

**The Odyssey School  
Board of Directors Annual Retreat  
Thursday, July 24, 2014; 8:15AM**

Christina Carlson, Jason Fritz, Marcia Fulton, Chad Harman, Chris Herndon, Heather Lamm, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Justin Silverstein, Jen Stefanacci, Erin Wilhoite, Eric Williams, Illana Poley

**Location:**

Bryan Cave LLP

1700 Lincoln Street (the cash register building)

Suite 4100 (41<sup>st</sup> Floor)

Denver, CO 80203

Parking Details on second sheet of agenda

Andrew Mohraz is our host & point of contact upon arrival (thank you, Andrew!)

**Approval of the June 18, 2014 Minutes**

Justin Silverstein motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 18 meeting of the Board of Directors Erin Wilhoite seconded the motion – Motion Approved

**Approval of the July 24, 2014 Minutes**

The Board reviewed the minutes from the meeting of the Board of Directors on 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2014 and were approved prior to the Board Meeting August 20 via email.

Motion to approve Erin Wilhoite motion second Jon Liu.

**Agenda:**

- Board On-Boarding Overview - Andrew (8:45-9:00)

The purpose of the presentation is to update new board members and refresh existing board members on the board regarding governance and procedures. As part of the presentation Andrew covered best practices regarding the Transparency Act that the board is subject to.

The presentation is attached and will be posted to the school web site and stored on the Board Google Docs site.

- Board Recruitment (9:00-9:10)

We have talked with six quality candidates and as of the meeting have not moved forward with any of the candidates. There are two board positions open. The board would like one of the positions filled by someone with an education background.

Erin provided a brief summary of the candidates' backgrounds again for the board.

Marcia – We need someone who has a broad/rounded background in education, preferably progressive education. A personality that is able to challenge the status quo.

Someone with ties to the broader Denver Education community and understands policy and policy issues.

Brenda Bautsch – Brenda’s educational background goes outside what the board is looking for; however, she has a background in data, which has been identified as a need in the past. Brenda would be a true community member as she does not currently have children. Brenda has met with a community member and staff member of the board. Jon will reach out to Brenda to see if she is still interested.

Discussion on Christine DeLeon as a candidate: The consensus is Christine out of all of the candidates meets the educational background the board is seeking. As with Brenda, Christine would be a true community member without children attending Odyssey during her initial term. Marcia and Chad had met with Christine.

Heather Lamm - Motion to vote on extending an offer to Christine and Brenda motion second Jon Liu. Motion Approved

Justin will notify Greg Hessee that the board has gone with another candidate.

Erin will notify the other candidates that we have gone with another candidate.

- Round Robin: Open Discussion/White Board Session re: Goals & Priorities for 2014/2015 (9:10-9:30)

Priorities Identified are:

Who is Odyssey – This is a major initiative for the first part of the year and key for the ED search.

ED Search – Though this is a major initiative this should not consume a great amount of time from the greater board. The search committee will do most of this work.

Sustainability – This is a continuations focus for the board.

Staffing – With the change in ED position the board needs to be prepared to address any larger issues that will affect the staff and be mindful of staff engagement throughout the search process, as well as overall job satisfaction.

Financial – No major priorities that will task the full board. The finance committee will need to assess compensation against the initiative from 2012-13 as well as competitiveness, and budgeting and sustainability.

Enrollment – Retention and student mix. Are we attracting the mix of children and families that continue to add to the diversity of the school? How do we ensure we retain our families and attract new families during the upcoming ED search process year.

Community building – This is an exciting time to be at Odyssey. We need to continue fostering a framework and environment that builds on the legacy of the school. Work on establishing a community and school that builds upon Marcia’s legacy and continues to move forward. It is critical that we achieve buy-in from the community on both the Who is Odyssey and ED Search initiatives.

Calendar – Weighing of inputs and outcomes to ensure our calendar meets the needs and expectations of the whole community.

