

## Board meeting Notes 8.2.2011

Attendees: Vivian Gibson, Ray Thorpe, Pat Shipley, Byron Francis, Alex Schoch, Margaret Wilson

Absent: Sue Cejka, Steve Novik, Jim Brigham, Tom Grote

Guests: Dawn Finley

Staff: Stella Erondy, John Grote, Ross Woolsey

1. A decision was made to hold off on a vote on the election to the Board of Margaret Wilson until all attending Board members arrived. Once Board members did arrive, the Board voted unanimously to ask Dr. Wilson to join the Board.
2. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the prior meeting and was approved unanimously.
3. Executive Director Grote gave the President's Report:
  - a. A review of the enrollment situation was given, including numbers, and demographic factors, such as zip codes, gender, students requiring transportation, etc.
  - b. He reviewed of classroom assignments on campus, and where each of the grade sections were to be held.
  - c. Teachers were in place and finishing their orientation process. They report on the 15th, and begin on the first day of school, Aug, 17.
  - d. Summer School was reviewed and we reported an 83% Average Daily Attendance.
  - e. ED Grote reported that our summer expenses had been higher than the prior year, due almost entirely to the growing size of the school.
4. The UMSL report was discussed. The Board asked if an action plan need be developed in cooperation with UMSL, based on the earlier Board request that ED Grote respond to the UMSL report.

Board member Wilson asked, "What constitutes the 'moderate success' that was referred to in the UMSL report?"

Dawn Finley, the UMSL charter liaison, responded that the report was a review designed to give feedback to the school. It was not a mandate. Rather, the report seeks the school to ask itself, "What is important' and 'how are we going to address it?'

Answers to those questions would be played out in ED Grote's action plan.

5. The Financial Report that had been delivered to Board Members earlier was discussed. There were no questions.
6. ED Grote discussed the ITBS test results that were received during the summer from the assessment testing done in the spring. He indicated his disappointment in our progress toward our third year goal of 75% grade level proficiency.

He indicated at the very least NSCS must achieve nine month progress every school year. Both he and Stella indicated this is an ambitious goal given the grade level status of our incoming students. Ambitious, but achievable, he stressed to the Board. He further stated that he felt the administrative academic team had not been active enough in working with our teachers during the past year.

Some other reasons for the results:

- a. We may need to somewhat revise our curriculum. We will NOT teach to the test, but Principal Erundu and ED Grote are reviewing the curriculum to insure what we are teaching is appropriate for our students.
- b. ED Grote indicated a need to strengthen our classroom supervision. More observation and training for our teachers will be done.
- c. Our internal testing and assessment proved not to be a good predictor of the ITBS results, indicating we need to review our own internal testing procedures. They may not have told our teachers enough.

How are we going to address this? Primarily, there will be more education leadership in the classroom.

- a. ED Grote will insure a far more active role by the principal. Since Principal Erundu will no longer be teaching, this will allow for greater observation and training and additional one on one work with all our teaching staff.
- a. Anne Miller, our Early Childhood education coordinator, will oversee a six week training and observation period for all teachers, primarily focusing on our newer teachers.

To sum up, ED Grote indicated he felt our problem was fundamentally one of execution not policy, and it is to that direction we are going to focus our efforts.

Board Member Wilson made the observation that we should not overlook the role that psychosocial causes may play in all this. As the children we serve age, are the families doing their part to shoulder some of the responsibility that the school is assuming? Do we need to educate the caregiver as well?

Board Member Schoch commented that there may be a disconnect between the testing instrument and the way the teachers understand the testing instrument.

Board Member Gibson stressed that her extensive experience in dealing with the exact population which we serve absolutely requires parental support. That must be something we work on diligently at the same time we look internally at testing instruments, training, etc.

The Board stressed that we must update the Board regularly on student performance. That is, how is the year progressing, how is our training going, how are the students responding, etc.

7. We reported to the Board on the progress of the Pre-K program, including enrollment numbers, space provided, and team teaching elements. Once again, we reviewed the childcare subsidy and fund-raising objectives to insure program

## Board meeting Notes 8.2.2011

sustainability independent of our K-5 school.

8. Board Member Schoch asked what was being done for summer maintenance of the buses. ED Grote indicated that all buses had made it through Summer School without problems and with an on-site maintenance expert, we have every indication that our buses are in reasonable shape to begin the fall.

9. Board Elections were held, with Board Member Francis being elected President. The elections of a new Vice-President and Secretary were tabled until the September meeting.

10. Board Member Tom Grote has been working on straightening out the terms of the individual members so that there is more continuity as to when terms run out and will report back to the Board the results of his review.

11. The Board thanked and gratefully appreciates the gift of the decorative "Butterfly" donated by Board Member Schoch. The piece has been strategically placed in our main building, the Activity Center, in the Multi-Purpose room, so that every visitor to the school can see the unique beauty of this special gift.

12. The Board and the entire staff of the School wishes to thank retiring President Thorpe for his unstinting constant hard work and willingness to take on tasks that were not always pleasant and/or easy. He never failed to do so with calmness and a gentle smile that has always stood the school in good stead.

So, to President Thorpe: A great thank-you from us all.