

The Classical Academy
975 Stout Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Monday, Sep 10, 2007

- I. Call to Order - Chairman Matt Carpenter called the open session to order at 6:02 p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call.
 - A. Matt Carpenter led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - B. Roll Call. The following Directors were present: Matt Carpenter, Chris Bender, Clark Miller, Steve Pope, Lisa Sutton, Chris Leland, and Steve Tomberlin. Also present: Mark Hyatt, President.
- III. Spotlight Recognition – Peter Hilts introduced 9th grader M.J. Franklin, and congratulated him for his award from the Daughters of the American Revolution as the Outstanding Citizen for Junior High.
- IV. Board Development – A continuing series of presentations highlighting the formation of TCA’s mission, values, and philosophy. Several “book reports” are being presented over a period of several months, focusing on books used to develop TCA’s mission and core values. Clark Miller offered insights into author Cynthia Tobias’ book, The Way They Learn. He described the different learning styles, and cited the practical guidelines the book offered to enable parents and teachers to present information in a way that will match their children’s various learning styles. Chris Leland then reported on The Seven Laws of Teaching, by John Milton Gregory, first printed in 1886 (Attachment 1). This book highlights the teacher as more than just a subject-matter expert, but more importantly as a resource and guide.
- V. Comments
 - A. From the Audience
 1. Becca DeMeyer, a 2nd-grade teacher from the East Campus thanked the Board for making teachers feel appreciated. Most recently the all-staff family party at Mr. Biggs was a huge success.
 2. Parent Jennie Chumbley spoke about the proposed calendar, describing the potential impact to secondary families when the TCA school year ends later than other D20 schools. She expressed appreciation to those who have taken the time to grapple with a volatile subject and present a viable solution, and encouraged everyone to look at a “big picture” that includes all TCA students.
 3. After recommending the book, Every Child Can Succeed by Cynthia Tobias, parent Barb Newland depicted the difficulties balancing the calendars of students from two different D20 schools. She inquired into why the dates for our teacher in-service training days differ from those of other D20 schools, citing that alignment of these days would help parents facilitate family days.
 4. Parent Karen Birch praised the efforts of the Calendar Subcommittee, and expressed gratitude for the committee’s ability to consider compromise solutions. She recommended shortening Fall Break, and reported that evening Parent-Teacher Conferences would benefit working parents. Mrs. Birch cited the importance of athletics to the well-rounded student that colleges are seeking, and then maintained that nearly half of our secondary students

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participate in fall sports and cannot take Fall Break. She requested that final exams occur before Christmas Break, and closed by reminding the Board that the survey statistics may be skewed in favor of elementary families, since there will always be a higher percentage of elementary students than high school students.

5. Parent Jodi Cyphers echoes the comments from Mrs. Birch, and expressed appreciation to the Board for listening to everyone's concerns. She described the affect on her family of finals after Christmas Break, and urged the Board to move the tests before the break.

6. Parent Katie Page conveyed the lack of a complete break from academics for high school students during the first semester, despite the amount of scheduled time off. The combination of sports/activities, projects such as Science Fair, and finals after Christmas result in little time for students to fully refresh.

7. After thanking the Administration for collaborating with her family, and making accommodations, parent Barb Childress expressed disappointment in some of our high school students, following a recent bullying action. She asserted that some of the character training is not getting through to some of the students. She closed by praising parents at Central for their response to highly qualified teacher issues.

B. From the President. Mark Hyatt announced that our football team won their first game. He then praised the efforts of volunteer parents on such important committees as the Financial Advisory and Stewardship Team (FAST), the Spring Fling Fundraising effort, the Appreciation Committee, the Character Advisory Team, the Titan Trust Development Group, the Curriculum Committee, PTOs and Parent Coordinators. We now have more parents than ever involved in helping to run our school.

C. Operations Update. Kevin Collins expanded on items in Attachment 2. Chris Leland inquired into the remaining funding required to obtain field lights, and then inquired into the amount of staff turnover. Mark Hyatt responded that there are no trends to cause concern, and Steve Pope asked if the attrition report was formally presented every year. Steve Pope then asked about the effectiveness of the new traffic light, and its affect on carpool, and if there are changes we should consider as our high school reaches full capacity. Kevin Collins described that annual pattern where carpool difficulties smooth out as drivers make individual adjustments. Chris Bender commended the staff members who direct traffic.

