

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL

Board Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2015

A Board of Trustees Meeting was held on January 15, 2015, at the Discovery Charter School, 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester, NY 14615.

Trustees Present: Daniel Aureli; Yoshida Blackman; Donna Dedee Doyle; Lisa Lewis; Joseph Martino; Sara Varhus; David Vigren

Trustees Excused: Scott Adair; Sarah Armignacco; Thomas DaRin; Yoshida Blackman; Olivia West

Also Present: Joe Saia, School Director; Anne Culver, School Business Manager; Steve Gleason, Administrative Consultant; Steven Polowitz, Attorney; Valerie Nolan, Independent Consultant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and it was determined that a lawful quorum was present.

2. Proof of Public Notice of Meeting

Public Notice was provided in the Messenger Post.

3. Conflict of Interest Reminder

The Chair read the following statement: "The Chair reminds everyone that if a potential conflict of interest exists concerning a subject under discussion by the Board that you have an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse yourself and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject."

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2014 meeting was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Mr. Martino and unanimously approved.

5. Expansion Committee

- a. **Financial Forecast.** The financial forecast that reflects horizontal expansion of the school through its 2022-23 fiscal year was reviewed in detail. The Finance Committee indicated its comfort with the forecast. A motion to approve the forecast to be the School's long-term financial plan was made by Mr. Martino, seconded by Ms. Varhus and unanimously approved.
- b. **Placement of Grade 6 Graduates.** The summary of actions taken to help parents of Discovery students find a good school for their child beyond grade 6 was discussed. It was noted that progress continues on the effort to revamp the Rochester East High School, a possible home for Discovery students. Mrs. Blackman outlined her efforts to identify other RCSD schools for Discovery students. Suggestions beyond efforts already underway included investigating the area's Urban/Suburban Program and other charter schools offering grades beyond grade 6. Several trustees volunteered to serve on an ad-hoc committee to work on this issue:

Mr. Aurli
Mrs. Blackman (chair)
Mrs. Lewis
Mr. Martino
Mrs. Cordova (staff)

- c. **Ongoing Support.** Mrs. Nolan commented on Mrs. West's ongoing support for Discovery "graduates" outline. It was the consensus of the board to discuss the matter further at the February board meeting.

6. Summer Learning Program

- a. **MOU – Full Time Option.** The latest draft of the Memorandum of Understanding among the three parties participating in the operation of the Discovery Summer Learning Program was discussed. No changes were made.

7. Charter Renewal

- a. **Org Chart Sec 4-5.** The Organization Chart, reflecting the school's planned organization during its next charter period and highlighting Key School Leaders, was discussed. A motion to approve the Organization Chart was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Mrs. Blackman and unanimously approved.
- b. **Staff Plan Sec 4-12.** The Staff Plan, Organization Chart highlighting Key Educational Staff, and a brief description for each key educational staff position were discussed. A

motion to approve all three documents, with minor modifications to staff position descriptions, was made by Mr. Martino, seconded by Mrs. Lewis and unanimously approved.

- c. **Enrollment Policy Sec 4-17.** A revision to the School's Enrollment and Admissions Policy (#4400), detailing expected enrollment from 2016-17 through 2022-23, was reviewed. A **Resolution (#196)** approving changes to Policy #4400 was moved by Ms. Varhus, seconded by Mrs. Blackman and unanimously approved.

8. HR Committee

Mr. Martino reported that the HR Committee is working on modifications to salary schedules and job descriptions. A formal report will be presented at the February board meeting.

9. Director's Report

Mr. Saia reviewed the more significant elements of his Operations Report.

- He highlighted the fact that there are 9 students who are chronically absent and that most absences are centered in 20 students. Without these absences, school attendance would be 99%. Various actions are being taken to address the issue, including home visits.
- Mr. Saia also indicated that future Family Association meetings will be held in the morning as attendance at evening meetings has been sparse. He noted that approximately 90 family members attended the December 19 Exhibition.
- The staff was asked to identify the top two “big ticket” items on their “wish list” of school needs. Of the 10 items receiving votes, 66% chose adding a stand-alone library.
- Applications for two interns/fellowships were mentioned. One will focus on alleviating the effects of poverty on youth and the other on summer programming.

Mr. Saia also presented the 2014 Teacher and Staff Wellness Assessment (Staff Survey) prepared by Foxwise USA. Continued improvement in all categories of the survey was noted. Individual staff comments solicited as part of the survey process have been grouped into categories for attention and potential action. Mr. Saia is driving that process.

10. Business Manager's Report

- a. **Enrollment Report.** Ms. Culver presented the January 1 Enrollment Report.

- b. Conflict of Interest Policy.** Ms. Culver presented revisions to the School's Conflict of Interest Policy (#1300) highlighting procedural changes strengthening administration of the policy. A motion to approve the changes was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Ms. Varhus and unanimously approved.
- c. Legal Fees.** Mr. Polowitz left the room. Ms. Culver presented a proposal from Mr. Polowitz to increase his hourly fee to a level that his firm charges to all not-for-profit organizations. His fee charged to the School since its inception had been below his firm's going rate. Also included in the proposal was a request to increase his flat billing rate for board meeting attendance from 2 hours to 3. Ms. Culver presented information indicating that Mr. Polowitz's proposed fee is considerably below market rates charged by other firms in the Rochester area. A motion indicating that the board is exceptionally satisfied with the service received from Mr. Polowitz and that his proposed fee arrangement is highly competitive and generous was moved by Mr. Martino seconded by Mr. Aureli and unanimously approved. Mr. Polowitz reentered the room.

11. Finance Committee Report

- a. December Financial Statements.** Ms. Culver reviewed the December Financial Statements with the Board.
- b. Key Financial Indicators.** Ms. Culver reviewed the Key Financial Indicators report.
- c. Grant Status.** Ms. Culver presented the January 8 Grants Report.
- d. Check Detail Report.** Ms. Culver asked if there were any questions concerning the 10-page Check Detail Report, totaling \$176,445.46, for the month of December. There were none.
- e. Checks Over \$5,000.** Ms. Culver presented a *Resolution (#197)*, detailing non-routine payments of \$5,000 or more. The Resolution was moved by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Ms. Varhus and approved with Mr. Martino abstaining.

12. Old Business

The Chair asked if there was any old business. There was none.

13. New Business

Mr. Saia reported on the January 14 unannounced visit of Mr. Bill Clarke.

14. Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Dedee Doyle, seconded by Ms. Varhus and unanimously approved at 8:10 pm.