

Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 28, 2017
Room 304 at 5:30 P.M.

OPEN SESSION

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER** by Board President

Meeting called to order at 5:31 PM.

- 2) **ROLL CALL**

Meg Rydman (MR), Board President (2018)	X
Mark Swanitz (MS), Secretary (2019)	X
Heather Fletcher (HF), Treasurer (2018)	X
Melanie Sutton Hodgdon (MSH), Member at Large (2018)	X
Robert Feinberg (RF), Member at Large (2019)	X
Elizabeth Dowhower (BD), Member at Large (2017)	X
Roxanne Usher (RU), Middle School Teacher Rep. (2016)	X (arrived 6:03 PM)
Linda Mayer (LM), Elementary Teacher Rep (2017)	X (arrived 6:02 PM)
Jim Brown (JB), Superintendent College School District	X (arrived 5:33 PM)
OTHER ATTENDEES:	
Mark Palmerston (MP), Executive Director	X

- 3) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** for March 28, 2017

Motion to approve the agenda: BD

Second: MSH

Motion to amend the original motion to include tabling the Board Survey Results (item 9d): HF

Second: BD

Discussion: none

Vote: Approved 7-0-0

Discussion: none

Vote: Approved 7-0-0

CLOSED SESSION (5:30 PM-6:00 PM)

Closed session called to order at 5:34 PM.

- 4) **PERSONNEL MATTERS PURSUANT TO GOV CODE 54597**

Closed session adjourned to recess at 5:54 PM.

Returned to open session at 6:00 PM.

OPEN SESSION

- 5) **REPORT** from Closed Session

MP presented the staffing plan for 2017-18 school year in full detail.

- 6) **PUBLIC COMMENT**

RU read a statement from the SYV Charter School Teachers Faculty Association in support of Executive Director Dr. Mark Palmerston, detailing his many accomplishments, personal and professional practices, his professional knowledge and his commitment to the school's vision and mission statements. She concluded with a request from the Faculty Association to acknowledge his efforts by offering him another contract term at SYVCS.

7) **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting February 21, 2017

Motion to approve the consent agenda: BD

Second: MSH

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 5-0-2

8) **STANDING REPORTS**

- a. Teachers' Report

Primary Grades

Kindergarten: Kindergarteners have been advancing their reading and writing skills by learning to increase their use of descriptive words when writing sentences and stories. In math, they are learning about two- and three-dimensional shapes in their Calendar Counts program. They are also sharpening their addition and subtraction skills in solving word problems. They began a new Arts Outreach session and are learning ceramics. In science, they are learning about motion and forces through the concepts of "push and pull."

1st Grade: First graders recently finished several longer projects and are enthusiastic about starting some new ones. They finished their ABC books and will be sharing them with each other, their buddies, and their families. They are now rehearsing their spring play, Three of a Kind. They are learning about the passage of time. They also received their library cards and checked out library books from the Solvang Library. Furthermore, they are learning about weather—air, sun, water, and wind—by making pinwheels, windsocks and kites. Finally, they have been exploring the Valley and the Great Wall of China on Google Maps.

2nd Grade: Second graders have been learning about the characteristics of 2D and 3D shapes using marshmallows and toothpicks. They have also been studying fractions. They are increasing their reading fluency and are approaching or above their target for the year. The students went on a field trip where they took a boat cruise and nature walk at Lake Cachuma. They also visited the nature center. They also reinforced their learning about rocks and the rock life cycle by doing an experiment in which they applied pressure and heat to Starburst candies.

3rd Grade: Third graders are studying sea life and tide pool animals. They are researching and preparing Slides presentations about a marine animal, are taking a boat trip from Avila, and are doing sea life drawings with Arts Outreach. They will be starting a swim unit, one hour per week for the next eight weeks at the YMCA. In math, students are learning about area, perimeter, fractions and geometric properties. They have also been taking practice CAASPP tests to get ready for the upcoming Smarter Balanced Assessment administration. In language arts, they are rehearsing their upcoming play, finishing their study of the last story in the language arts anthology and completing unit assessments in reading comprehension and vocabulary.

4th Grade: Fourth graders recently finished their mission research papers and presented their Google Slides presentations to the class. They are now moving on to study the Westward Movement and the Gold Rush in social studies. In language arts, they will begin the study of a new novel soon, during which they will be focusing on a variety of literary elements. They are also practicing for the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Music: Students are looking forward to Performing Arts week, April 3-6 at 5:30 PM each day.

Garden: Students have been cleaning up the garden and dealing with a pest problem. They are looking at solutions to protect the vegetables from squirrels and birds.

