

The Classical Academy  
975 Stout Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Board of Directors Meeting  
North Campus  
Monday, April 13, 2009

- I. Call to Order. Chairman Matt Carpenter called the open session to order at 5:02p.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, Steve Pope, Clark Miller, Chris Bender, Vance Brown, Lisa Sutton, and Jim Kretchman. Also present: Mark Hyatt, President.
- III. Executive Session – per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(f), for the purpose of discussing personnel issues related to staff and parent relationships.

*Moved by Clark Miller, seconded by Jim Kretchman, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(f) at 5:05p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel issues related to staff and parent relationships. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.*

*Moved by Steve Pope, seconded by Vance Brown, to adjourn to public session at 5:57p.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.*

- IV. Spotlight Recognition
  - A. Ms Love's 5<sup>th</sup> Graders – Abigail Lodholm, Bailey Brown, Spencer Webb

Don Stump introduced Kristen Love, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Central. Her students wrote letters to the Board of Directors, emphasizing that they wanted to feel connected to the school, to be heard, recognized, and to feel important. Ms Love's class chose 3 letters to be read aloud at tonight's Board Meeting – Abigail Lodholm, Bailey Brown, and Spencer Webb. Each student approached the microphone and read their letter. Each student showed courage in the reading of the letters and character in the content of their letters. The Board was very appreciated of the words shared by these students.

- B. Kayla Summers

Veronica Wolken highlighted North Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grader, Kayla Summers. Kayla won The Colorado League of Charter Schools first annual Charter School Essay Contest. She was presented a \$250 scholarship from CollegeInvest from Lt Governor O'Brien on April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Denver.


- C. Dylan Brown

Veronica Wolken also highlighted North Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grader, Dylan Brown. The Pikes Peak Library District, Kennedy Center Imagination Celebration, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators announced that Dylan Brown is among the winners in the 2009 Jean Ciavonne Poetry contest.

- V. Board of Directors Election
  - A. Candidate Comments - 5-minute presentations by Ron Mast, Jeffrey Naujok, Sue Obenauf, & Jim Woody
  - B. Voting
  - C. Update on TCA East Campus

Item: To inform the Board of progress since the March 9, 2009 Board Meeting  
Presenter: Mark Hyatt/Kevin Collins/Chris Coulter

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For: Information/Discussion

Kevin Collins introduced Chris Coulter, the project manager for the East Campus Project. Chris provided a review of the trades and their progress in this current phase of the project. There is a lot more activity with more people on the site – more subcontractors are working simultaneously. We're concerned about the schedule and hope to make up another week and reassess where we'll be as we move into the summer. Chris indicated that we have a tremendous group of subcontractors and the team is working very well; its positive for getting a high quality product completed as rapidly as possible.

Mark Hyatt presented information on College Pathways, which will begin course registration this week. Students can take 3-5 pre-collegiate classes; college-ready students can be full time. Beginning in 2010, students will be able to take 2-7 classes. The next College Pathways Information Night is schedule for Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the North Campus, rm 3303/05.

D. Announcement of Election Results – Matt Carpenter

Ron Mast and Jim Woody were elected to the Board of Directors. They will be joining the Board as non-voting members starting tonight.

VI. Comments

A. From the Audience

Matt Carpenter reminded the audience to please keep their comments to 5 minutes and that this time is not for a conversation with the Board. He encouraged all to be respectful in their presentations.

Barb Childress would like to see the Board of Directors election process handled by an outside source.

Connie Degrazio, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at North Elementary, is in favor of the proposed new schedule. She previously taught with the half-day-off schedule. She is looking forward to working with the teachers in the same grade level and up and down a grade level. Connie is also looking forward to a block schedule with a longer time to work with students, providing an easier time to integrate the classroom and subjects.

Kelly McCue has attended the Board Meetings since December 2008. She wanted to know when Larry Borland would do his presentation at the Board Meeting and also what the Board and Administration is going to do about school safety so the concerned families can make decisions for families.

Mark Hyatt replied that Mr Borland would not come to present to the TCA community until the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Review was complete. District 20 is hoping the CDE Review will be completed by early May. The plan is to address safety and security in the summer.

