

The Classical Academy
975 Stout Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Central Campus
Monday, November 12, 2007

- I. Call to Order. Chairman Matt Carpenter called the open session to order at 6:06.
- 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, Chris Leland, Steve Tomberlin, Lisa Sutton, and Steve Pope. Also present: Mark Hyatt, President.
 - C. Matt Carpenter asked those present to join him in a moment of silence, honoring our veterans, and the men and women currently serving our country on active duty.
- III. Spotlight Recognition. Peter Hilts presented Coaches Alan Versaw and Lori Alejo. Coach Versaw highlighted the accomplishments of the Men's and Women's State Championship Cross Country teams, who were finalists at the regional level. Coach Alejo praised the efforts of the Women's Volleyball Team, who garnered a 2nd place finish at the state level.
- 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. Steve Pope provided a handout (Attachment 1) on the Handbook of Nature-Study by Anna Botsford Comstock. He emphasized the author's focus on cultivating powers of accurate observation, and noted this was very much in tune with the Charlotte Mason style of learning. Steve Tomberlin will make the next presentation in December, and Lisa Sutton and Chris Bender will conclude the report series in January.
- V. Comments
 - A. From the Audience
 1. Jim Kretchman thanked the Board and Administration for many things that have gone "right" recently. He specifically highlighted Kevin Collins and his staff and committee for the solution to the calendar discussions. He thanked Mark Hyatt and Leesa Waliszewski for their leadership on the Veteran's Day assembly, and Peter Hilts for emphasizing with our students the importance of respect for our veterans. He closed by praising Lisa Sutton and Steve Tomberlin for assisting with carpool duties, and urged other parents to volunteer.
 2. After enjoining his praise for the Veteran's Day assembly, Tim Pfeiffer spoke on the topic of Board governance. He described the transition toward a more formal Board governance model, based on the Carver Model for non-profit organizations, as our school became larger and our functions and processes matured. He expressed concern over a recent proposal to create subcommittees, claiming this structure can lead a Board to engage in things that are best left to the Administration. He emphasized that the role of the Board should be to provide guidance and oversight, and he praised the Board for the many avenues and venues currently in place to provide input to the Board. He recommended a study/article by the University of Washington (sponsored by the

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National Center on School Choice) on Charter School Governance. He closed by praising our wonderful administrative team, and cautioning against putting any structure in place that might undermine their efforts at running the school.

3. Rick Mueller began his comments on Board governance by describing his unique perspective, having served on the Board and the Administration simultaneously. He claimed that if parents have a structure to circumvent the Administration, it has a way of undermining the school leaders. He asked the Board to think carefully about these implications. He thanked the Board for their dedication and for great work. Matt Carpenter reminded the audience that tonight's agenda item on Board Administrative Processes is only a kickoff to the discussion, and asked that all comments be taken as valuable inputs as we discuss ways to define Board governance.

4. Karen Birch expressed concern that the Administration's proposed definition of hazing is still too broad, and therefore open to miscalculation and misinterpretation. She provided an alternate definition of hazing, written by Tim Birch (Attachment 2).

- B. From the President. Mark Hyatt praised the morning's Veteran's Day assembly as the best yet. He then updated the Board on our character program's rural outreach to Routt County. The Daniel's Grant staff hopes our award-winning character program will benefit other schools.
- C. Operations Update. Kevin Collins highlighted the inspection and cleaning of modular Classrooms 1 and 2 at the East Campus. We've asked the Health Department and an industrial hygienist to inspect and assist us, so we can ensure the environment is safe and healthful.
- D. Secondary Schools Update. Peter Hilts announced that student Kaitlyn Hannenberg was named by the Denver Post as the female cross country athlete of the year. He highlighted the great work by cast and crew on the play Annie. Referencing alumni outreach discussion, we're hearing good things on what we are doing well, and where we can improve, as well as a consistent message about the value of (and gratitude for) our Rhetoric Class.
- E. Instructional Philosophy Update. Leesa Waliszewski praised Ruth Miller for her assistance with the Veteran's Day Assembly, and her work on our Character Program. She the provided updates on the upcoming Building the Passion Conference, and asked Board members to notify her if they plan to participate.
- F. Elementary Schools Update. Veronica Wolken commented that the staff is pleased with the new training on literacy testing, and that all elementary schools and preparing for various Christmas concerts. She praised the PTOs for working in instrumental ways on all campuses. Each campus is busy—staffs and students are participating in lots of field trips, and administrators are preparing for formal observations.
- G. From the Board