D. Administration

1. Finance. Dr. Doug Hering updated the Board on the General Fund (Attachments 3 and 4). He reported that while we are ahead of budget now because of several projects that won't come due until later in the year, we don't expect the under-budget trend to continue.

2. High School – Principal Peter Hilts described how well our school is taking care of kids with special needs, praising the sense of community that is truly heartwarming. He thanked the great Parent Coordinator Team for their ongoing efforts. He then invited the Board to attend both Titan Community Assistance (TCA) Day on Sept 28th, and the upcoming dialogue on Oct 18th, on the course our “college prep” high school should chart.

3. Instructional Philosophy. “Literacy” is the hot topic for the month of September, according to Dean Leesa Waliszewski. She then described the ongoing curriculum reviews for Prentiss-Hall Math, Spanish, and French. She reported that our Charlotte Mason Lab Schools are starting to see some good results from narration.

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She closed by announcing that Dr. Chris Leland will be the first guest speaker in the continuing series of Capstone Seminars on world views for our seniors.

4. Jr. High. Dr. Russ Sojourner described the herculean efforts involved in both the 7th-grade BOOT Camp, and the upcoming 8th-grade Mt. Lab Character Offsite. He cited strong parental support as vital to these programs.

5. Elementary. Diana Burditt spoke on behalf of the elementary principals, and reported that all of the Parent Orientations have been very successful. The PTOs are off to a great start, and are beginning to hold recurring, collaborative PTO trio meetings. She described how the 6th-grade students are looking forward to Camp Alexander. Mark Hyatt updated the Board on our pursuit of increased options for our Cottage School Program. We're being proactive to stay attuned to market forces, and to continually find ways to help parents.

E. From the Board.

1. Steve Tomberlin complimented the members of the Lead Team for their openness, and heart for TCA.

2. Chris Leland reminded the Board that volunteerism is a recurring theme, and should not be taken for granted.

3. Lisa Sutton reported on the East PTO meeting, and praised the great Leadership Team. She thanked teachers Melissa Clemmons, Grace Parsons, and Candus Muir for everything they contributed to ensure the success of BOOT Camp. She closed by praising Peter Hilts for his rousing support of the volleyball team, and for providing such a positive role model for our students.

4. Steve Pope referred to Charlotte Mason's list of intellectual and moral habits, and described how exciting it was to watch this take place in the Lab School. He praised Dorothy Simpson for her passion in this effort.

5. Chris Bender requested a report on the Lab School. Leesa Waliszewski invited the Board to attend the Lab School Open House on Tues, September 20.

6. Matt Carpenter reported on his experiences at both the high school and kindergarten orientations, praising the amazing passion at each end of the spectrum. He closed by encouraging each of the Directors to consider making a presentation at the November In-Service Training Conference.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

These are items that are for information or for vote but do not require further discussion by the Board or staff at this time. In the event that new information is available since the publication of this agenda, prior to approval of the consent agenda as presented, the board or staff may remove any consent agenda item(s) and move the item(s) to the Discussion Agenda.

A. Approval of Minutes. The minutes were approved as presented (Attachment 5).

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- B. Proposed Code of Conduct Revision – Vote to Remove a Director from Office. The proposal to change the bylaws, Article 3, Sect 3.2, making an addition at the end of the last sentence, was approved as presented [emphasis added]: Any Director may be removed at any time, with or without cause, by a vote of three-fourths of the other Directors then in office, **to be rounded up in a fractional vote.**

VII. Discussion Agenda Items

These are specific items that the Board and/or staff would like to discuss and expand upon in greater detail than the materials that have been provided.

A. CSAP Reports.

1. Principal Veronica Wolken reported on the results for the elementary schools, describing the trend line as stable and at a healthy level, despite a slightly erratic year for 4th-graders (Attachments 6 and 7). She forecast that we should anticipate a drop in CSAPs for next year for 3rd grade, since approximately 27% of 3rd-grade students at North are on literacy plans. She advised the Board that we will look at the assessment as a whole, to determine which changes are truly warranted in the classroom.

2. Dr. Russ Sojourner expressed that overall the trend in Junior High is up, although Reading 8 and Math 8 have negative trends (Attachment 8). He described plans to place a renewed emphasis on literacy, using new teaching/literacy materials, and more targeted support, along with one-on-one meetings between the principals and students, to motivate and assist in specific areas. Steve Tomberlin requested that teachers and administrators make extra efforts to communicate with and inform parents.