LeAnne Jackson, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher at North Elementary, is an advocate of the proposed schedule for next year. Block scheduling is appealing to teachers and she would love to work together more as a team with time built into the schedule.

Jeff Horton, a TCA dad, is against the proposed half-day Fridays schedule. A group of families met together and discussed the advantages and disadvantages to the proposal. They further researched ideas and made calls to principals and schools across the country and looked at different view with how to handle block scheduling and Response to Intervention (RTI). Although teachers and administrators are for the proposed schedule, some

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families cannot afford extra child care and would consider withdrawing their kids from TCA because they cannot afford the extra cost. Jeff understands the proposal is not intended to segregate the school; TCA is not only about those who can afford to take off on Fridays. He asked if there was another way to accommodate teachers and look at the schedule. Jeff hopes the Administration and Board can look at alternatives.

Kristen Love, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Central Elementary, asked her students what they thought of the proposed schedule. They did not mention the half-day Fridays, but rather focused on having chunks of time to be in their homerooms; time to bond and share information and opinions. Kristen thought it was an interesting perspective and her class asked her to share it with the Board.

Steve Pope thanked those who spoke for speaking in a civil, to the point manner.

## VII. 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- Handouts (February 9<sup>th</sup>, March 9<sup>th</sup>, March 17<sup>th</sup>, March 19<sup>th</sup>)
- B. Monthly Financials
- C. Operations Update
- D. TCA Charter Update
- E. TCA-C Project Plans (Sewer Project Initiative and Addition of Hydrants/Water Pressure)
- D. Board Orientation and Board Policies
- E. Board Meeting Schedule & Agenda Item Review

Matt Carpenter stated the TCA Charter Update (Item D) is pulled from the Consent Agenda. The Board is only voting on the Minutes from the March 17<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Everything else is listed for information.

*Moved by Chris Bender, seconded by Jim Kretchman, to approve the March 17<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote at 8:14p.m.*

## VIII. 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. School Calendar Review
  - Item: To formalize the 2009/2010 elementary school calendars – includes update about elementary school proposal and response from parents
  - Presenter: Kevin Collins
  - For: Information/Discussion

Kevin Collins began the discussion by saying that Operations consolidates and brings the school calendars together. The effort usually starts in January with First Reads for the Board. There are special initiatives that needed to be covered this year. He turned the floor over to Veronica Wolken and Leesa Waliszewski to discuss the parent surveys and further information.

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Veronica Wolken stated that each TCA family received a letter with survey information unique to their family, allowing for one anonymous reply per family. 15 families contacted the school about missing letters and were offered alternatives. The survey consisted of one question and a comments section. The Administration received feedback from 280 families and the information was presented to the Board. 25% of respondents Strongly Supported the proposal, 25% Supported the proposal, 9% were Neutral, 18% Opposed, and 23% Strongly Opposed the proposal. A group of people are very strongly supporting and another group is very strongly opposed. The Administration asked the Board to consider a one-year pilot program for the proposed calendar/schedule.

Steve Pope provided the board a summary of points from his discussion with Veronica and Leesa. They relooked at alternatives and took into account concerns on the timing of making changes after the District 20 Choice Window has ended. If this discussion had happened last October, the Board's input would have been different. Steve recommended to the Board task the Administration to go back and reduce the number of half-day Fridays so there would be less impact on child care, no loss of classroom time, and how to best reduce extra carpooling trips.

Vance Brown asked the reasoning behind the one-year pilot vice making the schedule/calendar permanent. As a pilot, it has the potential to have TCA parents adjust only to have to readjust the following year. Steve replied that they want to see what works on some Fridays then reevaluate. It is a chance to see if the proposal is beneficial. The challenge is how to preserve the block schedule yet minimize the half-days. Matt Carpenter asked if the Administration feels like they've already tried that. Veronica replied yes.


Steve Pope asked the Administration what the alternative plan is if the Board does not okay all of the half-day Fridays? In order to find a win-win solution, the Board and Administration need to come to a middle ground for the first year. He proposed deferring the vote for a week to coincide with an extra Special Board Meeting later in April.

