

Meeting of The Odyssey School
Board of Directors

Wednesday, November 18, 2015
4:00pm – 6:00 pm

In attendance:

Christina Carlson, Brenda Bautsch Dickhoner, Jason Fritz, Wes Frakes, Corey Goodrich, Heather Lamm, Jon Liu, Andrew Mohraz, Brian Moore, Illana Poley, Christine DeLeon on the phone.

Minutes

- Heather made a motion to approve the October minutes pending a revision that is mutually agreeable to Illana and Jen; Andrew seconded. Jon abstained; all others voted to approve.

Financials

- Started this year with a projected \$30K surplus. We are currently at about a 1.5 percent variance to budget. We are very reliant on fundraising – therefore if we have significant adjustments (e.g. this year to PPR) or change in fundraising, we can use up that surplus quickly.
- This year PPR adjusted down. It was projected to be \$7,633 but is now \$7,593 per student. In total, we are about \$13,000 total down. We did have a little extra come through the site seminar (summer math program).
- Last year the state approved adjustments to PERA including a look back - this gave us about \$14,000 in adjustments to positive.
- Finance piece – capital budget. When we built the budget, we assumed that the capital improvements would have to be spent or returned back to the state. After budget approval, we received guidance that those dollars could be used to pay for rent.
- The surplus has now grown by about \$50K to \$80K. It should remain there unless there are unforeseen changes.
- We officially received a large grant from the Kettering Foundation, a \$25,000 one-time grant. We are asking members of their board to visit the school. We will consider pursuing additional funding in future years. (This was already included in the budget to call out the kindergarten expenditure as a needed fundraising component.)

Accountability committee

- The board met as the School Accountability Committee to discuss student achievement data.
- Statewide PARCC data was released; we anticipate school-level data will be released sometime in December.
- Statewide scores have been reported as terrible. This has as much to do with a change in the standards themselves as it does a change in student performance. For example, standards in middle school math moved ahead by one full year.

- It is important to be thoughtful about how we communicate the results to parents. We need to be conscious of education jargon.

Enrollment update

- We are fully enrolled with one student above our budgeted amount.
- At our next SAC meeting, it would be good to have an update on current and projected enrollment.

Charter renewal

- We've had no current update from DPS. We will confirm a date of the DPS board meeting where the charter will be formally approved.
- This concluded the meeting of the school accountability committee.

Governance decision-making policy

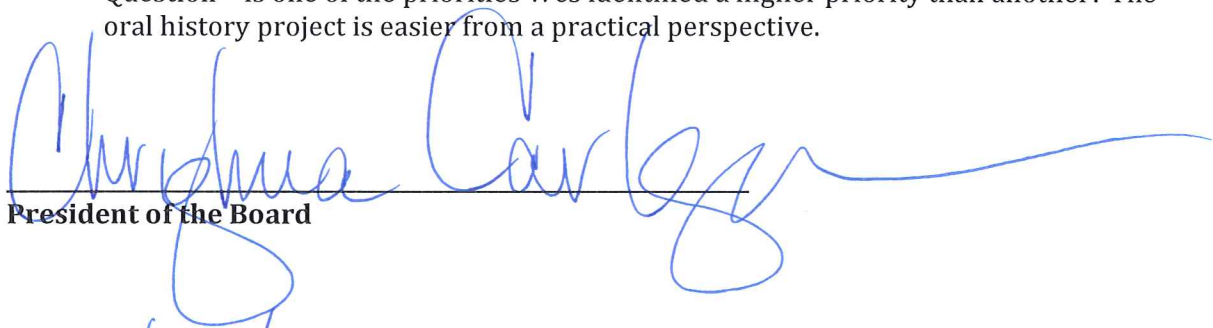
- Jason moved to approve the policy as it was presented in October; Illana seconded. All approved.
{This policy is attached to the end of these minutes.}

