

The Classical Academy
975 Stout Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Board of Directors Regular Meeting
North Campus
Monday, March 17, 2008

- I. Call to Order. Chairman Matt Carpenter called the open session to order at 6:04 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, Vance Brown, and Steve Tomberlin (via phone). Also present: Mark Hyatt, President.

Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f) at 6:05p.m., for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote

- III. Executive Session - per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f), for the purpose of discussing personnel issues

Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn to public session at 6:53p.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote

- IV. Comments From the Audience

- A. Tammy Totzke asked the Board for an update on the extension of the school year for East Students: school year 07/08. She also asked for an update the location of East students for next fall.

- V. East Campus Building Update

Mark Hyatt stated that last meeting he had asked for 30-day extension to research Pikes Peak Community College property partnership. He learned that it is legal for TCA to rent land for \$1/year. He commented that negotiations are going well and advised the Board that he will deliver the Lead Team's recommendation to them electronically.

TCA submitted a request to D20 that we make up half the contact time missed, by utilizing all the teacher workdays (ISTs), instead of extending the year. D20 thinks they can provide facilities for our students next year, but they're still not sure where the location(s) will be. Mark suspects the timeframe to be by mid- to late-April. Mark assured the Board that the students and faculty will be in safe and secure locations.

Kevin Collins stated that further construction actions are on hold until the decision for the site location is made. Initial design reviews with the contractors are underway and added that by positioning ourselves as far forward as we can (without obligating ourselves if the site changes) would be ideal.

- VI. Reconfiguring Elementary Programs / The "Art of Learning" Proposal: (Attachment: Modifications to the Art of Learning Proposal)

Leesa Waliszewski recommended this topic be a second read, due to the modifications. Lead Team has been able to engage in conversations with staff and parents and would like to hold several more meetings

before the April meeting. They understand the extra stresses the East campus is experiencing, and phased-in approach is not without precedent.

Mary Kretchman expressed her regrets about speaking last month without thoroughly understanding the issue. She addressed her sentiments in a letter to the board. "Classical" meant bringing the best of everything in combination and TCA was founded with the blend of Charlotte Mason, Socratic, and Trivium methods. The Art of Learning proposal helps us move in the direction we always envisioned. She humbly apologized for any confusion she felt she contributed to. The purpose of the IPD Team is to ensure we stay on course philosophically, and stated she is grateful for them.

Leesa Waliszewski presented the "Modifications to the Art of Learning Proposal" handout that guided through the modified proposal. She asked the Board that they approve the next year's Phase 2 of the pilot program, with Lab school being Phase one. She and her staff continue to explore ideas, and how they would incorporate them into the classrooms. She would like to allow parents share in a dialogue with the first-grade teachers to help arrive at a proposal for next year. They are asking to end the current Latin program (5th and 6th grade), and have Spanish return to two days per week, K-6. She stated that these changes are necessary, whether or not we implement the rest of the proposal. They realize the expectations for the classes are unrealistic. The No Child Left Behind legislation has narrowed our pool of high quality Spanish teachers, while demand has gone up. Tutors would go from 12 to 11 FTE at North and Central. The only changes for East would be the Latin program, in order to minimize the disruptions to their programs.

Clark Miller commended Leesa and the staff for their judgment and wisdom in modifying the proposal. Especially, in slowing down the implementation and involving the community in the development. Steve Pope also thanked them for the time and effort they have put into the research. It has highlighted an overall process and management change with interactions at different stages. He challenged the Board to work with Administration to define this process, so that all stakeholders understand when their voices can best be included.

Lisa Sutton praised Leesa for taking the proposal to Town Hall. Chris Bender asked about the financial impact and Doug Hering responded that TCA will save a little this next year, and then break even in the future years. With the new East building, our budget has been the tightest ever. Doug added that we'll have a much better idea of our financial position by phasing this in incrementally.

Leesa Waliszewski advised the board that they will be surveying parents for evaluation of the program. Leesa added that all three TCA campuses, principals and IPDs met with all grade levels to explain how this proposal ties into TCA's philosophy, and included time for Q&A and reflection. Diana Burditt shared the details of these meetings with East faculty. They discovered, collectively, that they need to be in a more settled place. Veronica Wolken and Don Stump agreed and stated the views are similar at the North and Central campuses.

Leesa stated that it would not be difficult to modify changes to the program if ever we decide not to pursue it after the first year. She plans to communicate this to the parent body by conducting smaller meetings with current Kindergarten parents. This would help to clarify, answer questions and allow time for reflection. Then, progress by having larger town hall meetings.

Steve Pope encouraged fellow parents to educate themselves on this proposal. Vance Brown thanked Mary Kretchman for the sentiments in her letter and added that she models the school so well with her humility and exemplary citizenship.

Jeff Naujok expressed that the revised proposal does resolve most of the issues he had however, he is requesting for “empirical evidence” supporting the success of this program.