Matt Carpenter questioned why the Board is even voting. He didn't understand how this proposal is different from the parameters the Board had already given to the Administration. Clark Miller raised this concern at the last Board Meeting. Clark added that, in general, this is not the Board's decision, but the Administration may want the Board's coverage for this late-in-the-year decision.

Jim Kretchman added that he respects Clark and Matt's inputs and would agree if the timetable was different and the Board had not already approved the 2009-2010 calendar. The Board is the voice of the parents. The continued discussion is not intended as second-guessing, but he just doesn't want to leave any stone unturned. Is it fair to the community to make a change to the calendar at the last minute?

Ron Mast added that having gone through the Election Candidate Process, the calendar is a hot topic for parents right now. He appreciates Mr Horton's comments and pains to hear parents are considering leaving TCA. TCA kids are not replaceable and we need to take care of the kids that are at TCA. This is a topic where we've had more teachers at Board Meetings. The Board needs to look at any way possible to assist and support passionate teachers. Ron sees two main objections to the proposal: earlier start times and financial obligations from child care on half-day Fridays. The Board and Administration needs to take this opportunity to create a win-win situation by using those half-days for alternative instruction for kids – Latin, Great Starts Sports, Science Matters, and all other curriculum that TCA is able to provide. Ron proposed a scholarship program for families that may not be able to afford these programs. He concluded by saying TCA has the resources to come up with positive ideas since many TCA families are against the proposal.

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Leesa Waliszewski said the Administration is very open to those ideas and can see the possibilities. Leesa is concerned because there is no guarantee that those families who need the child care will get the classes. There are also space considerations, with teachers still in the classrooms on Friday afternoons. The Lead Team has had the discussion and will continue the discussion. The state mandates will prompt the Administration to come to the Board for at least a day and a half for state mandated testing. She continued that we need to take into account how many actual days we are looking at. The Administration can try to get the impact down to 1 or 2 days difference – really trying to minimize child care/financial concerns – then come back to the Board with a proposal.

Chris Bender asked what the Administration recommends for a schedule to work within the already-approved calendar. He said it would help to know the options.

Jim Kretchman understands there are a lot of challenges to think through and solve in the upcoming days. Its not that it can't be done but will take all those involved to be open to creative thinking. Could Specials be down to 25 minutes, vice 30, to allow the block scheduling? Leesa agreed there may be a few more places to minimize impact on Friday afternoons. There also is a possibility to combine specials for one 50 minute class per week, although that would go against good judgment for what instruction looks like for students. Veronica and Leesa went month-by-month to look at the proposal from a parent and child care perspective. The Administration, along with the Board, appreciates the community's concern about the economic impact on families. Leesa volunteered to go back one more time to bring the differential down to a 1 or 2 day difference from the current calendar. She felt the Administration would rather reengage than let the proposal go.

Doug Hering reminded the Administration and the Board that TCA cannot violate child care and day care laws. Any Friday afternoon program cannot look like a child care program; it needs to be instruction.

Lisa Sutton asked when TCA, legally, has to be compliant with Response to Intervention (RTI) mandates. Veronica replied that the law goes into effect this August 2009.

Vance Brown said the best solution is to come up with a compromise for a divided school. When speaking with families, the survey results match Vance's anecdotal evidence from the community. The goal is to come together and all give a little bit more.

Jim Kretchman believes in the education of kids and to empower teachers so that the overall quality of the package can go up. The implication that this proposal is self-serving to teachers is offensive. Jim heard that it was the teachers wanting this because it was best for the kids. If cutting minutes from specials would work for one year, it was an option that needed to be considered. He thanked Mr Horton for his effort, energy, and care with this proposal.

Ron Mast and Steve Pope volunteered to meet with the Administration to work toward a creative solution for moving the 41% who oppose the proposal. Steve suggested two alternative approaches to the meeting: to move the differential down from 5 ½ days to Zero or if the calendar does not change, how the Administration can implement the elementary specials block scheduling without lengthening the school day.

