Endeavor
Charter School

Endeavor Board Meeting Minutes: June 5, 2017

Call to Order:

Clint White called to order a meeting of the ECS Board of Directors on June 5, 2017 at 7:03 p.m. in the ECS Multi-Purpose Room.

Present: Peter Henderson, Bill Kroll, Kristy McClure, Kevin Myers, Clint White, Charlie Kennedy, Jim Hollis. Kim Keith joined the Board at 7:12p.m.

Absent: Bill Borter

Minutes

Kevin Myers moved to approve the minutes from the May 15 and May 25, 2017 Board Meetings with a slight correction to those distributed for attendance. The motion was seconded by Charlie Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Board Elections and Interviews

Kevin Myers discussed the Board interviews with Kim Keith. He shared some of her background with community development and public education. Kevin Myers moved that Kim Keith be added to the Board for a term to run through the 2019-2020 school year. Charlie Kennedy seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Clint White reminded the Board that he, Kevin Myers and Peter Henderson had terms coming to an end after the 2016-2017 school year. Kevin Myers then moved to renew the membership of Clint White to the Board for a term of three years, through 2019-2020. Jim Hollis seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. Kevin Myers and Peter Henderson declined to renew their membership.

Endeavor Foundation Update

David Clodgo updated the Board on the Endeavor Foundation. The Foundation met on May 22 to discuss updates and improvements to the site. The most critical is improvements to the small playground on the One World Way side of the building. There has been some flooding to that area several times, and this needs to be eliminated. Improvements to landscaping would also be included.

The Foundation also talked about improvements needed to the large playground, including extending the concrete near the basketball court. Painting the interior of the building as well as the eroding hill on the side of the soccer field were also mentioned as areas that need addressed. A set of stairs was also discussed, but not prioritized now.

The Foundation is working on additional quotes, and the school has been working this as well.

Treasurer's Report

Kristy McClure did not yet have closed numbers for May, so we do not have a final update on budget or updated bank statements due to the early nature of this month's meeting. The Finance team had projections and revenue numbers on the annual fund that did allow for budgeting against some of the Foundation priorities, and the plan is to approve expenditures for most of those areas tonight.

She and the administration team have also been working with Charter Success to work through the budget for 2017-2018. There are two areas we are still working through (technology being one of the major) and will need to have a special meeting toward the end of the month. That needs to happen before end of June so that it can be submitted to the State by the June 30 deadline.

Kristy then moved to approve up to $12,000 to fix the small playground, up to $25,000 to replace 29 teacher laptops, up to $11,000 to wax the floor, and up to $6500 to paint the interior halls. Charlie Kennedy seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Myers moved that the Board extend teaching contracts to Erin Johnson, Dina Rafferty, Alison Haught, Beth Ammons, Alicia Rogerson, Amy Wilson, Leslie Clark, Anna Gaines, Sarah Keune, Andrea Comstock, Holly Ketchim, Aly Starkey, Molly Mueller, John Raitano, Barbie Dalton, Melissa Dougherty, Ashley Jacot, Stacey Clemmons, Alison Hester, Sarah McConnell, Tiffany Carson, Katie Clemmons, Brad Ezzell, Susan Nielsson, Mark Root, Kate Tyler, Lisa Bolton, Kirsten Ehlert, Jennifer Tatum, Christine Tompkins, Holly Heasley, Allison Biringer, Christine Ventresco, Josh Burt; Teaching assistant contracts to Jess Young, Jeanine Viola, Tonya Jones, Erin Fulk, Lisa Kristianson, Tara Whitbread; Office staff contracts to Molly Blanchard, Lara Rice, Maija McAdams, Jim Lundholm, Lauren Manfreda; Curriculum Coordinator contracts to Carolyn Southard and Julie Tudor; and Director contract to Chrsti Whiteside. Charlie Kennedy seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Policy Discussions

The Board discussed the proposed Technology Acceptable Usage policy that was discussed at the March, April, and May Board meetings. Bill Kroll took the Board through the final proposed policy.

Most changes from prior versions were to make the policy less specific, and to future-proof us for different kinds of devices. The goal is to have the policy create a framework for how we will govern different types of devices and different types of monitoring, and allow room for the student and staff handbook to handle more specific situations.

Bill Kroll moved that we approve the Technology Acceptable Usage policy as distributed. Charlie Kennedy seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Athletic Department Restructuring

Bill Kroll then talked about some of the transition that we plan to do with the athletics program and the Endeavor Boosters. There have been a series of discussions with the Boosters, our Athletics Director, and the Administration about how to bring the athletics program more closely under the supervision of the School. Bill led a review of some of the liability issues around how we have run the program in the past, and worked with all stakeholders to restructure how we review and sign contracts, and how we employ coaches.

Kristy McClure has already worked with Charter Success in anticipation of this change so that we can absorb the budgeting changes that this would entail, and is working with our insurance company to ensure we have the right level of coverage.

