

## Minutes of Conservatory lab Charter School Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 20, 2016 – 4:30p.m.

2120 Dorchester Ave., Dorchester

Present: Lisa Wong, Mark Churchill, Melanie Sheffield, Gary Gut, Anne, Snyder, Bob Grinberg, Stephanie, Perrin, Myriah, Johnson, Kitty Pell, Marth Kleinman, Brad Richardson, Danna Mauch, Bethany Ford, Erika Sanchez, Maisha Douvon Cover

Staff: Linda Nathan (ED of CAS), Nicole, Mack, John Chistolini, Josue Gonzalez, Chris Schroeder, Carmen Torres, Dana Reder, Bea Abascal, Seth Racine, Cecilia Soriano Christian Battista, Kriti Jain

Parents: Brad Mahoney

Gary called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. He began by asking everyone to go around the table and introduce themselves. Two new members of the Parent organization were introduced: Bethany Ford and Erika Sanchez.

1. Public Comment: Brad Mahoney, father of two students in the school, his family's 4<sup>th</sup> year at the school spoke. He feels that so far there has been a positive dramatic change in the school from last year. Certainly feels like the warm, welcoming place that they want the school to feel like. The Potluck for families last Friday was very upbeat and positive and he wants the school to keep going in that direction. He feels that the new facility in Dorchester is significantly better and he knows a lot of other parents that feel this same way. He stated again for the record, that 2 sites in 2 distinctly different parts of the city created a difficult dynamic that was not healthy.
2. Educator Comments: Highlight presented by Stephen Sun, a Harvard graduate in Architecture, a Teaching Assistant to Linda last year at Harvard and a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teaching assistant with the school this year. His presentation aided by visuals contrasted teachers with architects. Teachers use words to guide behavior. Architects use space & design to guide behavior.
3. School Report: Presented by Nicole Mack, Principal and John Chistolini, Chief Operating Officer.

John: All renovations at 133 Hancock are complete, the landscaping is complete, the playground is in and complete. Today was the 1<sup>st</sup> day that it was open. Several neighbors to that site have come to John to say how pleased they are that the school has moved there and that it is making the neighborhood more livable.

Attendance for last 3 weeks has been at 95%. Outreach is made every day to each student who is absent. Enrollment is at 447 students. It has been a challenge to maintain this number since 58 of those that signed in May that they intended to return, did not. There were a variety of reasons for this: 14 students with IEPs left the school because it does not have the special services which they require. 30 of the students admitted to the lower school changed their minds due to the move of the school from Brighton to Dorchester and the others moved because of their personal relocations. Although there are many names on the waitlist, the wait lists for grades 5, 6, 7 & 8 have been exhausted. Outreach has been made thru social media, word of mouth and sending flyers to the Boys and Girls clubs.

It was requested that in the future, we need to keep a framework to provide a basis of comparison for each year's enrollment. Numbers should be compared with other charter schools.

Nicole: We began two weeks before school began with the entire new team. We are concentrating in the Whole Brain Teaching approach to engaging students. It provides a continuum of development. During this PD the focus was on those areas that will impact all staff. With our instructional team, we have more staffing that most schools, that is because we are working on co-teaching. Lots of work is needed. It is done during common planning time and during Professional Development on Wednesday afternoons. We have split each class so that each adult in the classroom works with a smaller group. We are implementing universal assessments for each grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade in math and reading. We have no background data on students, we have no written knowledge of what each student knows.

On curriculum Night which is coming up in early October, each parent will receive a STAR report, a progress report, a work completion report, a listing of the crew qualities. We will describe Teacher Ease, which an Online Platform to be utilized by the entire team working with a given student. This instrument also has a family portal to give families access with post links for resources which they can use at home, eg. math resources.

Challenges –There are differences in experience levels of the staff. There is a greater number of younger teachers at the lower school. We need to work on differentiation – there is often a bandwidth of five different levels in one classroom. There is a lot of cohesion between the members of the administration team.

