

**SOAR Charter School Board Meeting
March 17, 2014**

Date, Time and Place: March 17, 2014, Evie Dennis Campus, Student Union Building,
Large Conference Room

Attendance of Board Members:

Present: Dan Smink, Ellin Keene, Sue Sava, Shelli Brown

Present by phone: None

Absent: William Weintraub, Rona Wilensky, Rosann Ward

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 Shelli and second by Dan

8:30 Consent Agenda

- February Minutes
- January Financial Packet

Month behind; haven't collected Title or turn-around funding yet; \$251,495 apparent Loss of Revenue over Expenses due to Sage not recording roll-over from prior year

Resolution on moving funds from Oakland needs to line up with budget approval in April;
Worst case scenario is \$70,000 from reserves

Questions on Minutes: Nora says we can use "bank" of potential board members

Board recruitment check-in: Ron Bass is not interested. Nora from the league is going to assist us with recruitment efforts.

Motion to approve the consent agenda: Sue moved, Dan seconds

8:45 Dashboards & Updates

Dashboard: Teacher Retention: 2 teachers did not return from maternity leave; 1 teacher left and Kat took over; 2 flex teachers moved into other 2 classrooms.

Enrollment Update: 68 families enrolled elsewhere through choice; 11 of those families have decided to stay. We will be full with wait list at every grade level; Shelli asked if we know why families are leaving; Marc noted we could do exit interviews; Leah noted parents are using Enrollment Portfolio which publishes SPF; 23 students from Oakland will come to GVR.

Principal for Oakland discussion. There are some current staff that are staying with Oakland; 3 teachers for sure. The model for at risk schools will be the dominant narrative.

Leah Mermelstein has been a great staff developer. She is assisting with the alignment of our curriculum with Common Core. We are working with Kirsten Shrouf or a person from APS (Aurora Public Schools) to work on our math. Each grade level will have a lead for Reading, Writing and Math. This will give us some real ownership for training together. Lucy will also assist with Writing (K-1).

Data: Marc reviewed student assessment data; SMI and growth fall to winter

Next year we will use SMI grades 2 through 5. Review of the Oakland student data in terms of where they are and their growth. The gender gap increases as the kids get older; what do we make of this (Sue)? This is interesting and fits with math research generally. It's something we should keep our eye on.

We started two and a half months late with tutoring. SMI is an online adaptive test; (explanation of scores). We've given three tests here; the other schools have given four tests because they started before us (comparison of SOAR and McGlone; growth between the first and the last test). We have had more growth when you take the amount of time we've had with the tutoring implemented. We have done exemplary in this area. Oakland has had some growth; though, not as significant as GVR. All of the other schools in the DSSN network have had two months more. How are we comparing – GVR is on par with the highest performing turnaround.

How do we tease out the variable of knowing if it's the teaching, tutoring, etc. (Ellin). We aren't sure (Marc). The implementation is changing where they are making it a cheaper model; we are being encouraged to do it again next year. We can't unless we went well into reserves. The instruction is all over the place. Expectations of students are all over the place: we think our 4th grade team is really strong. Essentially, the kids are getting more time on task.

Ed News did publish a report on this. DSSN has sent Marc a detailed analysis. They have found a correlation between SMI and TCAP. We should outperform some of the schools on TCAP; but, we'll see how that plays out.

(Ellin) Is there any value in having our classroom folks in visiting some of these sessions to pick-up some technique? Math Tutors are using a scripted curriculum "Do the Math".

Marc intends for the upper grade Interventionists to use next year. Our Math Coordinators and Teachers meet on a weekly basis; especially, during our test prep unit.

PARCC is far from being complete. It's impossible to say whether or not it will be comparable to TCAP. The growth data will be done the same way they did Access and WEDA; we expect the same thing to be done with TCAP and PARCC. For CMAS; no results are being used on SPF.

These tests will all be online. Regarding the curricular calendar: do these APS investigations help us align so that we aren't teaching pertinent units AFTER the assessments. Aurora is ahead of DPS in this because they have been using it for years now. The plan is that our consultant will help us with all of this. The alignment is essential.

We have been given the information about how many students have been placed at SOAR and how many are leaving. Because of the letter DPS issued we can let these students reenroll. We have 11 students wishing to stay out of the 68 that were going to leave. Our attrition rate is higher than it has been in the past but we expect a full school.

Marc and Leah will discuss doing an exit interview. Leah has talked to some of the families and anecdotally we have learned that their home school is doing better. We have had some families that have changed siblings because of 5th grade students leaving to a school closer to their house. There was some distinct discomfort around our SPF information in the enrollment guide.

Big picture is, full school and an overwhelming amount of families returning. The fate for how complicated things will be next year will be the end of this week when TCAP wraps-up.