3. Principal Peter Hilts presented data not only on CSAP scores, but also other indicators such as SAT and AP tests, and graduation rates (Attachments 9 – 11). He echoed comments by the other principals, and described plans to assess systemic improvement (teacher experience, etc.) in addition to student proficiency.

4. Chris Bender suggested that we need to continue looking at things other than CSAP scores to effectively provide a “big picture” assessment. CSAP scores may not be the single measurement or grouping of data that will provide the best indicator of our effectiveness. Steve Tomberlin asked whether we have the assessment tools to properly determine the success of our philosophy, or whether we need to develop some. Leesa Waliszewski reported that teachers and administrators are reviewing a variety of summative and formative assessments, since the feedback we receive from CSAPs can be pretty limited. Steve Pope highlighted that we currently have no measure of progress towards virtuous character, exemplary citizenship, etc. Leesa Waliszewski described several options for measuring character, and Mark Hyatt reported on new legislation requiring us to monitor students longitudinally, so we can help each child, not just a cohort. Steve Tomberlin encouraged the Administration to focus on assessments other than CSAPs, and report the results to the Board. Chris Bender suggested this could be a Board goal, and asked that the Administration consider obtaining data from graduates as a potential measure of what helps our students be successful.

Matt Carpenter called for a break at 8:16 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

- B. Calendar Subcommittee Report. Kevin Collins provided a handout package from the subcommittee (Attachments 12 – 17). The committee voted 12-6 to recommend a secondary calendar for 08-09 (Attachment 16), and to propose changes to the calendar philosophy (Attachment 15), as a first-read for

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the Board and TCA community to engage in a deliberative process for the next month, before the vote in October. Summarizing the key changes, Kevin Collins emphasized that the proposed Secondary calendar ends one week earlier (the same day as elementary) and starts two days earlier (one week before elementary), with a 3-day Fall Break (elementary retains the full week-plus). Additionally, two Secondary half-day in-service days (ISTs) were converted to full school days, and Secondary Parent-Teacher Conferences would be held in the evenings, enabling two additional full school days.

Chris Bender then asked the Board members who had participated on the subcommittee to provide their perspectives. Clark Miller praised the committee for great participation, and then questioned whether there was a sufficient groundswell, as indicated by the survey data, to make these proposed changes, or whether maintaining some of the TCA-distinctive calendar features were more important than aligning with D20 calendars. He also asked whether the extra burden on the teachers to accommodate these changes would be justified. Lisa Sutton voiced the concern that the survey data could be skewed by two phenomena—first, that many respondents may have expressed satisfaction with “current calendar” because of an anomaly in 2006/07, not realizing that subsequent calendars would dismiss school later, and second, that percentages would be skewed in favor of Elementary respondents, since there were 550 responses from Elementary, vs. 350 from Secondary. She closed by reporting that the Secondary teacher spokespersons had indicated strongly that—from an academic standpoint—Fall Break is not a positive since it fragments the semester. Steve Pope praised the committee members for their evident passion on calendar issues, and then described the polarity that existed between the committee members with Elementary students, and those with Secondary students. He said that we’re still struggling to refine our identity as a Secondary school, and he then urged the Board to more clearly define the role of Directors as participating members of these sub-committees. Matt Carpenter expressed appreciation that the committee was collaborating to find the best solution(s) for the school as a whole. He wondered if we would be placing more of a burden on the teachers by having finals sooner in January.

Chris Leland asked the Board to be certain that we truly have a mandate for change, and requested a calendar build out for the next eight years. Chris Bender expressed concern about partial weeks, and asked for Leadership Team response on this issue, the issue of evening Parent-Teacher Conferences, and the issue of reducing the number of IST days at the Secondary level. Steve Tomberlin offered the perspective that Fall Break was originally instituted for a K-8 program, and that they did not foresee the conflicts inherent in the myriad of activities at the Secondary level that take place during that time. He also stated he that any reduction in IST days would diminish the training and mentoring investment we make in our teachers. Steve Pope asked if it was too late to be changing the 2008-09 calendar, and also whether we should send out another survey. Chris Leland suggested we drill down on the existing data instead. Steve Tomberlin reminded everyone that while we are here to assist parents, there are perimeters on that assistance. Chris Leland and Kevin Collins emphasized the need for a prompt decision on this issue, and Matt Carpenter asked everyone to forward additional questions to Kevin Collins, and courtesy-copy Mark Hyatt.