1. Lisa Sutton highlighted the great community at the Central Campus, and praised the members of their PTO. She lauded Band Director Christina Soper for an excellent marching band performance. She closed by

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thanking Ruth Miller for a wonderful Distinguished Lecture Series, including speakers such as holocaust survivor Jack Adler.

2. Steve Tomberlin encouraged parents to take advantage of numerous opportunities to help improve our school.

3. Chris Leland thanked Diana Burditt and Kevin Collins for keeping parents informed about the ongoing processes at the East Campus. He advised them that parents want to be part of the solution.

4. Chris Bender commended Hal Meyer and his team for smoothly administering the recent accreditation process.

5. Matt Carpenter praised the recent Barn Dance as a fun family event, and gave a big “yee haw!” to organizers Lisa Sutton and Sue Obenauf.

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 - Oct 22, 2007 (Attachment 3)
- B. Operations Update (Attachment 4)
- C. Monthly Financials – Oct (Attachments 5 and 6)

Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Chris Leland, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous 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. Audit Review. Doug Hering introduced Wendy Swanhorst, CPA, of Swanhorst & Co., LLC, who provided an overview of the annual audit (Attachment 7). She described TCA’s financial condition as good, with the financial records in good order, and management doing a good job of oversight. She made one recommendation—trying to consolidate PTO accounts, since multiple organizations with many sets of financial books are difficult to oversee. Chris Bender asked if there were any audit issues associated with the previous accounting software. Ms. Swanhorst indicated that there were not. She added that the software was basic but that it did the job. Chris Bender stated that he was following up on a point that was made in the justification of the new Infinite Vision software. It was stated that there would be an auditor management comment made regarding the viability of the old software. Doug Herring stated that the new software provides significant savings and enhanced integration capability.. Dr. Herring also added that the installation of the new software is going well. Ms. Swanhorst then indicated general support for Audit committees, since it gives the auditors more time to discuss and interact with Board members. Matt Carpenter indicated that some committees serve two functions, and suggested the Executive Committee or FAST might also serve as an Audit Committee. Doug Hering

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indicated that the FAST currently supports the CFO and Administration, but it could serve a dual purpose. Doug Hering commented that using the FAST committee would provide more time for the Board to review the audit and preclude reporting at a regular Board meeting. Matt Carpenter thanked Dr. Hering and his staff for their amazing performance, and Doug Hering specifically highlighted the work of Toni DeMott. Lisa Sutton cited great feedback on the new software, and requested an update on its implementation. Doug Hering reported that everything is on schedule for implementation on Jan 1, 2008.

B. Charlotte Mason “Lab School” Update. Leesa Waliszewski introduced Instructional Philosophy Director Dorothy Simpson, teachers Jen Heffentrager and Liane Jackson, and parent (and staff member) Lynn Jenkins, asking each to provide details of their experiences over the first 2 ½ months of this experiment.

1. Dorothy Simpson provided the overview, stating that while these teachers are using the same curriculum, there are differences in both the physical atmosphere and the way instruction takes place. The technique of narration is the linchpin of instruction, and teachers provide much more specific work on disciplines of habit, such as concentration, observation, etc. She closed by highlighting the amount of Charlotte Mason book study completed by over 60 teachers to date.

2. Liane Jackson emphasized the areas that differ from our current mode of instruction. First, the atmosphere is very homelike, simple, and peaceful—not over stimulating. Second, there are fewer students per class—14 vs. 20—and although there is no tutor, student weaknesses are much more easily detected with fewer students. Finally, we focus more on interaction and relationships, which produces a more intimate environment and cultivates a more successful learning environment. For example, we have lunch with our students, and explore the art of conversation. Interaction with students has become less of the children wanting to please teachers, and more about relationships.