John Robillard applauded the staff’s tenor to take a step back and evaluate more thoroughly. However, he urged objectivity and evaluation of opposing view points in academia. In addition, he advised that an anonymous survey questioning the faculty’s viewpoint on this proposal would be prudent. Overall, he is concerned with elimination of Latin because of the solid foundation it provides.

Barb Childress expressed her gratitude that TCA’s is slowing down the implementation. She read from her prepared comments that referenced the TCA website, and articles on the benefits of Latin. She expressed her concerns that this new program change (eliminates the teaching of Latin) has not been fully justified. She urged that evidence supporting this change in curriculum, financially and academically, be provided.

Ken Childress commented that he is pleased to hear about the plan to further assess and implement the changes slowly. His concerns are the added costs to these changes- eliminating Latin, reducing Spanish and the consequences of losing good teachers. These changes are significant, and should not be minimized, under the auspices of returning to our roots. Also, the level of discourse among parents needs to be redirected and handled with the TCA character we expect our kids to have—encourages all to have a civil discourse, and agree to disagree.

Kara McIntyre thanked the staff for the vote of confidence and in the intellect and passion of the Lead Team. She added that she votes in confidence of the Lab School and witnesses that her daughter (who has been participating in the Lab this year) practices the “personal anecdote” of habit development that is taught in this program. She added that there is an element of faith and trust we should have in those who have studied this.

Sara Smith (teacher) agrees with the proposed curriculum and feels that the program expects more than having kids regurgitate knowledge. She added that this approach is refreshing and invigorating but most importantly, it infuses a passion for learning.

Leslie Giesbrecht expressed her gratitude for realizing that East is in survival mode. However, her concerns lie among the upper grade level students losing their passion for learning- especially those on literacy plans. She commented that the Lab school does not reflect the original model and that an agreed model that reflects TCA’s roots is needed. She requested specific details on how this change will affect the faculty’s teaching ability and advised that it may be more logistically difficult to revert back than what the Lead Team is indicating.

Brett Gracely stated that his kids would be here regardless of this proposal. He noticed a big improvement in his children’s dialogue ability and that it doesn’t fit neatly into a parental or teacher responsibility. It’s been an unequivocally positive experience for his 3rd grader—which he’s seen a profound difference in how they’re approaching learning.

Laurie Bossart thanked the Administration and shared what she found in Board minutes from a year ago. She informed the board that at one point TCA discussed that Latin wouldn’t go away, but would be incorporated.

Brenda White shared her one concern that decreasing the amount of tutors may present some problems. She realized that one shouldn’t overstate the value of a tutor at TCA. That tutor helps those who struggle and keeps the entire class progressing at nearly the same level. She asked the board to please consider this.

Billy Ramstel stated that many things have evolved at TCA over time and parents have a choice to have their children study here. He added that TCA is very unique and is targeted to assist the parents. This is not about content--this is about how well the teachers are trained and how they manage their classrooms. He shared that these struggles are preparing his daughter for the challenges she's going to face in secondary.

Mary Kretchman stated that the love of learning and the engagement with whatever the subject matter is, is the excitement. The more people understand what this program is about, the more comfortable they'll feel with it.

Rachel Muren, teacher at North, shared her experience with embracing this new approach and that it was not "rammed down our throats". It was Veronica Wolken's passion she observed that reignited what she loves about TCA. She supports this opportunity even though she has questions and doubts.

Liane Jackson (1st grade Lab School teacher) shared her journey with embracing the pilot program. Her focus was on a number of logistical concerns. Internally, it took time for her to understand this philosophy which- she learned through self study, research and from experts. She has implemented some of the principles in her classroom and found the value of relational awareness with her students. The smaller class size is manageable without a tutor. She is convinced that this philosophy is right and worthy of our pursuit. She is 100% on board for the sake of the children.

Jim Kretchman reminded those present that TCA is a public school that incorporates philosophy of education- many other public schools don't. He expressed that it's often not as clear as everyone would like it to be, but the mission is to preserve what the school was meant to be. The Board's mission is to ask a lot of hard questions before we make any changes. He also addressed the fact that TCA will not be able to provide hard evidence supporting the changes being proposed due to the multitude of variables and reminded everyone that TCA is an experiment in education.

Matt Carpenter stated that it was amazing to have this many people come to a Board meeting modeling civil disagreement, with passion. He thought this would have been a great meeting for our students to observe. He thanked Leesa and the school Principals and decided to take this a second read and to vote for next month.

Matt Carpenter called for a break at 9:02p.m.; reconvened at 9:10p.m.

VII. Presentation to the Board from a TCA Staff Family

A. Executive Session - per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f), for the purpose of discussing personnel issues

Moved by Matt Carpenter, seconded by Clark Miller, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f), for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote 9:11p.m.

Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn to public session. Roll call. Approved by unanimous vote 9:38p.m.

Moved by Matt Carpenter, seconded by Steve Tomberlin, to approve waiver as requested, due to the unique humanitarian situation of a TCA staff member. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote 9:39p.m.

