

Minutes of The Odyssey School
Board of Directors

June, 2015

No June meeting was held due to lack of items on the agenda. However, several items developed during late May and June that required board action prior to the regularly scheduled board retreat in August. Electronic discussions were held on the following topics.

Marcia's bonus

Andrew made a motion via email to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee. Illana seconded. All voting members approved. (Christina Carlson, Christine DeLeon, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Jason Fritz, Chris Herndon, Heather Lamm, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Illana Poley, Justin Silverstein, Jen Stefanacci, Erin Wilhoite, Eric Williams.)

May minutes

May minutes were approved with the following email:

Attached are minutes from our May board meeting. We need these to be approved in order to include them with our charter renewal documentation.

Please respond to me with your vote to approve minutes by tomorrow (Monday 6/22) at midnight.

The first affirmative vote I receive will be considered a motion and the next will be considered a second.

Justin motioned to approve the May minutes and Eric seconded. 14 voting members approved. (Christina Carlson, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Jason Fritz, Corey Goodrich, Chad Harman, Chris Herndon, Heather Lamm, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Illana Poley, Justin Silverstein, Jen Stefanacci, Erin Wilhoite, Eric Williams.)

Calendar change

During June, Odyssey staff learned that the EL national conference will be held on the same days as student-led conferences. Marcia asked the Executive Committee to consider revising the calendar in order to allow several staff to attend the national conference. This would entail moving student-led conferences to October 19th and 20th and moving fall break to October 29th and 30th.

Several staff could miss conferences in order to attend the EL conference, including Wes and a few teachers. Two teachers have slots provided by EL for the conference, and Jon has been nominated for teacher of the year – an award he would receive at the national conference.

A summary of the electronic discussion through email follows:

Understanding that some families may already have travel plans during the previously scheduled fall break, Wes and teachers will work with any families that need to reschedule conferences.

Discussion:

- This does not seem to be a good enough reason to change the calendar. It might be only one teacher who would need to reschedule conferences.
- This is a significant change with quite a few implications. Could only one teacher go? Could the instructional coach go as a way to lessen the impact on conferences and avoid a change that would impact families?
- This is a minor change, given that students are scheduled to be out of school on the same days. Put simply, this would swap the scheduled fall break days for the conference days so student contact days wouldn't change.
- This supports our goal of sustainability by allowing teachers to attend important professional development without needing to reschedule conferences.
- Is the proposal coming from the leadership team or the executive committee or both?
- Marcia brought the proposal to the Executive Committee with input from the ILT.
- Having a strong presence at the EL conference is especially important this year with a new ED. By making the change in June, we can minimize the impact to families. Even with one teacher gone, that means rescheduling conferences for 26 families.
- We may be talking about more than one teacher who would need to reschedule conferences. And it seems important for Wes to be at both – the EL conference AND conferences. We should be clear to teachers that they will need to accommodate any families who had already made fall-break plans.
- Do we know how many teachers we would be talking about? Does changing the calendar really benefit kids?
- Even if only one teacher is at the EL conference, 26 families would need to reschedule student conferences and that teacher would have the added burden of at least 13 hours of additional conference time. The goal was for this change to be a win-win, allowing all families access to student conferences and eliminating the burden of rescheduling conferences for any teacher that does attend EL.
- The precedent of reopening the calendar at this date is concerning, along with the impact to any families that had already made plans for fall break. But the impact of having one or more teachers miss conferences is more severe. And it's important for our new ED to be at the EL national conference.
- We also need to understand the funding that is used for the EL conference.
- Liza provided follow-up information. Several teachers are interested in attending the EL conference. The EL conference is expertly run and a huge shot in the arm for anyone who attends. We aren't supporting teachers as professionals if we ask them to choose between the EL conference and their own students' conferences. And we want Wes to attend both.
- Why is this just now coming to the board's attention? Was it our oversight or EL?
- What are the benefits of the EL conference? Are there specific outcomes we can point to? If this is an important PD opportunity, we should name that. Let's be specific and thoughtful about the purpose of and outcomes for the EL conference. There are budget and, this year, calendar implications for our teachers to participate in the conference.
- The EL conference is at different times in different years. In the coming year, it will be in October. Staff did not think to check the EL conference dates when scheduling conferences.

- Some additional clarification on the EL conference:
 - Odyssey has four free slots to the National Conference as a mentor school.
 - Historically, the only way we were able to afford the conference was to get teachers in as presenters.
 - Six teachers have expressed interest in attending the conference, including Liza.
 - If teachers present, that is one of eight workshops they attend as learners.
 - We have \$7,000 in our budget for Travel and Registration.
 - If we used all four spots, it would run us around \$3K. This would leave Wes with \$4K to spend on other PD.
- A few benefits of the EL conference:
 - Over the past two years, we shifted our entire math approach due to a workshop we attended two years ago. We got funding from the District to bring in the exact PD we got a taste of at the National Conference. Our math teachers have a deeper understanding of the math concepts and they are all working toward a more personalized approach to learning due to this initial experience.
 - We have also become a leader in student-engaged assessment practices. This was started due to our learning at the National Conference.
 - Mentor EL schools meet twice a year, in the summer and during the National Conference. Prior to Common Core State Standards being adopted, EL brought writers of these standards to our mentor meetings to prepare us for the shifts. This has been the topic of conversation for a few years as mentor schools. Many of the Master classes also have the implementation of CCSS as a theme.
 - When Odyssey kids were the keynote speakers of the National Conference in Denver, the theme of the conference was all about Citizen Scholars. That year, we pushed hard on revamping expeditions and have continued to refine them each year. It was also the year that helped us all understand the power behind our Habits of a Learner. We got pushed to strengthen our practices not only by presenting, but also by the classes that challenged our thinking.
 - When teachers register, they pick courses that are aligned to their needs. The quality is very good.

Illana motioned to approve the calendar change, swapping the dates for fall student-led conferences and the fall break. Erin seconded.

Thirteen members voted to approve the motion (Christina Carlson, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Jason Fritz, Corey Goodrich, Chad Harman, Chris Herndon, Heather Lamm, Andrew Mohraz, Illana Poley, Justin Silverstein, Jen Stefanacci, Erin Wilhoite, Eric Williams).



President of the Board

8/4/15

Date