3. Jen Heffentrager described training children in the habits of good living by redirecting behavior, and teaching them what they ought or should do in a given situation. There are few external motivators, with more of a focus on natural consequences. Character lessons are brought about more naturally through discussions about people through fables, legends, etc. She observes that children’s vocabulary and retention have both improved.

4. Both teachers then listed some challenges with the new environment. First, exams take longer, to provide time for narration, but the results indicate a deeper understanding and retention of material. Next, since there is no tutor, and teachers do our own recess and lunch duties, grading becomes trickier. However, it’s a benefit for us to have the extra relational time with the children, to see how they interact on the playground, and to help us see the whole child. Finally, it’s proven a challenge to find the extra time for research and gathering of the necessary quality materials.

5. Lynn Jenkins described the turnaround she’s witnessed in her daughter since beginning in the Lab School. While previous years had proved difficult, this year there has been little struggle—the narration technique appears to link things together, enhancing her daughter’s confidence, her sense of ownership, and her personal responsibility for the learning experience. Her retention has improved, and she loves school—and all of this has improved our family dynamic at home.

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6. Chris Bender inquired into the process for obtaining feedback from parents. Leesa Waliszewski responded that while we haven't begun formally gathering data, we are at the point where we will begin a more formal process, and we're just beginning discussion on the impact this lab may have on the future (Attachment 8). Board members made several inquiries of the presenters, and Steve Pope asked for a reporting timeline. Mark Hyatt agreed that the next Lab School report will occur in February, after our principals return from an instructional trip to the Charlotte Mason school in Ambleside, TX. Matt Carpenter closed by thanking all the teachers and staff who are making this experiment happen.

C. Hazing: Update on Policy, Actions, etc. Mark Hyatt began the update by providing the definition and draft policy (Attachments 9 and 10), and then described the structured approach our coaches use during their practices. Chris Bender recommended a word change, and Peter Hilts advocated keeping both the word "downplay" and "tolerate," to diminish a culture of hazing, and prevent the minimizing of this serious issue. Clark Miller recommended broadening the policy language to include all activities; beyond sports. Matt Carpenter noted that Nate Sassaman may have a conflict of interest as both a coach and the Activities Director; Mark Hyatt assured the Board that the High School Principal evaluates the Activities Director, to oversee and mitigate any potential conflicts.

Matt Carpenter called for a break at 7:57 p.m. Members of the Lead Team were excused. The meeting reconvened at 8:14 p.m.

D. October Count / Registrar Report. Kara McIntyre presented the comprehensive Registrar's Annual Report (Attachments 11 and 12). Mark Hyatt updated the Board on discussions with District 20 regarding intra-district transfers, and recommended aligning with D20 policies. The Board approved continuing this discussion with D20. Mark Hyatt then announced that D20 is researching home school outreach and online extension programs; this led to a discussion of our programs. Lisa Sutton asked if there would be a need for us to break off our Cottage School Program, and how the student count affects our numbers for CHSAA categories. Peter Hilts confirmed that we will remain 3A through 2010, although CHSAA will re-evaluate their 3A threshold next year. Doug Hering will address various implications of this discussion next month during the General Fund Revenue Projection. Kara McIntyre closed by stating that the overall Letter of Understanding return rate was approximately 70%. Chris Leland praised Kara for her consistently amazing work.

E. Board Administrative Processes - By-law Review and Revision and Standing Subcommittees of the Board. After Chris Bender distributed a handout (Attachment 13), he indicated that this outcome of this review will have three segments. First, the core values should be reviewed, to ensure they are truly reflective of who we are at TCA. Next, Board processes should be examined, to ensure meeting time is spent in a way that reflects and supports our mission statement and core values. Finally, our by laws should be reviewed, to ensure our legal document properly emphasizes our core values and mission. Leesa Waliszewski cited her recent experience at the Charting the Course discussion, and suggested the Board determine whether we are a school that remains focused on enduring core values, or whether we are a school that is democracy-/discussion-driven, which constantly evaluates and/or potentially changes its direction. Peter Hilts suggested that the amount of emphasis we place on the "assist parents" element of our mission statement may determine how frequently we evaluate and/or change focus. Chris Leland praised this agenda item as an excellent discussion to have, and noted it may also provide clarification on the Board's governance model. Chris Bender announced that he will head a subcommittee to initiate this discussion, and asked that Peter Hilts, Leesa Waliszewski, Don Stump, Chris Leland, and Steve Tomberlin comprise the initial membership. Steve Pope recommended including more founders,