VIII. Succession Planning: (Attachment not available on-line: What is Succession Planning)

Discussion took place regarding the attachment: What is Succession Planning and on the TCA Administration leadership succession planning for the future.

IX. 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: (Attachments: Dec. 10, Dec. 17, Jan.4 Feb. 4)
- B. Monthly Financials: (Attachment: Feb. Balance Sheet, Feb. Income Sheet)
- C. Operations Update: (Attachment: TCA Administration)

Moved by Clark Miller and seconded by Steve Pope, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote 10:10p.m.

X. 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. Announce Board of Director Candidates

Chris Bender announced the following candidates for the three pending vacancies (in alphabetical order): Matt Carpenter; Wendy Hammack-Smith; Jim Kretchman; Lisa Mueller; Jeff Najouk; Lisa Sutton; Steve Willis

Discussion took place in regards to the process of setting up voting logistics and meetings: Town Hall, PTO, etc. Information will be available on-line and send home packets will be distributed before spring break.

- B. Current Year Budget Revision: (Attachments: 07/08 Revision- Gen Fund; 07/08 Revision-All Funds)
Updated the Board, and requested approval for expenditure authority.

Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to approve the current Year Budget Revision. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

- C. Preliminary Annual Budget (for next fiscal year): (Attachments: 08/09 Prelim-Gen-Fund; 08/09 Prelim All Funds; 08/09 Prelim-Payroll Assumptions; and 08-09 Budget Presentation-not available on-line)

Doug Hering discussed information on the attachments: 08/09 Prelim-Gen-Fund; 08/09 Prelim All Funds; 08/09 Prelim-Payroll Assumptions; and 08-09 Budget Presentation-not available on-line). He also informed the board that Facilities has taken priority over everything else due to East Campus issues. Finance is trying to keep as much capital in reserves as possible. The goal is to raise one million dollars by 2010 (to enter \$4.8 million building project) in addition to researching more options to offset expenditure. This is to be discussed later in the year.

- D. Endowment Review: (Attachment: Endowment History)

Doug Hering updated the Board on the status of the Endowment Fund attachment.
Mark Hyatt: Designated donations for building- 10% to Endowment

- E. Parent Survey Report: (Attachments not available on-line: Survey Results; Executive Summary)

Kevin presented the results of the 2008 TCA Parent Survey. He stated that we were very successful this year gathering feedback from respondents. However, there was reduced survey participation- only approximately 25% filled out online surveys as opposed to 2005-2006's approximately 75% of hardcopy handouts. The outcome of both surveys came to be very similar. A condensed survey will be posted on website. Future Discussion: working session (next semester)

- F. Board Orientation for New Board Members: (Attachment: Board Member Orientation Policy)
Item: To discuss orientation process for newly elected and re-elected board members

Matt Carpenter discussed the orientation process for newly elected and re-elected board members. See attachment Board Member Orientation Policy. Matt requested that discussion begin and ideas develop for learning the Lead Team roles.

To Vote/Second read for April: To have the conflict resolution process for the new coming board members and as public working session.

- G. Encourage Use of Fall Break to Enhance TCA Philosophy

Chris Bender discussed ways to encourage use of fall break for education based travel. He presented the idea to PTO leaders and interesting reactions were in favor to put the word out about the gathered input and concepts used by those families who travel. He mentioned that he had planted the seed, and plans to revisit topic. Follow up is needed on contacts from PTO leaders that are involved in travel.

- H. TCA "Core Values" Update

Chris Bender presented the TCA "Core Values" discussion and advised that a draft laying out Peter Hilt's timeline be created following informal feedback. A draft to the community and board in written format would then follow. After publication, this document will be presented to the board for First Read and set up for formal board discussion for May timeframe. Eventually, this will influence how Board meetings are conducted and how by laws are reviewed.

- I. Board Code of Conduct Discussion: (Attachments: Code of Conduct; Proposed Revisions)

Matt Carpenter presented the enhancements to the Board Code of Conduct policy and suggested for Board to follow the conflict resolution model to bridge the gap between the two.

Vote on next meeting.

XI. Future Agenda Items

- A. Spotlight: Celebrating TCA - Information
- B. Board of Director Election - Information
- C. Final Annual Budget (for next fiscal year) - Vote
- D. President's Annual Review (Begin) – Information
- E. Quarterly Review – Information
- F. Foreign Language Curriculum Review Recommendations – First Read
- G. Board Meeting Schedule & Agenda Item Review - First Read
- H. Board Orientation for New Board Members - Vote
- I. Core Values Committee Report - Information
- J. TCA Building Corp - Appoint Directors - Vote
- K. Encourage Use of Fall Break to Enhance TCA Philosophy - Discussion
- L. Code of Conduct for Leadership Volunteers - First Read
- M. Reconfiguring Elementary Programs / The "Art of Learning" Proposal - Vote

XII. Adjournment

Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn meeting at 11:28pm. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

Matt Carpenter
Chairman

Chris Bender
Secretary