

Meeting of The Odyssey School  
Board of Directors

**Wednesday, May 18, 2016**  
**4:00pm – 6:00 pm**

**In attendance:**

Christina Carlson, Marnie Cooke, Ami Desai, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Jason Fritz, Corey Goodrich, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Illana Poley, Justin Silverstein, and Jen Stefanacci. Brian Moore on the phone.

Guests attending: Celeste Archer and Kendra Padgett.

**Public Comment**

- Celeste Archer provided public comment.

**School Accountability Committee**

*The School Accountability Committee (as required under CRS 22-11-401) held a meeting on May 18, 2016 at Odyssey.*

**Executive Director Update**

- The hiring process is wrapping up
  - We are bringing in two teachers with five or more years of experience to teach literacy
  - One person is coming from a high-performing EL school; another has outdoor experience in addition to teaching experience
- Marnie is working on observations for returning teachers in service of evaluation
  - Five are complete, leaving six more to go in order to see each of the eleven returning teachers
  - Liza has worked with Marnie on explaining the evaluation tool and its nuances
  - Restorative conversations with students and families are taking place as part of the discipline process
    - These involve conversations with students, students owning their actions and taking responsibility by apologizing and identifying how it would be resolved better next time
    - Marnie is following the Odyssey discipline grid, a tool that mirrors the DPS discipline grid
      - Being clear in understanding appropriate consequences and creating consistency

- Includes calls home to share out successes and challenges of conversations
  - Within middle school in particular, this process requires building trust
  - Across the school, being consistent is important
    - Difficulties tend to happen in the “looser” parts of the day, e.g. playground, cafeteria
- The spring calendar is bursting at the seams
  - Added a kindergarten round-up for all kindergarten families beginning school next fall
    - Will have opportunities for Emily, Willa, Elki, Jackie and Marnie to meet with families
- Has held meeting with parent regarding camping concerns that were resolved successfully

### **Finance Update**

- All revenue is in as of April and expenses are tracking well. The first part of staff retention bonuses were paid out on the 15<sup>th</sup>. A letter is going out to staff explaining that bonuses are paid in two parts.
- We have a projected fund balance around \$50-\$60,000. This is down slightly from the approved budget. Drivers of that include Wes’ severance and Marnie’s compensation and general costs associated with transition.
- Next year, our revenue will mostly be from PPR. As we go into next year, on the fundraising side, the development committee has come together to develop a plan to tackle fundraising needs. The status of a renewed Kettering grant is unclear – this was \$25,000 last year. There is an expectation of the board and the ED to identify dollars to fill that cost.
- The biggest increases in expenses include staff compensation. PERA/PCOPS is going back to historical rates and 75 percent of retention bonuses will be paid out.
- The other big change includes school design costs. We have had preliminary conversations with Jon Mann. This is a result of not being an EL Mentor School.
- After working hard on the budget, we expect to have a positive operating income of about \$2,500. Once we take into account the sale and purchase of a bus, that will give us a negative fund balance of \$28,749.
  - This includes expenses approved this year that will be paid out next year. Thinking about operating costs, this really puts us at about \$15,000, which is good for a bus year.
- We had earmarked ED transition costs in this year’s budget of \$5,000 but we have nothing budgeted for next year. This was intended to be for the cost of the new leader rather than the search committee, but we may need to budget money for next year’s search.

- Marnie commented that next year we will need to spend some time thinking about sustainability. We want to attract great teachers but we need to be able to pay them a competitive wage. We're ok against other charters but probably a little behind DPS.
- Jason commented that bringing in teachers at the compensation we used to is getting harder and harder. We have to take into account the Denver economy, the cost of living/cost of housing, etc. The committee needs to work on this.
- The finance committee is also thinking about how to budget for both technology and busses. There are structural questions around budgeting for capital goods. Compensation and capital goods need to be planned for.
- The technology bond is also rolling off this year.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Justin made a motion to approve a budget for the 2016-2017 year. Jen seconded and all voted to approve.

#### **Development committee update**

- The committee held a retreat last Friday. We are proposing a move to put the auction earlier in the year. We will discuss that with the auction chairs. This will also change the annual campaign timing, beginning with Colorado Gives Day and continuing through the year.
- Christina will also attend the kindergarten roundup to introduce Odyssey fund raising opportunities.

#### **Executive Director goals process**

- Marnie will talk to us about her ideas for a process plan. This will involve short, quarterly cycle improvement planning and areas for evaluation.
- Marnie presented a school improvement process (attachment)
  - Short-cycle improvement planning is a common model at schools and other non-profits
  - It reflects best practices in short cycle improvement planning for schools.
  - Establish a Vision and Set Targets: Find out what it is we want to achieve and the measures to show we have reached that.
  - Data :Getting at a root cause. Otherwise, not addressing true challenges for which to problem solve.
  - Strategic Priorities
  - Action Plan
  - For Vision and Targets, there are two big questions. What does success look like and how will we know?

