



The Children's Guild DC Charter School Board

Date: Monday, October 12, 2015
Time: 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Place: 2146 24th Place NE, Washington, DC

ATTENDEES: Jawauna Greene, John Ferguson, Lesley Nesmith, Ross Litkenhous, Michelle Musgrove, Maurice Sawyer, Chris Zimmerman, STAFF: Duane Arbogast, Steve Baldwin, Bryan Daniels, Susan McFaul, Andrew Ross, Kelly Spanoghe

Minutes

1. Call to Order at 6:06 by Ms. Greene
2. Welcome New Board Member, Terry Carnes and Maurice Sawyers, who is a parent. Mr. Sawyers is very dedicated to the school, offering many suggestions. Mr. Carnes was not present.

Mr. Sawyers owns a project management group. He has two children in the school. One child has a disability. He wants to make sure that the promises made will be carried out. He wants to make sure that the children are safe and instruction is going on.

Mr. Sawyers does not want this to be a special education school. He is concerned about the number of students who are disruptive and suggested that disruptive students be pulled out of the classroom. He suggested two teachers in a class and dedicated aides to support disruptive students in a separate classroom.

3. Review of Minutes: No questions or comments. Minutes approved.
4. Status of the Principal: Ms. Greene described it as war of wills between the operator and the principal. The owner was not happy with the level of system deployment provided by the principal. The principal resigned and her resignation was accepted. Balancing the financial commitments causes stress.

Ms. Musgrove asked for a copy of the resignation letter. Ms. Greene will provide it.

Dr. Ross described the situation as an absence of structures and routines on day one of opening. Dr. Ross felt that with the addition of himself, Ms. Spanoghe and Dr. Arbogast on a daily basis, the routines are coming together.

We interviewed two strong candidates for the principal position. One declined. Nakia Nicholson accepted the position and will begin November 2. She will be on the premises next week. We will not announce publicly until the background check is completed.

What was the parent reaction to the resignation? No parent has expressed a concern to the operator. Parents seem connected to Bryan Daniels, the assistant principal, who is acting as the interim principal. Mr. Daniels said that there was a comfort with the leadership team and the leadership team minus Principal Gardner is still intact.

The board understood that the business aspect should be stressed with the new principal because it is just as important as the educational aspect.

Ms. Greene discussed the demands on a charter school principal.

Ms. Musgrove suggested that internal communications is key to addressing staff anxiety. We cannot over-communicate.

Scott Pearson, the Executive Director of the Public Charter School Board, called Dr. Ross. He expressed concern about the launch of the school. His deputy saw the chaos in the school after being notified that the principal had resigned. Dr. Ross shared the plan of improvement with Mr. Pearson. Mr. Pearson reiterated his desire for The Children's Guild to transform special education in the district.

5. Enrollment Status – Dr. Arbogast reports that we had 343 students fully enrolled and present on October 5. We are currently at 351 students, although not all have shown up. Twenty one students have either withdrawn or never showed up.
6. Progress on Launch – Dr. Ross
 - Special Education: Ms. Spanoghe. Several things are in the works. Every student with an IEP needs a 30 day review. We struggled with the database from OSSE called SEDS. We have begun the meetings required. We also have six expired IEPs. We have four students with expired re-evaluation plans. We are collaborating with DCASE for evaluator support. We have addressed a student who was inappropriately placed and will be moved to our Chillum campus as a diagnostic placement. We are working on the entire calendar. We are also addressing students that have IEPs that do not reflect the actual needs. The caseloads are heavy. Do we require additional resources?
 - TranZed Academy: Dr. Ross. We recruited the YMCA to provide programming and staff to operate the TranZed Academy After School Program. We are currently covering the after school program with teacher aides and teachers. This causes a problem with time to work with teachers. Transportation is also an issue because we are running buses two times i.e. 3:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. We are using the DC One cards. Many of the students who are staying after school are students who require support from dedicated aides.
 - Logistics: We are working to revise IEPs to truly reflect the needs of the students, which has a budget implication. At this point, special educators are tracking interventions to see what is working. Teachers are taking anecdotal notes, and we are collecting data on visits to the student support center and tracking interventions provided by student support to the students.

7. Principal's Report: Mr. Daniels. We have seen a great deal of issues from the first day. We are making phone calls to parents and learning the level of support parents can provide. Many of our students have mental health and trauma issues. We are trying to address issues based on the student needs. We have noticed that the students get settled after breakfast, we get about two hours of quiet and calm. Behaviors start to spike at the first big transition of the day around 11:15. We are also noticing that many of our students are hungry. We have established a student meal team to cull the options students want. We will be adding snacks at 10 and 2. Mr. Sawyers noticed students with the large sodas. Parents should be notified that this is not a healthy or productive choice and education around nutrition should be provided to parents.

What is the morale of the staff? We had the entire staff in the room at one time. They had an opportunity to vent. They made recommendations around general communication. They left today with some new information around instruction. We discussed the PBIS implementation. Staff essentially are overwhelmed with student behavior and need a great deal of direction on how to manage students.

A professional develop calendar is available, but is subject to revisions.

Are you concerned with staff turnover? Mr. Daniels has not heard much about staff turnover. Mr. Daniels sees commitment, but also frustration.

Ms. Greene publicly thanked Mr. Daniels for his commitment.

Mr. Sawyer reiterated that the parents of students without behavior disorder issues need to see changes quickly.

8. Back to School Night: Dr. Ross and Mr. Daniels. Back to School was postponed because of the Pope visit. It is scheduled for Monday, October 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 with a Fall Harvest theme.
9. Board Assistance: Dr. Ross. At this point in time, there is nothing specific in mind in terms of what we need from the board. We made need help with transportation. The board would like a wish list.
10. Committees need to start meeting.
11. Visits to the school? Board members should give a call in advance.
12. Public Comment – None
13. Adjournment at 8:00.