the potential H1N1 and the DOE recommendations/advisory as well as upcoming training on Friday September 4th. Ms. Piazza will provide an update on this issue at the October meeting.

Motion to Approve with the manual as revised: Lee Cordaro

Second: Donna Lemoyne

All in favor:

- b) Notification of FY2010 Site Visit: Board members were asked to “save the date” , but be advised that it may change, but that board members attendance will be required.
- c) Notification of NAEYC Accreditation Renewal: Krista Piazza noted that this keeps us eligible for the Quality Full Day Kindergarten Grant

6) Financial Report

- a) Personnel Update: New hire listing attached: Krista Piazza noted that we have a new student enrolled that will require additional support and therefore the addition of another staff member.
- b) Enrollment Report as of 08/25/09: 671 enrolled, waitlist 475, 668.71 ADM. Krista Piazza spoke to getting this number closer to 680 for the beginning of the year and then not filling late in the year, with the target to maintain a minimum ADM of 666 per our charter. Donna Clark Cranham asked about the enrollment, and which grade level was not at capacity, Krista Piazza noted that is was Junior Academy. Initial enrollment we were trying not to bring in new student in JA due to the difficulty students have joining SHCPS so far along in the school’s program , but in order to meet target we had to. Joanne Newcombe asked about any tracking of the transition of new JA students, and Krista. Piazza spoke to how this transition is difficult, and the majority of the students who enter the school late have brought with them substantial needs both academically and behaviorally. Our ELL population doubled from last year and the special education numbers and students with extensive behavior intervention plans are increasing dramatically as well. Suzanne Buglione asked if we have data on what was the motivation of those that transfer in. A lot are “word of mouth”, and many have been on the wait list for a long time. We are known for our high quality Special Education and some parents talked about being “referred” to Seven Hills for that reason. Some families talk about school safety or a history of

failure in current settings and are looking for an alternative, a fresh start somewhere else. Krista Piazza also spoke about the issue around “school jumping” to avoid the process for dealing with attendance, discipline, etc. and that she has had conversations with Worcester Public and they encounter the same situations.

- c) Cash Balances: May 2009, June 2009, July 2009: Cynthia Krackovic reviewed, there were no questions.
- d) May 2009, June 2009 and July 2009 Balance Sheet and P/L. Cynthia Krackovic reviewed, and noted that the quarterly reports included the true up for accruals.
- e) Budget to Actual year ended June 30, 2009: This is the year end report. Cynthia Krackovic spoke to the variance from budget, and addressed the strategic decision to be conservative in light of the financial climate, and the recommendations of the DESE and Charter School Association. Cuts to revenue were predicted to occur with the final payment, when it would have been too late to make any spending cuts. Spending freeze was put into place early in the year, and where possible staffing coverage was done with in house resources, verses position replacements, or maternity leave coverage hires. The availability of ARRA funds to assist with a bleak revenue picture for FY2010 and FY2011 was also not known until the end of the FY09 year. The strategies put into place were successful in providing the financial safety net that would have been needed. Krista Piazza spoke to the fact that the ARRA funds are only for two years, and will drop off so their funding must be utilized to generate programs to facilitate the long term achievement goals.
- f) FY2010 Amended Budget: Cynthia Krackovic presented the requested changes to the FY2010 budget based mainly on updated revenue information, and the confirmation of the ARRA grant funds as noted on the presented documents. Cynthia Krackovic noted that the debt ratio is healthy and that all bank covenants will be met. There were no further questions.

Motion to Approve: Suzanne Buglione
Second: Donna Lemoyne
All in favor:

Motion to adjourn: Lee Cordaro
Second: Donna Lemoyne
All in favor
Meeting adjourned at: 7:30

Next meeting Tuesday October 6, 2009

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cynthia Krackovic