We have about 22 students coming over from Oakland. Oakland parents; the most vocal parents have gotten really involved in the planning for the new school and they feel really good about it.

9:24 Marc's FY15 Job Description

Revised job description based on the ED Review; Ellin will contact Rosann about what this was.

9:25 Executive session for personnel and compensation discussions—school leadership offer (Marc)

9:45 Board Business

- ED Review: Rosann was going to get new categories to Marc; she did and he replied; need next steps
- Next steps for allowing Ellin to transition from Board President and finding an appropriate replacement. Ellin will be Board President through June 30, 2014; we don't meet in June so the last meeting will be in May. Ellin has been a great Board President and got us through some trying times. (Dan) This role needs to have a vision, perhaps a vision for education – not business. This is closely tied to our pipeline which is very concerning. Ellin will get something out to everybody requesting their input of what quality looks like for this role.

- There are looming questions of whether or not this person needs to be an educational leader. We need additional members that represent these other areas of priority.
 - From Gianna, the one thing that Ellin really brought was someone that managed issues and the Board and didn't leave that to the Co-executive Directors. The Board President has to do that.

10:30 Committee Reports

- Plan for board self-assessment presented by board development committee – coming up in the retreat.
- Strategic plan discussion lead by Sue – Sue emailed this document to us. The revisions reflect addition of new goals and removal of old goals. There are two different ways to look at this. It is interesting to see our progress; but, we could eliminate the past goals and just focus on what's the current. The action plan could be revised; but not eliminated so that you're keeping in the plan. Goal #3 – this will need to be done according to timeline. The plan will help us to calendar and be held accountable for outcome. Sonia will speak to the Core Principals in May. She is the lead in the Staff Lead Action Team.

Goal #5 is a project for Marc, on his to-do list. The budget timeline is reviewed; April Board approval for the purposes of staff salaries; revisions would come later if necessary. Enrollment (review coming in) confirmed (pretty good idea) in August. (Sue) because we decided that we would unpack the vision and mission, who is going to facilitate at the May retreat? We need a discussion on this in April so that we can determine whether or not we want to revise the mission and vision. We don't have a facilitator booked; but we don't have anyone booked right now. We could use Bill Fulton or Cile for facilitation. Cile Chavez has been Gianna's coach this year. She is a former superintendent from Littleton Public Schools. She went through a similar situation and resigned from her position over philosophic reasons. She is a quite skilled communicator. Ellin thinks that Cile would push us harder and she has Board experience. Gianna will contact her and then we will use Bill if she is not available.

Budget for development is \$2,500.

Goal for the "Big Three, will populate the calendar for us. The next action is for Marc to give the Board a calendar so that we know when to expect them. Marc can send this in August.

Goal #8, staff is to design the metrics by September.

- ❖ Marc asks where we are with the parent engagement plan. Marc was posing this question to the Board about how they are going to more aggressively engage with the parents in community. We could cultivate Board members from the parent community. The Board more regularly and intentionally could lead to surfacing a potential Board member. Ellin feels as though a discussion is necessary either on the April or at the retreat in May.

This will be discussed in April and then taken to the Strategic Plan in May. We will allocate 45 minutes to an hour in April for this discussion. Ellin would also like to have a Board Education experience in April as well.

- Board recruitment discussion led by Rona – Shelli did talk to Erin Brown. She is still torn; her kids will not be at SOAR. She wants to support the FNE but not sure she was ready to commit. Shelli recommends that we leave it alone for now. We really need to gear-up right now; there is some urgency to this. Ellin will circulate the matrix for what we're looking for in Board members.

Vision for Community of Learners (Marc)

Marc reviews his alignment with how our society has become a market society and that SOAR is the battlefield for this. We are about fighting for and freeing from a market society. There is a huge tension in our country and we are battling out who is going to win. This is the last place that we still have the idea that everyone should get the same thing. SOAR is microcosm for that, for better or worse. This is from his frame or paradigm that he approaches this work.

Dan feels as though SOAR is on the leading edge for how we should do things. The opportunity of SOAR is to prove the values of democracy. These are human values where everyone can flourish.

Marc's definition for our vision is about changing the world not fitting into it.

Review from excerpts from the book, Improving Schools from Within. Marc is going to put his efforts in closing the gap between the schools are and the way he wants them to be. This is through vision. The kind of school Marc would like his children to attend, two ideas, first – the world is need of changing and there is no better place to start then at school. We will be the people the world needs. These people need the ability to critique the social order. The skills to work with others along the hard road. Second, there must be internal consistency in everything we do – kids, adults it all needs to match. Routines, habits and rituals need to match positive world changing people.

Fun needs to happen because it is part of balance.

Ellin would love to for Marc to share this material and experience with the entire board. Perhaps, this is how we do the Board's discussion for mission and vision.

11:04 Motion to adjourn Dan moved, Shelli seconds.