Director's Update

Christi started with sharing a list of the items that we accomplished in 2016-2017:

> New this year:
> Newly repaired playground, Installation of 2 flagpoles, New EC team with no lost service hours, Annual Fund, Spirit Rock, Combined art show/book fair, Return of Family Fun Fest, Creation of Student Support Team, Better defined path toward IEP or 504 plans, 10 Year Charter Renewal events, DARE introduced into elective options, 1st Social Media assembly, 1st Anti-bullying assembly, 1st Leadership assembly, Track team, YMCA on campus, Return of Stakeholders meetings, Establish brokerage account, Begin long range facility/financial planning, 4th Cafe Day, Yearbook and video announcement clubs, Parent notification about emergency lunch needs, Salary scale, Switch to Charter Success, New student computer labs, kindle lab and Ipad lab, Artist in residence chandeliers.
>
> Looking toward next year, we are pursuing:
> Heterogeneous grouping throughout K-5, Lunch sign up calendar requests for parents, 10 Year Anniversary Celebrations, Newly reorganized athletic conference, Newly reorganized teacher teams, New phonics program for K-2, New character education program for K-8, 4 part Leadership assembly program, Whole school legacy art project, Outdoor classroom, Individualized PD program.

Wake County has released their 2018-2019 Calendar, and it repeats the issue of a late spring break like we had this year. The staff reviewed three calendars, including an option that mirrors this year (two weeks around Wake County's break); a split break (one week at the end of the quarter, and one week around Wake County); and two weeks at the quarter break (and no overlap with Wake County).

The Board recommended that the school adopt the split schedule, but left it to the administration team to determine what is best for the educational program.

Christi then took the Board through some of the reasoning behind some of the changes that are being made to ability grouping, with a move to heterogeneous groupings in grades 2-5. She talked about some of the changes in philosophy that the last 9 years have brought to educational theory on how to develop critical thinking skills in all of our kids. At opening, we had three clear and concrete ability groupings. That changed quickly, and we have moved to two classes with a faster pace, and one class that might move slower. This was not communicated directly, but was essentially how we operated. Over the last few years, teachers have started to talk about if it is effective, and if this kind of tracking was providing the best experience for all students. The fifth-grade team asked for the opportunity to pilot a program to switch to heterogeneous groupings starting in 3rd Quarter. Feedback from staff and anecdotal results from this year's initial testing results was that if not a benefit, it certainly hasn't been a detriment to our ability to achieve excellent results.

The Board asked some questions about how this might impact our ability to deliver services for students on IEPs or 504 plans. The EC department will still work with teachers on student scheduling to ensure that they can provide coverage. They also asked for a clarification on some of the research that was used around growth mindset and heterogeneous groupings. Carolyn Southard, one of our curriculum coordinators, shared some of the research with the board.

<u>Public Comments</u>

Sarah McConnell spoke about one of the benefits of the rearranging being social – students in all three groupings commented on the relief to be able to move around to a different grouping and be moved away from some other students with whom they did not have a good relationship.

Heidi Bray spoke about her experiences as both an educator and a parent in support of homogeneous groupings, and shared some research with the Board that supported educational methodology that relied on those groupings.

Melissa Dougherty shared her support of the change, and how the diversity of the new groupings allows her as a teacher to serve kids better. She also talked about how getting a diversity of opinion, and learning to value that, is as important as getting an 'A' on every test.

Ashley Jacot shared her experience that children lack grit; the ability to persevere in the face of adversity. She feels that she has seen growth in her kids both emotionally and academically.

Paula Kukulinski thanked everyone for the open dialog, and the thought behind it. She is a believer in the growth mindset, and works in human resources and knows the need for it in the working world. She expressed her worry that her child would spend her time mentoring others rather than being challenged. She would like to understand the plan on how we will challenge those students that are advanced. She would also like to understand what happens for the kids that are not getting it, and how do we handle how we ensure we don't leave them behind.

Heidi Bray talked about how she found out about the change, and then talked about her family and talked about the information on the website that talks about how Endeavor levels students. She read from a study from the National Bureau of Economic Research that talked about leveling. She talked about the charter talking about a rigorous academic program, and her opinion that homogenous grouping would be the most rigorous way to educate children. She talked about Magellan Charter School and the fact that she believes that they are unapologetic about ability grouping. She encouraged the Board and administration to consider keeping homogenous grouping, and asked that it not become a personal issue for those that disagree.

Melanie has a rising 5th grader, and wanted to understand how this would be implemented next year, and communicated to parents. She also expressed her concern that there was not more conversation. The point was made that the educational plan is not laid out each year, but that we will make efforts to communicate some of these changes and the reasoning behind them. She expressed her hope that we talked to other schools that have done this, and that her perception is that this is for the benefit of children that might be in the lower ability group rather than in the higher.

Jodi Sheldon talked about the transparency of communication and the need for the school to be much more open about changes, policies, and decisions. There was agreement from several Board members that this is an issue that the administration and Board will continue to work to resolve.

<u>Closed Session</u>

Clint White moved that the Board go into closed session in accordance with North Carolina statute 143.318.11 (a) (6). Kevin Myers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the Board moved into closed session at 8:54 p.m.

<u>Return to Open Session</u>

The Board returned to open session at 10:40 p.m.

Jim Hollis updated the Board on some of the technology assessments that he and Jim Lundholm have been doing. It exposed some security, networking and storage issues that we have with our password storage and email storage. Jim Hollis is working to close these issues.

Adjournment

Clint White moved to adjourn the meeting.   Charlie Kennedy seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously at 10:45 p.m.