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parents, and teachers. Matt Carpenter preferred that the Board lead this discussion, and therefore initially limited the committee to members of the Board and Lead Team. Steve Pope urged the committee to obtain inputs from various constituent groups, and asked what the Board will do with the results of these discussions. Chris Bender agreed that incorporating outcomes into the Letter of Understanding could be one use, and Matt Carpenter anticipates more clarification on the process as we go through it. Chris Bender agreed that the committee will begin by determining which discussion points will need further refinement, and that they will provide an update at the December meeting.

- F. Quarterly Review. Doug Hering provided a quarterly review of all funds, including highlights from the monthly General Fund (Attachments 14 – 17), reporting that the first quarter has gone very well from a budgetary perspective. The PPF account is over-budget, almost exclusively due to the Lab School. Steve Tomberlin asked if the revenue from the Lab School is exceeding the expenses. Doug Hering responded that the program is definitely paying for itself. Steve Tomberlin asked that a financial report be included in the next Lab School update in February, specifically whether the program is financially self-sustaining. Doug Hering continued the review by citing that donations are down compared to last year, but speculated that this could be due to anticipation of the Spring Fling fundraiser. Chris Bender asked whether funding for SPED came under PPF. Dr. Hering replied it came under federal grants. He concluded by announcing that we are currently in good shape, although we anticipate less capital construction funding than last year.
- G. Review of Board Policies for the Election Process, Succession Plan, and Induction Process. Matt Carpenter distributed copies of the current Election Policy (Attachment 18), and began the discussion by inquiring whether the election cycle was too long, and if so, would it make sense for the cycle to go from February through May. Chris Leland inquired whether a shorter timeframe will ensure that the PTOs are able to offer opportunities for the candidates to speak. Matt Carpenter then broached a second issue: whether to induct new Board members at the beginning of the August meeting, so they can vote for the new officers. He observed that D20 does not hold their transition meeting in August. Steve Tomberlin provided a review of previous election processes. Chris Leland summed up with the proposal that we announce vacancies in January or February, vote at the April meeting, and shadow until the August meeting. A First Read will be presented next month.

VIII. Other Business

- A. Steve Pope asked whether we were abandoning the discussion about Board administrative processes. Chris Bender responded that will be incorporated in the discussion underlying the By-law Review.
- B. Mark Hyatt presented an informational report on teacher attrition (Attachment 19), noting our average is 21%, and that this is better than most public schools. He indicated we ought to compare ourselves to all the schools in Colorado, rather than just D20. Steve Pope inquired into the details of the graph depicting teacher attrition vs. other professions.
- C. Lisa Sutton initiated a short discussion on the upcoming Board-hosted appreciation breakfasts.

IX. Future Agenda Items

- A. Parent Survey Plan – Information

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- B. New Course Proposals – First Read
- C. General Fund Revenue Projection, FY08-09 – First Read
- D. Board Administrative Processes - By-law Review and Revision and Standing Subcommittees of the Board – Update
- E. TCA Building Corp - Appoint Directors (Chairman) – First Read
- F. Building Community Within the Classroom Structure
- G. Vision Subcommittee
- H. Board Goals/Objectives for 2007-2008

Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. 24-6-402(4) (f), Personnel and Discipline Matters, at 10:03 p.m., for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

X. Executive Session

Moved by Steve Pope, seconded by Clark Miller, to adjourn to public session. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

XI. Adjournment

Moved by Matt Carpenter, seconded by Steve Tomberlin, to adjourn at 11:00 p.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

Matt Carpenter
Chairman

Chris Bender
Secretary