- C. Subcommittee Report - Ten Year Anniversary Plan. Mark Hyatt updated the Board on the plans for the commemoration on Saturday, September 29th, highlighting an anticipated audience of 500-600 people (Attachment 18). Lisa Sutton expressed frustration from members of the community that this event has overlooked the children. Bob Swanson reported that the subcommittee and the PTOs had determined that family-centered celebrations would be more effective and appropriate at each of the campuses.

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Parent Susan Pantle expressed her disappointment in this choice for celebration, and claimed it was dividing the community instead of uniting them. Lisa Sutton, Matt Carpenter, and Mark Hyatt suggested that a variety of events could be held throughout the year, to appeal to a wider variety of our community.

- D. Verification of Accreditation Absolutes – First Read. Hal Meyer presented the criterion requiring Board verification for the Accreditation Review on October 30-31. (Attachments 19 – 35). This verification requirement was a change made last spring, and these process indicators will comprise 50% of our accreditation rating—CSAP scores comprise the other half. Steve Tomberlin inquired whether non-compliance with any item would jeopardize our accreditation. Hal Meyer responded that adherence to our charter would constitute a valid reason for non-compliance with certain items. In response to a question from Steve Tomberlin, Hal Meyer reported that we also obtain an additional, optional accreditation through AALE. Chris Bender requested a presentation at the next meeting on the pros and cons of obtaining this additional accreditation.

Matt Carpenter dismissed the members of the Lead Team at 9:44 pm, with thanks from the Board. Mark Hyatt, Kevin Collins, Doug Hering, and Peter Hilts remained.

- E. Building Community Within the Classroom Structure. Steve Tomberlin initiated a discussion on ways to build stronger relations and a higher level of community involvement within our current organizational structure. He proposed a cohort movement, where an entire class remains together from kindergarten through 6th grade (or 8th grade), asserting that this would provide a better opportunity for parents to develop long-term relationships with each other, and which would foster a stronger buy-in for TCA's culture and expectations. Chris Leland indicated that this would be difficult to implement, but might be a good challenge to pursue. Matt Carpenter asked if this were a variation on the Titan Team concept—a way to connect parents as well as the students. Lisa Sutton observed that there is a great deal of community within athletics and activities. Chris Bender noted that before the Board can have a good dialogue on this topic, they would like some inputs from the Lead Team on what the optimal environment would look like. Chris Leland recommended this be a topic at the November offsite.
- F. Disposition of Titan Trust Review (Stewardship). Doug Hering presented a report on the donation and expenditure of funds in the Titan Trust (Attachments 36 -38). Chris Bender inquired into how decisions are made about expenditure priorities, specifically how non-designated monies are spent. He expressed concern that the Board does not control how the money is spent, and that decisions are made outside of the approved process. Doug Hering disagreed, citing that all funds were collected and dispersed without violating our policies. Steve Tomberlin asked for an element of accountability, and Chris Bender agreed that there is no coordination with the Board on the priority direction for undesignated Titan Trust money, and this amount is likely to increase over the coming years. Steve Pope and Lisa Sutton expressed concern that the community is not being informed in a timely manner about the disposition of funds collected during the Spring Fling. Doug Hering and Bob Swanson commented that not all of the monies have been distributed, so it would have been premature to report. Mark Hyatt announced that the annual Stewardship Report is due to the community in October. Steve Pope requested that we be sure to communicate what we were able to accomplish as a result of the donations, in order to build trust on how the money is being spent.

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- G. Endowment Review. Doug Hering presented a report on the status of funds in the Endowment Account (Attachments 39 -41), noting we currently have a balance of approximately \$270,000. We were able to earn a return of 2.2%, compared to the average S&P return of 3.7%.
- H. Designated Non-PPF Monies. After distributing two handouts (Attachments 42 -43), Doug Hering opened the discussion on potential reallocation for unused designated Non-PPF monies. The total balance that is potentially reallocable is \$137,829. Clark Miller recommended that if we are unable to use funds for their designated purpose, that we should reallocate the funds for a purpose that aligns with the spirit in which they were given. Chris Leland cautioned that if we choose to head that direction in general, then that would be a policy change—the current policy states that funds must be used for the designated purpose. The Board agreed that for this one time the funds could be reallocated for a purpose that aligns with the spirit in which they were given. Chris Bender will research previous minutes to determine if we have written guidance that would allow this action in the future.
- I. Request to Execute Funds for Infinite Vision Software and Services (Attachments 44 – 46). Matt Carpenter advised the Board that he had approved this item as a first-read/vote. Chris Bender inquired whether this was a compelling need, in order to justify the exception to procedure. Clark Miller concurred with the expense justification and the urgency, and inquired whether the proposal would be budget-neutral. Steve Pope inquired into the estimated payroll reduction figures.