Genius Hour: For the first two meetings of the third trimester, students engaged in team collaboration activities. Next week, they will begin the last project sessions for this school year.

Middle School

Language Arts: Fifth graders are reading Esperanza Rising and looking at elements of plot and the author's use of literary devices. Sixth graders are reading and analyzing The Jungle Book and looking closely at characterization and how authors use language to convey deeper meaning. They are also doing extensive writing and analysis to continue to develop their writing skills. Seventh graders just finished The Giver and, after an extensive writing and peer revision process are presenting their

collaborative summative essays to the class. Eighth graders are in the middle of The Diary of Anne Frank and are developing a seven-paragraph research paper on a topic related to World War II.

Social Studies: *Fifth graders are studying the original thirteen colonies. Next they will be working on a research project and poster on a president. They will soon be studying the American Revolution. Sixth graders are learning about the ancient Israelites. This has involved learning about Moses, working on a mini book to go along with the story, and creating symbolic Passover meals. On the last Friday before Spring Break they'll celebrate the annual Seder meal and Passover celebration. Seventh graders are studying the Renaissance. They they have created and are presenting research projects on topics ranging from King Arthur, the Knights Templar, Nostradamus, Michelangelo, di Vinci, fashion, music and Galileo. Eighth graders are in the middle of a unit about the Civil War. They will be going on a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance this Thursday at which time they are also scheduled to see the Anne Frank Exhibit. The class read The Diary of Anne Frank in language arts and are eager to see the artifacts.*

Science: *Fifth graders finished learning about the water cycle, including some evaporation and condensation lab activities. Next they will study wind and density of fluids. Sixth graders are learning about transfer of energy and ecosystems. Following this they will learn about symbiosis. Seventh graders are learning about the fossil record and how scientists date parts of the earth and fossils. Next they will study bacteria and viruses. Eighth-graders learned about Pascal's principle, Archimedes principle, and Bernoulli's principle. Next is astronomy and the cause of seasons.*

Math: *Fifth graders are working with decimal place value to order, round, add and subtract decimals. Sixth graders are learning to multiply fractions and connecting this knowledge to finding the products of mixed numbers. They will extend into multiplying with decimals. The current unit will end with some geometry practice where students will learn the formulas to find the area of various figures. Seventh graders are continuing their work with proportions using tables, graphs, equations, and real life situations and are learning to simplify algebraic expressions. Finally, eighth graders are learning to solve equations which include fractions and decimals. Next they will be learning to solve systems of equations to solve for two variables and determine their point of intersection.*

Physical Education: *Middle schoolers have almost completed fitness testing. Middle school will begin a track unit soon to prepare for the All Valley Middle School Track Meet. Third graders have joined fourth graders for PE on Fridays to allow them to play more team games.*

b. **PTSO Report**

MP shared the PTSO's minutes from their last meeting. Included in the minutes, was a mention of the planned Flamingo Flocking Fundraiser. HF asked if we had changed directions with regard to fundraising, because she remembered that the Annual Appeal was intended to replace all fundraising. MP answered her that while the Annual Appeal was intended to replace fundraising, it hasn't been as successful as hoped, and so there is a need to do a limited number of other fundraisers including Flamingo Flocking. What we are definitely not doing are direct sales fundraisers like Sees Candy and wrapping paper. At a later meeting, MP promised to share and request board input and approval of some plans he has for the Annual Appeal for next year.

c. **Treasurer's Report**

HF presented the treasurer's report, stating that as of February 28, 2017 we had an ending Fund 401 balance of \$45,063.19 and that she has subsequently transferred \$10,000 in donation funds to our accounts at the Santa Barbara County Office of Education to reduce the account balance and keep our assets protected.

d. **Director's Report**

MP presented data which demonstrated that after the first semester of high school Charter graduates are competing exceptionally well academically when compared to all freshmen. He also shared that the CCSA Conference he recently attended had a different feel and was focused more on politics than on teaching and learning than past conferences have. MP reported that with the recent addition of 20 new kindergarteners and 8 new TK students, our projected enrollment for 2017-18 will be approximately 205-210 students. MP also invited the board to attend evening shows during Performing Arts Week, April 3-6. MP also reported that he is working with a parent, Mike Boggess, to redesign our website. MP also reminded the board to complete their Form 700 filings. Finally, MP publicly thanked RF for sending thank you notes to all members of the public who made comments at last month's meeting.

