



The Children's Guild DC Charter School Board

Date: Monday, May 9, 2016

Time: 6 to 8 p.m.

Place: 2146 24th Place, Washington, DC

Minutes

Attendees

Jawauna Greene
Dana Baughns
Ebony Broadwater
Ragini Dalal
John Ferguson
Ross Litkenhous
Lesley Nesmith
Chris Zimmerman

Not in Attendance

Terry Carnes
Michelle Musgrove

The Children's Guild

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

School

Nakia Nicholson

Call to Order

Ms. Greene called the meeting of The Children's Guild DC Charter School (CGDCPCS) Board of Directors (BOD) to order at 6:05 p.m.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 14, 2016 and April 11, 2016 meetings was made by Ms. Baughns and seconded by Mr. Litkenhous. The motion was approved.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Introductions

Ms. Broadwater, new board parent representative, was introduced to the board.

Budget Approval for FY 17

Mr. Zimmerman, chair of the Finance Committee, has reviewed the proposed budget, however, the Finance Committee has not due to the timing of getting the budget completed. The board would like to go through the budget but would still like the Finance Committee to review it and recommend approval. The board will meet by conference call to approve the budget.

Dr. Ross added that the difficulty in completing the budget is trying to determine the best guess on how many students and special education students will be starting next school year. The goal is to give the best figures as possible and to avoid having to go back and alter the budget.

Based on the issues from last year, steps are in place to quickly evaluate special education students which allows payment to begin. The enrollment to date is currently at 30% special education but that is expected to increase.

The budget is based on the following key assumptions: 450 students with 40% special education and a cost of \$685 per student for instructional materials. Ms. Henck stated that a surplus of \$426K is projected. Any fundraising would be considered a bonus as would the Walton Grant if we receive the funds. The largest expense at 53% is salaries and benefits which is normal for a charter school. The management fee is 6% but was waived last year given the financial situation that occurred in the fall when the school opened. The management fee should actually be 10 – 12%.

Several items under the capital budget include the build out to accommodate the additional students, low voltage wiring and technology wiring. The larger build out costs of construction are included in the lease for 10,000 square feet to accommodate the incoming increase of students. Mr. Baldwin reported we have a one-time opportunity to include the construction expenses in the lease. The problem is a decision needs to be made prior to knowing the final enrollment figure for the upcoming school year. The landlord has agreed to finance the expense. The extra rent is included in the budget. Even the art expense of \$50K will be rolled into the lease. After this year should we miss this opportunity we would need to pay for the renovations out of pocket.

Mr. Litkenhous expressed concern that if the space isn't filled then it sits. He feels it would be cheaper to wait to see if we have the necessary enrollment and just pay to build it out ourselves.

Dr. Ross stated the ultimate enrollment goal is 800 students. Next year we can only admit 550 but after that we can increase as we choose with no cap. Dr. Ross and Dr. Arbogast both agree that with the special education population the extra space allows for options to work with the students. If we do hit 550 students we will need the space. Ms. Greene was concerned that we could meet enrollment and be short of space but understands Mr. Litkenhous' view that if under enrolled we are stuck paying. The question arose as to whether we could have a third party utilize the space if we don't.

Ms. Henck stated they will go back and work on the proposal and will discuss it with the Finance Committee. Mr. Litkenhous suggested asking the landlord for another year to allow time to see what happens with the enrollment.

Mr. Greene recommended a strong plan in the event the enrollment is lower than expected to help offset the expenses.

3rd Quarter Financials

Ms. Henck reported on the 3rd quarter financials (see attachment). To date the financials are ahead of projections and hope to end the year even higher.

Marketing Update

Dr. Ross reported on the status of the marketing to date. The report shows the results of the boots on the ground as to places that have been visited. The word on the street continues on our initial start so we still need to work to overcome that negative view of the school. We have reached out to several charter schools about getting some of their special education students that they are having difficulty with or if they wish to keep the students offer to provide consultation on diagnostic services. Dreams for Kids has 700 families with autistic children on their mailing list and are willing to do a mailing for us and refer families to our school. Ms. Greene offered to allow flyer distribution at certain metro stations. This would be a free opportunity to distribute information. If you add a lollipop or something simple it catches people's attention.

Parents could be a powerful voice to share the positive things that are happening at the school and to spread the word about the change since the school opened. Ms. Broadwater suggested spreading the word through Living Tree and social media. The only downside is that contact information changes frequently and is hard to maintain. It can be difficult with social media because posting pictures is tricky because some parents don't want a child's picture up even though we have a release.

Ms. Broadwater suggested a table at Eastern Market and will do research on other community events and opportunities. The goal is for parents and teachers to be involved at the tables.

Ms. Greene stated she could get movie/sports tickets for a donation to give to parents who give referrals or tag our page.

The Potomac Preparatory school is closing and approximately 50 of their students have signed up for our school. For some transportation is an issue to get parents to visit. Some teachers have been hired and half of them have children. This will hopefully help spread the word to parents.

Ms. Nicholson added that we need to shift the perception of the campuses to move past that we are not just special education and that we do offer regular education as well.

The Board was asked to assist by posting something on google, linkedin, twitter, facebook etc. about the school to push out content. Ms. Greene suggested reporting back at the next meeting. To assist with this Ms. Nicholson will send out some authorized pictures and Ms. White can share marketing information.

Building expansion

This topic was covered under the budget discussion.

Review of Charter

A calendar was distributed showing items that must be completed to remain compliant. Dr. Ross stated this is the rubric that we are evaluated on each year. Dr. Arbogast stated charter schools are held accountable by the Performance Scorecard framework; our school won't have data until after the first year of operation. Our current at risk student population is 40%, however, this could increase to 60%. The concern is that the at risk definition is limited. The Charter Board is willing to expand the definition i.e. include students who have a parent who is incarcerated, transient families and other issues that put students in the at risk category. Several other schools are requesting this as well and negotiations are in the works.

Monthly metrics

Dr. Arbogast reported on only the metrics that have changed. There are 90 special education students which equals 40.4%. The staff have done a good job identifying special education students and those students have not left. The special education students are broken down by levels. The higher level of need equals a higher reimbursement rate. There are 240 students who are enrolled as of today. There are 73 pending offers for next year and 128 in post lottery that mentioned The Children's Guild as a possible school and this figure continues to increase. While the school does focus on special education students the goal is to cater to both regular education and special education students. This helps better serve families with multiple children and provides balance.

Ms. Nicholson stated there are monthly family events and added that giveaways are helpful to draw in parents. Ms. Nicholson requested staff giveaways as well. The Board recommended creating a list of items that might be of interest.

The metric for parent complaint tracking shows none for March but one for April. The April issue was really just a request for assistance, not a complaint.

Principal Report

Due to limited time the principal's report will be sent out by email.

Grievance Policies

The Board reviewed the revised grievance policies and phone numbers will be added to offer further clarity to the contact information.

A motion to approve the employee and parent grievance policies as revised was made by Mr. Ferguson and seconded by Mr. Litkenhous. The motion was approved.

New Business

- Ms. Greene thanked Mr. Litkenhous and his company for conducting a book drive to help establish a library at the school.
- Ms. Dalal will not be seeking reelection; June will be her last meeting.

Adjourn

Ms. Greene adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m. The next meeting of The Children's Guild DC Charter School (CGDCPCS) Board of Directors (BOD) is scheduled for June 13, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Susan McFaul, Recording Secretary