Moved by Chris Leland, seconded by Steve Tomberlin, to accept the request to exceed the Grant of Authority to execute \$118,000 for the purchase of Infinite Visions software and project services. Roll call. Carpenter – yea, Bender- no, Miller – yea, Pope – no, Sutton – yea, Leland – yea, Tomberlin – yea. Approved by majority vote.

Kevin Collins then initiated a discussion on the first read/vote process. Chris Leland cited that we violate the Board’s trust with the community if we repeatedly truncate our own processes by asking for first read/votes. Steve Tomberlin expressed frustration that the current process takes 60 – 90 days to reach a decision, constraining agility when necessary. Steve Pope asked if there were a process to enable the Board to efficiently handle “emergency” issues, and also if there is a mechanism for forecasting long-term issues, and informing the Board about them.

- J. Vision Subcommittee. Steve Tomberlin updated the Board on the progress of the Vision Subcommittee. They proposed two potential vision statements that define or express TCA’s uniqueness: “Assisting parents, developing exemplary citizens” or “Assisting parents, developing exemplary citizens, impacting the world.” He requested any feedback before the October meeting.

Item: To update the Board on the proposed TCA Vision Statement

Presenter: Steve Tomberlin

For: Information/Discussion

- K. TCA President’s Annual Objectives for 2007-2008. Matt Carpenter opened discussion on proposed objectives. Clark Miller observed that some of the proposals sound like ongoing expectations, rather than a short-term, one-year objective—perhaps those should be converted to long-term objectives. Steve Pope inquired about a potential objective to increase teacher pay by 1% over PPR, and possibly exceeding the D20 rate. Matt Carpenter indicated there might be an additional objective to limit the 5-

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year education plan. Chris Bender asked the directors to think about what the key attributes of the objectives will be. Matt Carpenter asked that feedback be sent to him before the October meeting.

- L. Board Goals/Objectives for 2007-2008. This item was deferred until the next meeting.
- M. Staff Appreciation and Board Involvement. Chris Bender began the discussion by highlighting how important the founders believed it was to appreciate our teachers. He praised Bob Swanson for a great job as the coordinator for many staff appreciation efforts, and cited the work by the PTOs at each campus. He then recommended we have a parent chair the Appreciation Committee. Lisa Sutton suggested more Board-sponsored activities, to model the importance of appreciation. She agreed to spearhead an appreciation event around Thanksgiving.

VIII. Other Business.

- A. Matt Carpenter announced that the TCA Directors will be meeting with the D20 Board members for a social event on Friday, September 28th.
- B. The Board confirmed the next TCA Board Working Session Offsite will be held on Saturday, November 10th, from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm, with the location to be determined.

IX. Future Agenda Items

- A. Fundraising Report – Information
- B. Teacher Compensation Plan (06) – Information
- C. Hazing: Update on Policy, Actions, etc. – Information
- D. Review of Board Policies for the Election Process, Succession Plan, and Induction Process – Information/Discussion
- E. Calendar Subcommittee Report – Vote
- F. Value of an Additional Accreditation – Discussion
- G. Vision Subcommittee - Discussion
- H. Board Goals/Objectives for 2007-2008 – Discussion
- I. TCA President's Annual Objectives for 2007-2008 – Vote
- J. Letter of Understanding Update – Information
- K. Board Administrative Processes and Subcommittees – Discussion
- L. Building Community Within the Classroom Structure – Discussion (Nov Working Session)

Moved by Lisa Sutton, seconded by Steve Tomberlin, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. 24-6-402(4) (f), Personnel and Discipline Matters, at 12:30 a.m., for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

X. Executive Session

Moved by Chris Bender, seconded by Matt Carpenter, to move out of Executive Session at 12:38 a.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

XI. Adjournment

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Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn at 12:39 a.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

Matt Carpenter
Chairman

Chris Bender
Secretary