How do we offload institutional knowledge of Marcia – This will be a critical transition project throughout the year. Justin and Marcia to address within Marcia’s goals.

Charter Renewal Preparation – The Odyssey Charter renewal is a year out.

Student growth measure Senate Bill 191

Data Audit of the tools we are using

Communications 101 – Continue to assess how we are communicating critical issues, i.e. The Common Core Curriculum and Who Is Odyssey.

State of the School – This has been something the board has discussed in the past and may be something for the new ED and their introduction to the school community.

Development – Need to continue to measure the success of current programs and to identify future opportunities to secure the critical funding for the school.

Committees need to have set time to meet. Need leadership. Need to have clear objectives. We need to hold ourselves accountable.

- 2013/2014 Review: Successes, Challenges, Opportunities (9:30-10:30)
  - 2013/2014 Committees and Task Forces:
    - Exec Committee
    - Accountability
    - Finance
    - Governance
    - Communications
    - Development
    - ED Succession Planning (Task Force)

Exec Committee –

Accountability –

School Accountability Committee quarterly meeting – This committee reviews the existing accountability plan and assesses how the board and the school is tracking to our accountability measures.

Board Accountability Committee – The purpose of this committee is to analyze the existing accountability plan and revise it as needed. Additionally, this committee completes the school surveys and monitors how the school is tracking to plan.

Once the Who is Odyssey document is complete the committee will need to review and make recommendations on aligning the accountability plan with Who is Odyssey. This may become the work for a specific task force.

#### Finance –

The purpose of this committee is to monitor the schools financial accounting and track how the school is performing to projections. The financial statements being produced by Boos Financial has greatly helped in this responsibility and added to the schools financial transperence.

#### Governance –

This committee works on the by-laws and governance.

#### Communications –

Parent feedback on communication this year was positive. The updated website has been a great success.

The strong interest in sixth grade enrollment was another success of the committee. An initiative for this year could be a State of the Union address from the ED to the school community.

- Family & Staff Survey Overview (Illana)

This year's survey had good participation with over 123 total responses. Responses were also balanced across K-8 grades. The survey results presentation is attached to minutes and will be stored on the Board Google Docs site.

Overall most of the responses were positive and results of the survey detail the school is meeting the needs of the community. The data will be aligned with the accountability plan.

A question came up over anonymity. Anonymity is respected; however the board may want to review what language we provide when the survey goes out?

- 2014/2015 Planning (10:30-Noon)
  - Officer Election
    - Chair Elect
      - Nominations - Erin Wilhoite nominated Christina Carlson. Illana Poley motion to approve the nomination motion second Erin Wilhoite. Motion Approved
    - Treasurer
      - Nominations – Eric Williams nominated Jason Fritz. Motion to approve nomination Christina Carlson, motion second Justin Silverstein. Motion Approved
    - Secretary
      - Nominations – Illana Poley felt that she could take this roll on once the Who is Odyssey initiative was complete. In the interim, Erin felt that she could take this roll on for Illana. This will be tabled until the next board meeting to see if there is interest from the any other existing or new board members.

- Establish Key Priorities/Board Organization/Committees & Task Forces/Targets for Committee & Task Forces

A table of the committees, chairs and members is attached to the minutes.

- ED Search Discussion --
  - Discuss Board priorities for ED (establish requirements for ED from a Board standpoint)
  - Elect Board reps to serve the search committee
    - The Board reps are Heather Lamm, Jon Liu and Chris Herndon
  - Three Staff – Chad will send out email today let the staff know the need for three representatives.
  - One family – Need transparency in the selection. The board still needs to work on what that will look like. There has been some interest in serving on the committee but no follow up to date. An ideal representative would be from the middle school as the committee already has strong lower school representation. Justin will solicit candidates. Community first Thursday Folder.

