

SOAR Charter School Board Meeting

Date, Time and Place: January 8th, 2015, 4800 Telluride St. BLDG 4, Denver, CO 80249

Attendance of Board Members:

Present: Sue Sava, Rosann Ward, Shelli Brown, William Weintraub, Rona Wilensky, Laurie Godwin, Dan Smink, Ethan Hemming

Present by phone: Claudia Gutierrez (on a field trip)

Absent: Ellin Keene

Staff absent: Lacey Martinez

Quorum? Yes

Also in attendance: Marc Waxman, Sonia Sisneros, Jessica Welch

Members of the public in attendance: Marty Caplan

Meeting brought to order – Dan moved, Rosann seconded 9:56 AM

Business Meeting - Start of business meeting was delayed because of snow and late arrivals – we needed to make sure we had a quorum. Meeting was reorganized slightly to accommodate delayed arrivals.

8:45-9:00 Coffee and pre-brief with Marc Waxman and Sue Sava.

9:00-9:30 Classroom visit

Talk in the Oval – Amanda’s kindergarten class.

9:30-9:56 Classroom de-brief

Debrief – Schema, realia, etc. There was discussion about how to teach what Amanda is doing to the “lay person” (parent, non-educator). Dan asked about videotaping her in process and using that as a training and/or marketing tool. Marc mentioned that Amanda, along with 2 other teachers have self-selected to work more with consultants and use their classrooms as lab sites. Amanda is a long-serving teacher at Soar – started her career at this school. She has bought in to Soar’s model and grown into her skills over the last few years.

There was also a suggestion to put classroom visits back on the calendar every other month since we have such energy around the visits and there are implications on a grander scale as to Board members seeing and understanding the content and process of Soar’s classrooms, content, and climate of the school (financial, empathy, resources, etc.).

Business meeting brought to order – Dan moved, Rosann seconded **9:56 AM**

There were questions regarding the threshold for which expenses need to be reviewed by Marc. He explained that outside of needing two signatures on checks over a certain amount, there isn't an official "threshold". That said, Sonia and others make sure that expenses that are approved are well within the budget. Sue also gave an example of a question from a couple of months ago about a check that they had to vet more closely that was larger than what we budgeted for. She talked about the internal controls in place.

Rosann asked if the internal controls policies are actually documented. Marc responded "yes and no". The large policies are documented, but the day to day actions are not. Dan reminded that as a Board, we have fiduciary responsibility and that clarifying the internal policies is needed, especially in this time of transition. We have institutional memory, but that won't be enough for the incoming school leaders.

Sue thanked everyone for budgeting so conservatively.

There were questions about the dashboard, specific to enrollment. Marc explained that we have had a couple of new kids because we have gotten "overflow" kids that move into the area. There was further questioning regarding "enculturating" kids into Soar. Sonia explained the process of receiving the new kids and their paperwork/ documentation. Discussions happen internally with grade level teacher about what is the best classroom fit for the new student. Some assessment is done. A classroom visit is also completed. The staff figures out what is the best first day for the new student to start based on outstanding paperwork and/ what is going on for the individual, personally, as well as in the classroom.

Motion to approve minutes: Bill Weintraub, Dan Smink seconded. Approved.

Calendar approval. Jess Welch explained the change in the school calendar from 2015-16. It changed slightly from our review last month because the Denver Public Schools calendar came out recently and Soar wanted to make sure its winter break was aligned with that of Denver Public Schools. The slight shift was related to the fact that Christmas falls on a Sunday. Note: the change in schedule from last year is that Soar will start a week earlier and include a fall break.

Motion to adopt new calendar Rona Wilensky, Bill Weintraub seconded. Approved.

Motion to adjourn business meeting and move into the Board Retreat by Rosann Ward, Ethan Hemming seconded. Meeting adjourned **10:12 am**.