

**SOAR Charter School Board Meeting
February 14, 2014**

Date, Time and Place: February 14, 2014, Evie Dennis Campus, Student Union Building,
Large Conference Room

Attendance of Board Members:

Present: William Weintraub, Sue Sava, Rona Wilensky, Shelli Brown,
Rosann Ward

Present by phone: None

Absent: Dan Smink, Ellin Keene

Quorum? Yes

Also in attendance: Marc Waxman, Brad Fischer, Sonia Sisneros, Gianna Cassetta,
Leah Miller

Members of the public in attendance: None
Motion to begin Rosanne and second by Rona

8:30 AM Consent Agenda

- January Minutes
- Amendment to the FY14 budget
- December financial package

Motion to approve moved by Bill and second by Rona

8:36 AM School Updates

Dashboards

We've had a lot of growth and progress. Both schools (more so OAK) feel like different places than they did at the beginning of the year. OAK is in a better place today than it has ever been.

The quality of instruction is still uneven but it is at a higher level than what we've seen. Still, the decision was the right one. Would it be in as good a place if we hadn't gone through what we have? (Rona) yes, kids know teachers and teachers know kids. The staff have experienced a 7 month growth curve.

Student recruitment and retention: this is not a surprise that we are about half as popular as we were last year. This is the first year we had an SPF and there are more Kindergarten seats in our area. The message from the district is that they expect us to be full after all students are placed. There is real opportunity to really invest in the Kinder families and build these relationships. Marc is running all of the enrollment sessions himself and agrees that this is a great opportunity.

(Bill) The magnitude of the decline is close to 50%; why? (Marc) We don't know everything, more or less Kinder kids than last year, we do know that there are more seats than there ever were, and there are schools that are performing much better than they ever have in the past and we are a 'red' school. The buzz on SOAR in the community is not a good buzz. We have 94% of families returning, down 4 percentage points. Grades 1 through 5 are in a good place we will lose one or two students in each grade. These are wait list numbers; applications. We will know for sure what is going on in two weeks (3/3). The numbers in the fall are pretty close to what we received during the intent to return process.

Marc is anticipating we will have a full school. If that changes he will let us (Board) know.

The SPF does get changed each year in terms of how the data is weighted. Marc is in the loop on these changes.

Staffing: we will have 100% of returning staff next year. Our first retreat day is on Tuesday 2/18. As for the morale with folks that aren't returning but wanted to is where it has always been. We are entering a next phase where there is increased anxiety with people who may not have jobs yet for next year.

Everyone is a leader next year; there are no mentor teachers but there are a lot of experienced people and we are creating a culture where we are a community of learners and a community of leaders. We will work to become a model and support for other people. We are not creating any pipelines right now. We see a lot of people that have a lot of energy and enthusiasm. This was discussed during the interviews with Marc individually.

"Improving Schools from Within" The idea is where you build a community where everyone is a learner and leader.

Parent engagement: new survey in January; we are doing four new events in the Spring, restaurant night, movie night, science night and performances. We formed a homework committee. The work for the committee will be to get clear on what the policy for next year with staff and parent input to inform the process but ultimately Marc will make the decision.

Parking lot: Marc is gathering folks to discuss this issue.

Parent engagement is going to be a staff led action team. We are going to launch a parent organization.

Parent communication: One of the biggest take-aways is that our families prefer email communication. We are also working on our website.

Urgency & rigor: teachers have set goals and have identified areas that they want to work on.

Culturally relevant pedagogy: Gianna is working with a staff member on this.

Marc is working on Antoine Jefferson to work on getting staff connecting to resources in the community.

Review of data:

Online assessment tool that the math tutoring group uses. Blueprint thought we were at the place of all the other programs even though we started later (November).

GVR 4th grade growth data: good growth; paced or outpaced the other schools that are doing tutoring

GVR 5th grade growth data: good growth

OAK 4th grade: some growth; one class regressed. Marc looked into this

OAK 5th grade: some growth

DRA Fall to Winter

OAK – kids are reading better and growing more

GVR – not huge growth; but there was growth; questions around 5th grade not sure the data for last year was accurate. We are seeing what we should be seeing. Things are getting stronger over time. We should get 80-90% by fifth grade for students that start at SOAR in then Kindergarten.