Josue: Our biggest challenge has been the need to accommodate to the large number of new students coming in to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades who have had no prior music

experience. And also with returning students we have seen “summer loss” where music knowledge that they had acquired last year has been forgotten. We have also had some staff changes in that 6 music staff who were new and part-time last year are now fulltime. Jeremy Groover, who teaches musicianship, is working with smaller groups with the sections who are really focusing on notations and reading.

Nicole: the music and academic curriculum has begun to really interrelate. The Curriculum Development work is going deeper into that marriage, eg. make connections between math fractions and music notations. The old practices such as Fountas and Pinnell are continuing, our work now is in tightening up everything and filling in the gaps.

4. Update on the Center: Linda reported on wanting to codify el Sistema. On Oct 5th there will be a mini workshop on el Sistema form 3 National Research Projects that the school has taken part in. Speakers will be Larry Scripp, Principals from Wolf Brown and Ellen Winner. Linda invited everyone to view the Center’s website.
5. Vote: to approve the minutes from 6/16/16 and 7/14/16 meeting. Kitty Pell moved to approve, Martha Kleinman seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
6. Review of Administrative Work Plan: Seth gave an overview of the work plan sent out in the Board Packet.
7. Chairman’s Report: Gary Gut
  - Discussion and vote to approve Board Goals for 2016-2017 – Need to add the attainment of \$500,000 as a Fundraising Goal for the Board, since it properly belongs as a Board responsibility. Building and developing an effective Board is the most strategic tool for success that an organization has. The Governance Committee is key to helping the board as a whole to build this strength.
  - Motion was made to approve the Board Goals for 2016-2017 as set forth in the document sent forth to the Board with the addition of: a. the \$500,000 development goal for this year and b. the following additional clause: "To identify and cultivate new Trustees who represent the school's future needs, culture and make-up." Kitty Pell made the motion and Martha Kleinman seconded the motion. It received unanimous approval.
  - Approval of recommendation to the Center (CAS) for Executive Director Goals for 2016-2017. Gary made note to say that this CLCS Board does

NOT set the goals for Linda Nathan, Executive Director of the Center, but rather that we should recommend to the CAS Board what these should be. Motion was made to approve a recommendation of the Executive Director's Goals for 2016-2017. Anne Snyder made the motion, it was seconded and unanimously approved.

- Discussion and vote on proposed By-Law revisions. Gary made note that DESE has made us pay stricter attention to the Compliance requirements. The motivations for the update are: Nicole and John report to the Board now; telephonic participation at meetings can be allowed if a quorum of the body is present, including the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person authorized to chair the meeting as required by [M.G.L. c. 30A, sec 20\(d\)](#); more representation of Parent Body with staggered terms. It needs to be clarified when these new bylaws go into effect. Clarification is also needed as to how these rules apply to officers. Gary said: Beginning now 1. Officer does not have to be a trustee and 2. Being an Officer is for a 1 year term. Discussion ensued as to what is in the By-laws and what certain parts mean. Linda wanted it on the record, that she cannot say to Parents that are on the Board that they cannot vote. She feels it is counter to the democratic process to her. Discussion ensued as to the different roles of representation and of governance on a Board, not all are the same. A motion was made by Martha Kleinman to postpone the vote on the new by-laws to the next Board Meeting. Brad Richardson, seconded that motion and it was carried unanimously.
- Presentation of shared description of entities – CLCS, CAS and the Foundation. This description is to be used for requests from the media or as an “elevator speech” to be used as necessary.