- Lunch (Noon-12:30) – Branding & Costs Discussion

Jon Liu showed the board the new logo again. He shared the plan for the family picnic rollout of the new branding. He also shared some concepts for wrapping all 4 busses, logos on the front doors, retractable banners, stickers, and signage out front. The branding was well received by the board. The estimated cost to launch the new brand is \$6,766.00. The branding team is still reviewing some pricing. Branding was not contemplated in the approved budget. Funds can be made available though the reserve account.

Discussion: do we approve \$10,000 to allow the some flexibility for the branding group with oversight from Marcia?

Heather Lamm motion to use **up to \$10,000** from the reserve account to fund branding second Justin Silverstein. Marcia will oversee budget. Motion Approved.

Jason Fritz to follow up with Kendra Padgett on this approved unbudgeted dollar amount.

#### Development/Fundraising Breakout Session (12:30-1:30)

The session was lead by Eric Williams. The purpose of the session was to frame and provide focus for the committee on the schools development and fundraising efforts.

Annual Campaign – The annual campaign is a Board initiative. This is high leverage ask with positive results relative to the effort in putting together the campaign.

The question was asked, are we communicating effectively. Can this campaign be upped?

Adventure Campaign – This is a steady funding source. Multiple approaches have been pursued with the same results; however, this continues to be a good funding sousee for the school. May consider increasing the ask per child.

Auction – This is a community building event. The consensus is there are improvements that can be made. The focus needs to be on a fun party for the community. This is a time to come together and a great opportunity to raise money for the school. Need to draw a larger portion of the school community.

Grant – This is a challenging sousee of funding. The application process requires a great deal of the ED and staff resources. Need to be mind full of unintended consequences of certain grants, grant with strings. Grants can be a large source of funding; however, success rates are typically low.

- Who Is Odyssey Session – led by Maro Zagoras (1:30-3:30)

Maro's roll is that of a third part natural to keep conversations on task and on time.

Maro will present information on the process for this work and discuss who are the discussion makers

Collaborative Needs: Psychological, Procedural, Substantive. If these needs are address the process will be more collaborative.

Who and How

Vehicle for this process: everybody in the room for community meetings and separate students' forum just for students

Constituencies for this process:

Parents, Staff, Board Accountability Committee and student middle school 6-8 grades

The task force wanted at least 1 meeting away from the school.

Present Vision , Mission, Core Values:check for fatal flaws and blocks

Shared on Google docs

Vision – what you want to see in the future

Mission – what you do, what vehicles you use to achieve your Vision

Core Values – When we make decisions, what we value

“Special Sauce” – what makes Odyssey so unique and a model EL school

Need to put something up for people to react.

- ED Transition Training – led by Maro Zagoras (3:30-4:30)

Maro lead a discussion on change within organization and gave the board ideas on how to manage change for the community as the school transition from Marcia to a new ED.

Change management –

Ask others how do they perceive change, handle change. Do they perceive it as a danger or an opportunity.

Ending Stage

Have to end before you begin  
Between ending and beginning there is a gap  
Transition can be creative, developmental and source of renewal

People go through transition at different speeds.

Most organizations run a transition deficit. To avoid this:

Identify what you are losing  
Accepting reality of loss

Openly acknowledge losses  
Expect and accept sadness  
Mark the ending as a team ceremony/conscious  
Treat past with respect

Define what is over and determine what employees should and should not work on.

Communicate this. Let people know that this is a natural process.

Map out strategic initiatives for constituencies for the next year

Celebrate Marcia leaving before the end of the year to provide closure

What are we communicating before the start of the year?

Continue to feed to the communication loop.

There should be a letter from Marcia.

- Extra Time/Close – (4:30-5:00PM)
  - Allowing a bit of extra time in case any portion of the agenda runs a bit long.  
We will have everyone on their way no later than 5:00PM!

Date to remember:

August Board meeting the 20<sup>th</sup> of August.

School Potluck August 14

Staff Potluck August 15

Approved on 31st day of August 2014 by:

  
Justin Silverstein  
Board Chair