Chris Bender added that he would be a proponent of taking the "trial element" out of the proposal and Board vote. He would like to come up with a plan that lays out the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 calendars and to vote on that. He is not in favor of the possibility of changing the following year.

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Russ Sojourner discussed the Secondary aspect of the calendar. The secondary voice has been and will continue to be part of the discussion with the Board. Junior High and High School would adjust their start time to preserve the K-12 model and minimize negative impacts on the families. If minutes aren't added to the day, then the Administration has to have a discussion on how to implement RTI. Jim Kretchman liked the idea of elementary working simultaneously with secondary.

Steve Pope and Matt Carpenter said they would work with the Administration to set the date for a Board Meeting the following week.

B. Preliminary Budget Projection, FY09-10

Item: To review current assumptions for FY09-10 Budget (includes update on current proposed legislation regarding 08-09 and 09-10 Colorado School Finance)

Presenter: Doug Hering

For: First Read

Doug Hering provided the Board a document discussing the TCA budget projection, updated Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. We do not have a School Finance Act; would usually have one by now. In early November 2008, Governor Ritter announced a 6-7% increase in the 2009-2010 K-12 budget. After the holiday break, the governor's office announced they were planning on cutting \$150k or more from the budget. The Colorado Senate passed the school finance bill, but there is nothing out of the House yet. The numbers presented for TCA's 2009-2010 budget are soft; they are based on current information and are worst case. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act passed recently and the Colorado Legislature's reaction is based on what is going on in DC. The governor's cut is close to what Colorado thinks they'll get from the Federal Government Stimulus Act. Not everything that is cut can be replaced and the stimulus money is not recurring money. Doug has heard of school districts laying off employees or freezing wage scales.

Chris Bender asked about TCA's responsibility to report the budget to District 20. Doug has written confirmation from Pat Richardson and Will Hatcher that the District will accept TCA's 2009-2010 budget projection by May 15<sup>th</sup> and they have discussed moving the date to the end of May. District 20 is in the same situation to produce a budget.

Steve Pope asked what financial decisions are between now and May; what are the big impact items such as capital construction or the Mill Levy Override (MLO)? Doug replied that hiring and raises annually occur this time of year. The MLO is still on, but coming in at a lower number; around \$680k for 2010. Capital Construction money could go down \$100k and it is unlikely it would go up. College Pathways is another big piece. The assumption is 150 FTE for College Pathways for 2009-2010; that number is likely to go up. Mark added that District 20 did not approve the multi-district online program for College Pathways. This first year will be a "pilot" year with a blend of "online" and "seat-time."

Chris Bender stated this is a unique year from a budget perspective. Doug will continue to watch the financials and have an update at the next Board Meeting. The Board will have a Final Vote at the May Board Meeting.

Matt Carpenter thanked Doug on behalf of the Board for keeping track of a very fluid situation. If a Special Board Meeting needs to be called, he requested the Administration let the Board know since we want to be compliant with District 20's deadlines.

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C. President's Annual Review (Begin)

Item: To convene a sub-committee to commence the President's annual performance review

Presenter: Matt Carpenter

For: Discussion

Not discussed.

D. Executive Session – per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b), for the purpose of receiving legal counsel about the CDE Investigation

*Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Chris Bender, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(b) at 9:37p.m., for the purpose of receiving legal counsel about the CDE Investigation. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.*

*Moved by Chris Bender, seconded by Jim Kretchman, to adjourn to public session at 12:20a.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.*

E. Board Planning/Debrief/Additional Items

Item: To discuss future items the Board should discuss and debrief the board meeting

Presenter: Matt Carpenter/Steve Pope

For: Discussion

Not discussed.

IX. Future Agenda Items

- A. Parent Survey Summary – May
- B. Student Fee Schedule – May
- C. President's Compensation Plan and Objectives (Begin) – May
- D. Auditor Engagement – May
- E. Budget/Quarterly Review – May
- F. President's Annual Review (End) – June
- G. President's Compensation Plan and Objectives (End) – June
- H. Textbook Review/Approval – June
- I. Student Fee Schedule – June
- J. Annual Policy Review – June

X. Adjournment

*Moved by Jim Kretchman, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn meeting at 12:28a.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.*