- Look at student achievement, perceptions, systems data. We have some data with which we can start digging. E.g. PARCC, data compiled by Van/Alex, etc.
  - Different types of data include adult, student and systems. E.g. observations data, understanding what types of feedback people are getting. Looking at systems – e.g. what exit tickets were collected, what about the master schedule and calendar? All focused on deep, systemic improvement.
  - Identify notable trends. Target student performance and system challenges – e.g. professional development.
- This will allow us to get to the root causes and use that strategic priority to address it.
  - E.g. establish rigorous approach to math instruction. Name specific processes – e.g. everyone shares the same vision for strong math instruction; observation/feedback would be prioritized toward that vision; train math coach; clarify math assessment and use protocols to develop efficient improvement; host parent learning nights.
- Action Plan. Odyssey has both a work plan and unified improvement plan (UIP). Work plan is through EL; UIP is state-mandated. Good news is we are doing a lot of improvement planning but we haven't really shared that with the community. This would be a good foundation from which to set goals.
- Recursive process – have a laser focus on the challenges, know what the root causes are, get clear on action strategies and priorities and how to identify and collect data.
- Timeline
  - May – Marnie and the ILT working on instructional priorities driven by data. At the same time, Liza, Ami Desai and Marnie will generate some organizational priorities for the board to look at. Could be talent management, communication, fundraising. Instruction is being well facilitated by the ILT but would like to present organizational priorities to the board.
  - June – present organizational priorities to the board. Think about what will be most important for setting priorities for the school and for Marnie. Board votes on about two organizational priorities goals that will lead to goals for Marnie.
  - July – Executive Committee would identify goals for Marnie that align with the board-approved organizational priorities. Marnie crafts action plan to match goals and priorities.
  - August. Board votes on goals and Marnie is set up for state of the school presentation in early September.
- Question: What is coming to the board in June? Will there be analysis on what those priorities should be? Marnie and team will provide a handful – maybe five or so that the board will consider. Provide the board with some space between June meetings for members to consider what is most pressing.

- Question: If we pick one or two, what happens to the other priorities?
- Question: I heard a desire for families to give input into this process. Where does that go?
- Question: Organizational priorities – how do those fit with various stakeholders? E.g. if the board has priorities of its own that are separate from the ED, where does that live? Strategic priority could have multiple touch points, key actions.
- Question: Is this the ideal timeline in general or the ideal timeline for this year? The state has schools starting in September which is awful, this is really ideal – if it happens in the summer, that gives us opportunities to be thoughtful. Where could family input live in this? Between June 8 and June 20 does not seem ideal.
  - An instructional priority could be a little different than a strategic priority but could have some crossover, or bleed into each other.
- Regarding the timeline, it could be worth moving it up a little so family council could engage. If it all moved up a month, Staff and Family councils could weigh in. This time next year, information could be presented in May so that could offer input.
- Question: How could we gather input from parents in this process – is the survey a part of that? Per Justin, with any survey, if you put it out there and don't use it, that can create challenges.
  - We should be intentional if we put that question out to parents. What data set are they using? Need to be sure that parents are using an informed lens to make that decision.
- May also want to look at the decision-making matrix. Are we looking for families' approval or providing information? This tool has been in place for a while. There is an in-between spot where we are looking for input if not approval. Use that document to determine that the ED and ILT will set the instructional priorities, then determine whose decision it is.
- Question: Does everyone agree that this is a good framework? There is a consensus of support from the board.
- Question: Who has the responsibility for setting the direction? At times in the past, we haven't had an ED in place to set the goals for the following year. In the absence of an ED, who is setting these goals? It falls to the board; maybe they bring in experts but the decisions still need to be made. This would be a good question to ask candidates – how do they move forward with goals they haven't set.
- Question: Who is the audience for the state of the school? Ideally it's families – in a perfect scenario, they would have had an opportunity to weigh in during the spring about priorities. Perhaps it could be tied to back-to-school night.
- Tie this work to the vision and mission – all stakeholders understand how the vision is implemented to achieve the vision. Possible priorities include communication, family engagement, talent management, leadership structures.

### **Board updates**

- Christina will forward a letter from Marg. She is resigning from the board.

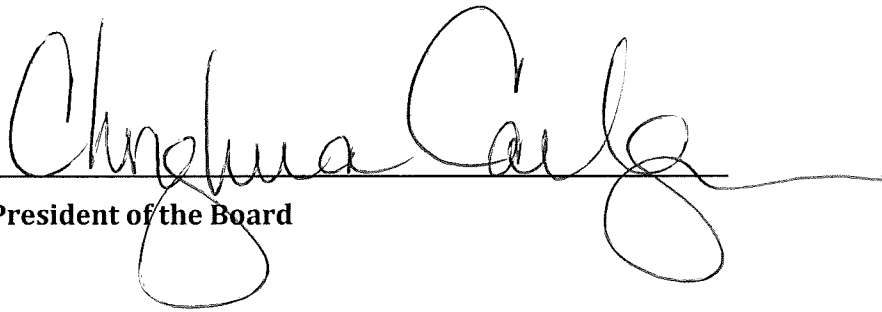
- Two individuals have indicated an interest in serving as family reps.
- An end-of-year staff/board party and 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation will be on the last day of school. There is a suggested donation of \$40 per board member.
- Upcoming board meeting dates - June 8<sup>th</sup> at Odyssey, 4 to 6pm. June 20 location TBD.

### Minutes

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jon made a motion to approve the minutes from March 21. Christine seconded. All voted to approve.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Jason made a motion to approve the minutes from April 11. Jon seconded. All voted to approve.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Jon made a motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Jason seconded and all voted to approve.

### Adjourn

- **ACTION ITEM:** Jon moved to adjourn. Ami seconded. All voted to approve.



Christine Calkins

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President of the Board

6/20/16

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Date