SOAR Charter School Board Meeting
September 12, 2014

Date, Time and Place: September 12, 2014, SOAR 4800 Telluride Street, Building 4, Denver Colorado 80249

Attendance of Board Members:

Present: Sue Sava, Rona Wilensky, Ethan Hemming (most of the meeting), Ellin Keene, Shelli Brown, William Weintraub, Rosann Ward

Present by phone: Dan Smink, Ethan Hemming (2nd half of meeting)

Absent:

Quorum? Yes

Also in attendance: Marc Waxman, Brad Fischer, Lacei Bixby, Al Fischer, Brenna Copeland, Carol Mehesy

Members of the public in attendance: Al Fischer

Meeting brought to order - Shelli moved, Rona seconds 8:50 AM

Agenda

8:45 AM Consent agenda

- Introductions

- August Minutes

  - Changing from Ellin to Rona for who called the meeting to order

- Financial packet

  - No longer reporting Oakland on the financial packet. The audit is done. Finance is all GVR. There was an update to financial policies – we added a sentence that says we’re following the DPS guidelines around our title funds.

  - FPF (financial performance framework) – this piece shows where we’re strong according the ratios that DPS looks at.

  - We met with DPS finance folks to go over fpf & they were comfortable about the area’s that weren’t green. If it was a red area, it could be explained.

  Motion to approve – William moved, Rosann seconded

8:55 AM School update

- Ellin noted that all of the updates Marc adds to the board emails are very helpful & save a lot of time.
- Competency, autonomy – Marc spoke on how he feels about his role this year.
- School updates -
  - Dashboard
  - Things to note – enrollment is 4 under projections – we are thinking we’ll be at or over enrollment by October count.
    Attendance is strong. Teacher retention is at zero – we hope to keep it that way. Very strong staff this year.
  - Suspensions – Marc told staff that there won’t be any suspensions this year, unless it’s something we can’t get around – for example, weapons. Yesterday there was a fight between 2 5th grade students & it was escalated & calmed down very quickly. Different approach to how we handle bad behaviors this year.
  - Parent educations – bullying policy & bullying approach.
  - Summer Institute Survey
  - PD
  - What is the relationship between PTO & SAC? We are keeping these separate. PTO is focused on community building/engagement. SAC is data review & strategic planning. Marc & Sue are to figure out the metrics.
    - Suggestions for improving SAC attendance:
      - handing out invitations at arrival/dismissal & eblasts.

9:05 AM TCAP/SPF Data Presentation
- Completely new DRA & PARCC testing this year.
  - Our DRA grows each year – right now we’re at the highest we’ve ever been.
- SMI – math interim assessment tool. This is aligned with common core.
- Jose Vilson – math teacher from The University of Rochester. (Possible help with test preparation.)
- We’ve changed writing so it’s much more aligned with PARCC.
- SPF ratings from the year before last, 4th grade significantly underperformed, but they had the highest DRA levels.
- Blueprint math tutoring – how did that payoff? We haven’t seen anything in data that shows if it worked or not. In terms of financial investment & what’s good for the kids, we stand by the fact that we aren’t using tutoring this year.
- Students are more confident in subjects when they build relationships with those coaching them.

(Ethan leaving, Lacie dialing in for him.)

10:00 AM Vision Process Explanation
Sue set out a timeline for us to reshape the vision and establish guiding principles

- Reviewing the Strategic planning committee report
- The old (growth) vision wasn’t appropriate to our mission.
  - Core Elements - We have a commitment to the arts & we firmly believe social/emotional learning goes hand in hand with academic instruction.
  - We want to create a planning process that is grounded in an updated vision.
  - We aspire to create guiding principles that could be meaningful for ourselves. The board is to recreate a new vision to help everyone make decisions to match the principles.

Next steps
- Oct/Nov – We want to think about what we are passionate about.
  (Sue may miss the Oct. meeting, we will start in November.)
- Dec/Jan – Essential questions
- Jan/Feb – Principles
- March/April – Mission, metrics
- May – Unveil principles
- June – Action planning (Rosann, Bill, Ellin, Marc & staff)

10:10 AM Finance Committee Debrief
- Audit
  - Both audits are done – we used to show an assigned (board put in reserves) & unassigned (allowed to roll over into future years for reserves)
  - These tie back to the SPF number that turned yellow – DPS uses unassigned to calculate that number. For audit purposes, we will start showing it this way.

Motion to approve – Dan moved, Rona seconded

- Budget Approval
  - Big changes – roll over was better than expected because we didn’t spend as much fund balance. We added a G/T consultant - $50k.
    (Marc would like to approve that line item as gifted/talent support – he wants flexibility knowing that we will get it covered under that budget.)
  - Discussion about how we’re checking who we’re looking at to fill this position.
  - We received $77k for kinder paras

Motion to approve – Rona moved, Rosann seconded

10:20 AM Board Education – SEL Continuum
- Meghan Statton in to present
4 week action plan

- SEL action team – 8 staff members. They built the continuum, relied on their own background experience, making SEL specific to our kids, we are looking at certain grade levels & making goals based around where we think they should be by the time they leave that certain grade level.
- Curriculum calendar
  - The curriculum calendar was created so teachers can focus on one competency at a time. This will change & grow over the year as we learn how the process works.
  - The calendar outlines competencies when they’re being taught. We will focus as a school in 2 weeks blocks on a specific competency.
  - One point person for each grade level – the point is from a different grade level.
  - Meghan is meeting with teachers on a regular basis, one on one to talk about students who are in need of significant SEL building.

10:40 AM Fundraising Discussion

- Rosann will send out materials to review.
- We can raise money to offset current items.
- Looking at core elements on last page – we need to talk about the SEL piece. We need to determine what the rollout will be to approach funders.
- Rosann needs help determining who is going to reach out to whom.
  - The items in blue, she doesn’t have context on these foundations. (Do we know anyone who works at these places?)
  - Once we know who we have collectively, send your info to Rosann before the October meeting.

11:00 AM Adjourn

Adjourn into Executive Session 11:00AM – Sue moved, Rosann seconded