9) **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

a. California School Dashboard

MP gave a presentation showing Charter's California School Dashboard report. He explained the rationale behind the Dashboard including its foundation in "status and change" for the major metrics. The report indicates that Charter is doing very well in English and mathematics and that it has an anomaly in suspension rate causing the report to indicate a deficiency in that area.

b. Explore Ecology Presentation

Genevieve from Explore Ecology presented on their organization, its history, and its mission and vision in local schools. The Orfalea Foundation started the local school garden movement to encourage health and nutrition. When Orfalea shifted its focus away from school gardens, Explore Ecology stepped in to bring garden educators to the schools. Explore Ecology also runs the Art from Scrap and Watershed Resources programs in Santa Barbara County. They also provide environmental educators as guest speakers in the schools. Caydi, our garden educator, thanked the board for their support. She also gave a report on the activities in our garden.

c. Middle School Grade Point Average

MP presented his plan to add value to an A+ by increasing the point value of an A+ in calculating the GPA to 4.3, a .3 increase over its current 4.0 point value to make it equivalent to the value added by a "+" for other letter grades. His plan was to make the plan retroactive to the beginning of this school year. The board discussed the proposal and determined that this was an administrative action and did not require a vote of the board.

d. Board Survey Results

Tabled until a future meeting during approval of the agenda.

10) **ACTION ITEMS**

a. Review and Approval of Grade Level Configurations for 2017-2018 School Year

MP talked the board through his findings and recommendations on the grade level configuration, specifically whether 5th grade belongs in the middle school or should be self-contained. MP based his presentation on data, opinions gathered from parents and board members at a community town hall meeting, and faculty recommendations. He filtered his comments through student support; planning time for middle school teachers; and viability and sustainability. He presented two options and assessed them according to these filters: 1. hire a full-time fifth grade teacher and 2. fifth graders rotate through content area specialists in the morning and self-contained classroom in the afternoon. His recommendation to the board was to approve option 2.

Motion to approve the grade level configurations for 2017-2018 school year as presented and recommended by MP and staff: MS

Second: LM

Discussion: HF stated that her opinion of the budget is that we can't sustain the hiring of a full-time fifth grade teacher. MS expressed that he was proud of the school that has been built over the last two years, and he is concerned that we would be at risk of potentially dismantling much of that. He felt that this proposal of is the next evolution of the innovation we have undertaken on behalf of our students. RF reiterated that the presumption that a self-contained classroom is better than the current proposal. He felt that blowing a hole in the budget for something not proven isn't worth it. RU expressed excitement on behalf of all the middle school teachers about the potential of this grade level configuration. MSH stated that she was disappointed that the fifth graders didn't get a field trip, weren't allowed to participate in sports and missed out on a number of other things that the rest of the middle schoolers get. She believes that more attention needs to be paid to the fifth graders to enrich their experience. MR felt that the "middle school" label for fifth grade is misleading and problematic and potentially contributes to the perception that they are lost. She hoped that the fifth graders could blend primary and middle grade extracurricular and enrichment activities. BD explained that she was waiting to see what the middle school teachers had to say. She has long been concerned on the impact of having a fourth prep has an the sixth through eighth graders. She was excited to hear that the middle school teacher were enthusiastic and excited about this plan.

Vote: Approved 8-0-1

b. Review and Approval of Certificated Staffing Plan for 2017-2018 School Year

Motion to approve the certificated staffing plan for 2017-2018 school year as presented: MSH

Second: BD

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 7-0-2

c. Approval of Auditor Selection for Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Motion to approve Moss, Levy & Hartzheim, LLP as the auditor for fiscal year 2017-2018: RF

Second: HF

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 9-0-0

d. Recognition of Gifts

Motion to accept the gift of nine Samsung Chromebook 2 11.6-inch laptops (model 503C) valued at \$2,250 from Kibo Commerce, Inc.: LM

Second: RF

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 9-0-0

11) **BOARD ADVANCED AGENDA**

The board discussed the Board Advanced Agenda. The advanced agenda shows upcoming meeting dates and agendas and gives board members the opportunity to add agenda items to future agendas. MP reminded the board that they needed to complete the Form 700.

12) **PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS**

There was no public comment on closed session items.

CLOSED SESSION

Closed session called to order at 8:25 PM.

13) **CERTIFICATED TEACHER NEGOTIATIONS**

14) **PERSONNEL MATTERS PURSUANT TO GOV CODE 54957**

15) **PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - Executive Director**

Closed session adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Returned to open session at 9:40 PM.

OPEN SESSION

16) **REPORT** from Closed Session

The board reviewed the Executive Director's final evaluation. The board gave feedback to the Personnel Committee to finalize the evaluation document for approval at the next meeting on April 25, 2017. The board also voted 7-0-0 to offer the Executive Director a two-year contract extension.

17) **ADJOURNMENT** by Board President

Meeting adjourned at 9:48 PM.