8. Joint Strategic Planning Committee Report: Martha Kleinman & Lisa Wong  
The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of this committee was held on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>. There are 11 members of the committee: Martha Kleinman, Lisa Wong, Linda Nathan (ED of CAS), Gary Gut, Stephanie Perrin, Danna Mauch, Myriah Johnson, Cecilia Soriano, Seth Racine. Three Consulting Firms have presented proposals. Each is different and with different lengths of time to accomplish the work: Wolf Brown would take 6 months; Bellweather would take 4 months and TDC would take 9 to 12 months. Also each has a very different budget. Lisa has prepared a rubric by which members of the committee can evaluate each consulting firm, score them and return the rubrics to Martha and Lisa by Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Committee will meet again as a whole on October 6<sup>th</sup> to review the rubrics and prepare a recommendation to make to the Board at the October 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Kitty suggested that as part of the strategic planning process, it is important to get a common language among the three entities and an agreement on the goals of all three.

9. Governance Committee Report: Stephanie Perrin

The committee proposed the names of two people to be invited onto the Conservatory Lab Charter School Board. They are: Maisha Douvon Cover and Kay Sloan. Maisha was in attendance at the meeting and she was asked to step out for a few minutes as her name was presented and the vote was taken.

Kitty Pell made the **motion** to invite Maisha Douvon Cover, parent and an employee of the Brigham in the Public Health area, to serve as a Trustee of the School, Danna Mauch seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

The second name presented was Kay Sloan, Ph.D., former President of Mass. College of Art, who is experienced with both public and private boards. Anne Snyder made the motion that she be invited to come **on** as a Trustee of the School and Kitty Pell seconded the motion which was then unanimously approved.

Both candidates will be required to seek DESE approvals for service on our Board..

10. Development Committee Report: Melanie Sheffield

The fundraising goal for this year is \$500,000. Larger than other year's, but is it for two entities: the School and the Center.

Melanie asked all Board members to be honest about their philanthropy to the school. So please be responsive when Bea Abascal, Development Director, calls.

The first prospecting event is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Pucker Gallery on Newbury Street. We have to use these events as opportunities to bring in new folks.

Bea Abascal spoke of her team - Catherin Martin who is in charge of the Website and Kate Rourke who is the Development Associate, but has also been helpful in helping to reassign some of the school space.

11. Facility Lease for 2017-2018: Bob Grinberg

The basic facts were presented: presently the school is in two buildings, the school owns one, the other has a lease and that expires in June unless an option is exercised for 1 more year to June 2018. Without the extension, the school has 21 months in which to move to another site; which, given the time required for permitting and renovation, it is more like only 12 months to identify a replacement property to house the children

One option is being considered: a building in Hyde Park, which has 40,000 square feet, which is a school already. Lease could begin in June, 2017 for 5 yrs. with a 2<sup>nd</sup> 5 year option. Another feature in the lease is to be able to terminate with a 2 yr. notice.

The drawback is that this site is 6 miles away from the school at 131 Hancock St. and considered to be an obstacle to stabilizing the school's culture and climate.

The mayor is in this equation. He likes our school, came to visit shortly after we opened for this year and has offered to help negotiate with the people at Steward to extend the school's lease for one more year to 2018. If this takes place, then the school has 33 months in which to move to another site.

The crux of the decision right now is IF the school has only 21 months (Carney does NOT give the additional Year) there is no choice but to sign the Hyde Park Lease. Unless the Board wants to consider the option of not having one school site to house the entire school and is willing to consider being in 2 school sites which are in close proximity.

However, if Carney does give the extra year's lease, bringing the time period available to getting a new site for the whole school to 33 months, then the Hyde Park lease does not have to be signed.

Kitty Pell stated that a study needs to be made of the impact that having two sites, instead of one, will have on the Model of the school, as it exists in our vision. What must also be considered in the extra money that it will cost to have two sites.

Gary Gut made the **motion** that if it appears we are at imminent risk of losing the opportunity to sign the Hyde Park lease and, after best efforts, have not yet secured the extra year's extension of the Carney lease and have 33 months to get another site, then we MUST sign the Hyde Park Lease. If we do get the extra years extension, then we do NOT sign the Hyde Park lease. Brad Richardson seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

12. Board Meeting schedule and major topics for 2016-2017. A page listing all the upcoming Board dates and topics was distributed. It was announced that the meetings would begin at 4:30 p.m. for the rest of the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35p.m.