Wes' update

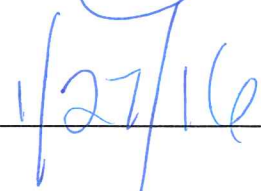
- Wes was directed by the Executive Committee to provide an overview of his first three months at the school for the November board meeting (100 day update).
- Presentation:
 - One advantage of having someone new in the building is that person has no background perspective and can offer fresh eyes.
 - Odyssey has many strengths to celebrate.
 - Intentionality – how did Wes enter the community?
 - Listening – staff retreat, one-on-ones with staff, conversations about teaching techniques (pedagogy); coffees with parents; students.
 - Principal learner – learning about EL, paying attention to the culture and the things we value; how we spend our time; Site Seminar; National Conference.
 - Jon's acceptance of the Klingenstein award; strong conference for real learning.
 - Mentors – EL senior leadership, board Exec Committee, Gretchen and Marnie as additional connections.
 - Mindsets – the way we filter our learning; our central to how we approach teaching and character education.
 - At Odyssey, we believe that we can teach mindsets – we can teach how we filter our learning.
 - E.g. "growth mindset" – people can develop ability through dedication and hard work.
 - Odyssey's academic mindsets:
 - I belong to this academic community;

- My ability to improve is proportionate to my effort (growth mindset; my effort matters);
- The work I'm asked to do has meaning to me;
- Success is possible.
- Can be challenging to name our special status or name what we are asking students to do.
- More learning: we play in the rain; students are working hard on Habits of a Learner; parents want to be involved (may not know how); Partners in Literacy and reading buddies; Denver's choice process; navigating the district.
- There are many things to celebrate that are working well around Odyssey:
 - Strong roots with EL – the cornerstone of Odyssey – if we removed that, we could not function as the same school. Resources, opportunities (e.g. math PD).
 - Strong school culture (school rituals, close friendships, Marcia left Odyssey in a great place).
 - Strong thinking about evaluation systems
 - What teaching moves matter – e.g. what does it mean to plan for student benefit, culture, instructional moves. Rubric of criteria for teaching that Marcia worked with staff to create – piloted in 2012-13.
 - Staff accountability – hold each other to social norms, professional focus, outcomes.
 - Adventure program – character, habits (revision, responsibility) come alive in outside experiences.
 - Front office staff.
 - Platooning – an innovative approach.
 - On-site coaching.
- Things to attend to
 - Capturing oral history
 - Adventure program, family council.
 - Difficult to understand common ideas, e.g. historical achievements or ongoing challenges
 - E.g. bullying at last school – heard that this was an issue but through formalized conversations, determined that there was a fear of bullying instead of actual bullying and therefore could address the underlying fear.
 - For action planning to happen, it needs to resonate with the actual need.
 - I'm taking guesses as to what the local sacred cows are – e.g. community circle; math.
 - Informal conversations feels like a shaky way to make school plans.
 - Not about asking to confirm or deny specific topics but instead, open up conversations to identify topics independently.

- Comment – would love for students to be involved in these conversations.
 - Student conversations happened during the Visioning process.
- Rigor in service of student achievement
 - 2nd and 8th reading and 6th math – STAR data shows weakness.
 - Figuring out coaching time; measures for kids to figure out how they are performing.
 - Making a commitment to report what progress we are making.
- Assessment and data to build mastery
 - Definitions of terms like accomplished are consistent across grades, teachers, parents;
 - Best, first instruction is really strong, which means that a need for interventions is less
 - Differentiation – create a different pathway to access the same teaching;
 - Odyssey work plan already centered around data; create common assessments.
- Financial considerations of concerns identified above
 - Strategically capturing our historical strengths and challenges...
 - Data warehouse, data dashboard involve one-time and ongoing costs.
- Question – heard from other schools that hiring cycle is moving up (e.g. posting positions in January) – consider posting some positions without knowing for sure if positions are opening. Important that, especially in a transition year, teachers understand that this is in response to other schools moving up their own timelines, not a response to internal actions.
- Question – is one of the priorities Wes identified a higher priority than another? The oral history project is easier from a practical perspective.



President of the Board



Date