Review of writing data and explanation of roll-up process. The singular data points are very helpful for the teachers. Teachers grade each student's individual work and are able to hone in on some things and prepare for TCAP.

The GVR staff in upper grades is required to have more time to do their unit planning together and use the data. Our staff is using data to drive their instruction. Test prep units have been written and are individualized based on the needs of their class.

FY 15 Budget/Finance

Everything is good in the 5-year budget. The big change was adding the teacher pay scale and carrying it out over five years and making sure it's affordable. At the current model we can afford it.

There is a little bit of a budget issue. We have been assuming that we could use OAK surplus to pay the end of year compensation. We have been told no, but we are continuing to work on this. If we get held to no then we could reallocate salaries in a way to make this achievable. Worst case scenario is that we need to dip into reserves.

If anybody wants to dig into the FY15 budget you are encouraged to set-up a time to meet with Marc and Brad to go through details.

9:50 AM Board Education - Dance

10:05 AM Board Education Debrief

10:15 AM Executive Director Review Discussion (Rona)

We need to get some questions clarified. This work is slated for the Governance Committee. Rosann has done a preliminary look at this as it relates to Marc's new job description, whether or not to complete a review for Gianna and restructuring survey.

We want to consider what DPS might evaluate us on in terms of process as well as SB 191 pieces for Marc as a Principal.

Rosann is going to send Marc and Gianna the categories for them before she digs in to create an evaluation tool.

9:45 AM Committee Reports

Board Development (Rona)

Amy Desi – it is not a good time for her. She is booked.

Erin Brown – hasn't contacted us back. We haven't been able to get with her.

Ron Bass – Rona has met with him. He has an accounting background and an interesting person. He is new to Colorado and has always devoted time to nonprofits. He is touring the school next week with Marc. There are two degrees of separate in this relationship but Rona advises that we should complete references. Bill will assist Rona with this.

Parent, community member and someone with finance expertise are our top priorities for recruitment.

Board self-assessment process – Rona has collected tools for board self-assessment. The next step is to be ready with something at the Board retreat. Gianna recommends Nora w/the league to assist us with determining what would be the best tool for this purpose.

Discuss succession planning and set up sub-committee to explore with Marc. Ellin was interested in a one-year term of the Board. The Governance Committee needs to think about this in the context of what the school needs for next year. This is coming up on the horizon.

Natalie will assist with scheduling the Governance Committee Meetings. The intent is that these meetings get scheduled on a regular basis.

Next agenda: We need to clarify the end of the Board President Term; we think it is the end of the fiscal year as well as what the school needs may be.

- Strategic Planning Committee (Sue)

Discuss, Review & Approve Strategic Plan (Most current UIP Goals will be sent by Marc later next week). Sue reviews the revisions and opens it up for questions and comments.

Next board meeting we will discuss the vision for the community of learners; thus, tying the succession plan to this.

Vote on UIP goals integrated into Strategic plan: Motion by Rona second by Bill unanimously agreed to adopt the UIP goals to the plan and accept the plan.

Vision-growth Plan Vote (Marc)

10:30 AM Parent/Community Development (Marc)

Marc's big four goals for parent engagement

What is the Board's job? Is it to sync up? What is it if it's not that? The Board is a natural place to think about engaging with the community. Should the Board have a very specific plan for what's its goal, not Marc's but the Boards'. When/how/if is the board going to start connecting with the staff? The board has the opportunity to take some pressure off of administration by playing a buffer role to have staff tell them what's going on.

Marc is planting the seed for the board to think about.

Focus on the goals/priorities/plan for parent engagement

What the board's role is in regards to parent engagement and community development?

10:50 AM Executive Session – HOLD UNTIL MARCH

11:02 AM Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Shelli and Rosann seconds