

Minutes of The Odyssey School
Board of Directors

Board Retreat
August 3, 2015
1245 Champa St.
Denver, CO

August 3, 2015

A retreat for the Board of Directors was held on Monday, August 3.

Attendance: Christina Carlson, Christine DeLeon, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Wes Frakes, Jason Fritz, Chad Harman, Heather Lamm, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Illana Poley, Justin Silverstein, Jen Stefanacci.

Introductions and setting the stage

Christina Carlson, incoming chair of the board, welcomed board members to the retreat. She asked board members to identify proud accomplishments of the board over the last year, hopes for the upcoming year and dreams for the future.

Urban expedition

Wes Frakes, the new Executive Director, asked board members to meet together in pairs to discuss questions about our roles as board members and general topics to help get to know each other in better and different ways.

Officer elections

Justin will begin serving in his role as past chair (last year of a three-year cycle). Christina will begin serving as the chair (middle of a three-year cycle).

Jason has volunteered to serve as treasurer for another year. Illana made a motion that Jason be approved as treasurer; Justin seconded. All voted to approve.

Brenda has an interest in serving as secretary, but given that she is expecting a baby in the next month, this is not the best time to begin that role. She will consider taking over this responsibility in the middle of this year or will serve in that capacity in the next year. Illana is willing to serve again as secretary through part or all of this upcoming year. Jason made a motion that Illana be approved as secretary for the upcoming year; Christina seconded. All voted to approve.

Andrew is interested in serving as the chair-elect. Heather made a motion that Andrew be approved as chair-elect, beginning a three-year term; Christina seconded. All voted to approve.

Charter renewal

Odyssey submitted its charter renewal packet to DPS prior to the June 30 deadline. DPS will conduct two visits, including the September board meeting and a half-day visit in September. We should consider inviting DPS board members to visit Odyssey prior to the DPS board vote on

Odyssey's charter renewal. We should also consider inviting families to attend the DPS board meeting when the vote will occur.

Board business

Governance policy. The policy was first adopted in 2005. It is very detailed and outlines who is involved in various decision-making processes. The policy has been in a process of revision for the last 18 months. Family Council took the lead in revising the policy, as they are involved in many of those decisions. The Executive Committee will review the document closely with Wes before bringing the policy to the full board for a vote in October.

Personnel policy. This was rewritten in January, 2015. It will also be up for approval in October.

Financial policy. Illana motioned to approve this policy; Heather seconded. All voted to approve.

June minutes. Heather motioned to approve; Justin seconded. All voted to approve.

Finance update. We anticipate a \$20K positive fund balance adjustment for 2014-15. This is money that DPS does not have to pay for PERA credit that we anticipated receiving over two years, 14-15 and 15-16 but received the entire credit in 14-15. We had thought we could not use the capital expenditure dollars for rent because we are in a DPS facility. This is about a \$4,000 difference, meaning that we now have to spend or return \$4,000. We expect to receive about \$40 per student less in PPR than we had anticipated. This means that we are getting more than last year but less than what we thought. At the next board meeting, will look at the budget more closely.

Executive Director update. Wes is nervous about the hallways returning to normal after construction and repairs. Air conditioning and classrooms are in fine-to-good condition. The library and conference room are not in good shape and the hallway to the cafeteria is in terrible shape. Wes is in frequent contact with DPS and the construction team to remedy these concerns prior to the first day of school.

Parent survey. Jen presented the results of the parent survey conducted at the end of the 2014-15 year. She will send the results electronically.

Board recruitment. Two candidates, Marg and Ami, are interested in joining the board. Both have met with parent members of the board and are in the process of meeting with staff members. Ami brings a strong background in school management. Marg has experience in nonprofit fundraising as well as extensive project management experience. These are inline with the needs we identified for new board members. Christina will send out additional information to the full board with background about both candidates (resumes and/or nomination forms). Both will also meet with staff members. If staff members agree that they should be put up before a vote, this will occur electronically in order to expedite their ability to join the board.

An electronic vote was held on September 8th to approve both new members. Illana motioned to approve both Ami Desai and Marg Collins as new board members. Corey seconded and the following members voted to approve: Christina, Jon, Jen, Chad, Andrew, Brenda, Jason, Christine, Corey, Illana, Heather, Justin, Brian. There were no dissenting votes.

Roll of the board. It is important that the board have an active and visible presence at Odyssey, not just in student’s crews but also at school-wide functions and important events. A list of events throughout the year includes:

- New parent orientation
- School potluck
- Family council
- Board staff potluck
- Community Circle
- DPS vote on charter renewal
- Colorado Gives Day – December 8th
- High donor appreciation event
- Auction
- PE talent show

For board members who are also parents, it is important to remember that we wear two hats and need to be conscientious of how we are being perceived in interactions with other families and staff.

Task Forces

In addition to standing committees, we need to determine what, if any, task forces should be charged with specific roles in the coming year. This year we need to focus on the transition and integration of a new Executive Direction – this responsibility should live with the Executive Committee. We also need to update the succession plan. The charter renewal process is well under way but the task force should continue into this year to ensure the process is successful.

Committees

The following standing committees will continue this year, with goals and members as noted.

Executive

Christina – Chair

Justin – Past Chair

Andrew – Chair-Elect

Jason – Treasurer

Illana – Secretary

Goals: Staffing issues, oversight, hire or fire Executive Director, oversight of other committees, set tone of the board, board recruitment, hire/fire ED, triage.

Finance

Jason - Chair

Justin

Christina

Brian

Heather

Goals: Monitor school budget, approve extra expenses, forecast budgets, review/approve audit, recommend auditor and oversee accountant.

Development

Christine - Chair

Jason

Jon

Christina

Corey

Goals: Fundraising, donor management, auction, annual campaign, adventure campaign, longer-term planning.

Communications

Jen - Chair

Jon

Chad

Illana

Goals: Messaging, craft communications framework, identify external messengers and materials where needed, opportunities for visibility, outreach, and engagement. Crisis communications, work with family council. Do alumni relations and community engagement also belong with this committee?

Accountability

Brenda - Chair

Jen

Christine

Justin

Goals: Update and approve accountability plan; determine if we have the right metrics and tools to track the right data; create easy to use dashboards for Executive Director, teachers and board.

Governance

Justin - Chair

Chad

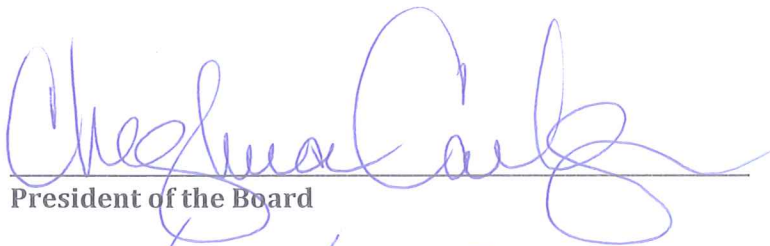
Jon

Brenda

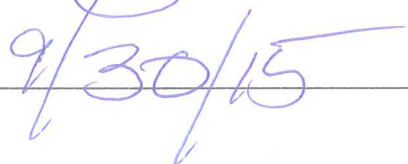
Illana

Andrew

Goals: Sound policies, compliance, inclusion, living documents (Google Drive); resolve question about state-mandated school accountability committee.



President of the Board



Date

