



## The Children's Guild DC Charter School Board

Date: Monday, November 9, 2015  
Time: 6 to 8 p.m.  
Place: 2146 24<sup>th</sup> Place NE, Washington, DC

### Minutes

#### Attendees

Dana Baughns  
Ragini Dalal  
John Ferguson  
Jawauna Greene  
Michelle Musgrove  
Lesley Nesmith  
Chris Zimmerman

#### Not in Attendance

Terry Carnes  
Ross Litkenhous

#### Children's Guild

Dr. Duane Arbogast  
Steve Baldwin  
Amanda Henck  
Susan McFaul  
Dr. Andrew Ross  
Kelly Spanoghe

#### School

Nakia Nicholson, Principal

#### Call to Order

Ms. Greene called the meeting of The Children's Guild DC Charter School (CGDCPCS) Board of Directors (BOD) to order at 6:10 p.m.

#### Parent Representative

Dr. Ross reported that Mr. Sawyer, board parent representative, has withdrawn his children from the school and will no longer be on the board. Dr. Ross has found another parent representative who is considering joining the board.

#### Principal Resignation Letter

Ms. Garner's resignation letter will be distributed to the board.

#### Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2015 meeting was made by Ms. Baughns and seconded by Mr. Zimmerman. The motion was approved.

#### Special Education Report

Thirty five percent of the children have been identified with special education needs and there are another significant portion of the students who have special education needs (10 to 15%) but have never been diagnosed as having them. Enrollment is approximately 311 students with the October 5<sup>th</sup> lock in figure at 314. New students are not being accepted at this time while the school is in the process of stabilizing.

Dr. Ross stated that parents have left because they felt the school did not meet the reputation and expectations of The Children's Guild. The disenrollment of students results from inadequate structures and routines being deployed at the launch but this problem has now been rectified due to the hiring of a new principal and the help of the EMO.

### **Progress since Launch on September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Dr. Ross presented a quick update on progress since the launch:

1. Bus transportation has improved dramatically. Ms. Greene reminded management to have students get their DC One card since it is free.
2. There is a marked decrease in physical violence between the students.
3. Many of the problems in accessing DC databases have been resolved but problems still exist.
4. We currently have enough special education teachers to meet student needs.
5. We have a plan to deal with student reactions to traumatic experiences.
6. We have now created a schedule that permits faculty to meet for problem solving and staff development after school.
7. Physical education has improved under the new PE teacher.
8. The faculty are enforcing school wide behavior expectations which has resulted in a safe and orderly school.
9. Enrollment numbers have been clarified.
10. Transportation for special education students has been resolved for all but one student. This has positively impacted our transportation budget.

### **Transportation Policy & After School Program**

The transportation policy was distributed for review. One modification will be the removal of all references to the 5 pm bus since that has been discontinued. It was noted that discontinuing the aftercare program could be difficult for parents and we could lose students.

Dr. Ross stated that with the current enrollment figures the organization simply cannot sustain it. The original plan was to contract with the YMCA to handle the program but the Y was not able to provide the manpower they promised. The board was concerned that this was an advertised benefit. Dr. Arbogast reported two bus stops drop at Y Centers. Dr. Ross stated the impact of discontinuing day care services is not known.

The board wanted to be assured that all communication means will be utilized to avoid the surprise of a parent who was not aware of the change.

The board and management agreed of the need to better understand the issues this change causes parents and figure out ways to help solve their problems. Dr. Ross committed the EMO to the following:

1. Management will do due diligence to make sure parents are clear that Friday, November 13, 2015 is the last day that after school care will be offered.
2. Transportation policy/book will be changed to remove the 5 pm bus run and reflect only one afternoon bus. All changes will be updated on the website ASAP.
3. Management will present proposed structured ideas with financial details (clubs, uniform, concerts, etc.) to the parents.
4. Make the board aware if parents have issues and if many express concern.

A motion to approve the Transportation policy as amended was made by Ms. Musgrove and seconded by Mr. Ferguson. The motion was approved.

#### **Facility Report**

Dr. Ross stated work will begin next week to create three new classrooms which will be finished by December 15<sup>th</sup>. The playground is about a mile away so parents have approved busing the students to it. There is a parking lot next to the building is being used as a playground for older children and K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are using space behind the school as a play space.

#### **Principal's Report**

Ms. Nicholson reported she has been here for five days and sees improvement. Her immediate goals have been developing a strategic plan for the flow of the day and holding staff accountable. Simple changes have been made that make a difference such as flow of students getting off the bus. Parents would like to create a PTA so that is under development. The leadership team has been organized to make sure people are in the right place at the right time such as covering bathroom breaks, 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition etc. The next objective is to focus on instruction to see where teachers are in their instructional practice and where they need assistance. The Positive Behavior Instructional Support (PBIS) program is in place for recognizing positive steps and acknowledging students. Students like it but are not accustomed to it. Ms. Spanoghe is assisting with the creation of the student support system for the school that teaches social skills and helps students to reflect on more positive ways of getting their needs met.

### **Back to School Night**

Presentations were made to parents so they understand the school improvement plan and what to expect. Also instructions to set up the Living Tree application were distributed. The Living Tree program is used to provide real time communication to parents.

### **Budget Impact of Enrollment Status**

Mr. Baldwin reviewed that the budget was initially based on 450 students and then adjusted for the actual enrollment of 314. The budget shows a \$1 million shortfall with a \$1.386 million cash dollar shortage. Management identified \$750K that can be reduced by the end of the year which leaves a \$636K cash shortfall. The plan is to go to The Children's Guild board and ask if they will fund this balance. It is anticipated that a plan can be created to pay it back over 7 years. Cuts in two large areas, transportation and staff, helped align the budget.

### **Updates**

Ms. Greene stated the first year of creating a charter school is the hardest and this is where issues are worked out.

The plan for the physical design is still moving forward given it is being paid for by the landlord. The Design Team has been focused on finishing Monarch Global Academy but will be returning to work on DC soon. The design of the school is critical to student recruitment and should be ready in the spring. The timeline for design will be presented at the next meeting.

Weekly updates from Dr. Ross have been extremely helpful. It was suggested that it would be helpful to debrief on what worked and what didn't for the start of school so it can be corrected for next year.

### **Adjourn**

Ms. Greene adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm. The next meeting of The Children's Guild DC Charter School (CGDCPCS) Board of Directors (BOD) is scheduled for December 14, 2015 at 6:00 pm.

Submitted by:

Susan McFaul  
Recording Secretary