

APPROVED BOARD MINUTES

ASD Board Meeting June 13, 2012

Board Members Present: William Bonner, Thomas Frischknecht, Kent Glossop, Idina Holden, Brandon Jackson, Kim Lavalley and Heather MacDonald.

Board Members Absent: Matt Collins, Jack Donovan, Karen Graham, Patty Humphrey and Michael White.

Non-voting Members Present: Jennifer Cava, Dominique Dadekian, Andrew Myers

Others in Attendance: Jim Overman, Lisa Moser, Kym Harmon, Joel Preminger, Carol Gelman, Madge Smith and Denise Chasen.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

1. Board Chairman Election

Mr. Glossop nominated Thomas Frischknecht for the position of Board Chair. Ms. Lavalley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

2. Public Comments

Carol Gelman spoke in support of Seth Hussey. Mr. Hussey has been very nurturing and a source of support for her child.

Mr. Frischknecht clarified Mr. Hussey's employment with ASD: He was first a contractor, then assistant director and thirdly guidance counselor. Ms. Cava clarified that two guidance counselor positions were approved for next year. The break out of responsibilities is still being determined.

Ms. Gelman then asked if there is some way that FOCUS could be more user-friendly – Ms. Gelman doesn't feel that it gives her an accurate view of how her son is doing in his class.

Ms. Cava agreed that she has concerns with FOCUS as well and said the school is looking at alternatives. Ms. Cava is also working with teachers to find common ground in the grading system. Specific questions could also be addressed to Angela Overman. Mr. Bonner complimented Ms. Xu on the way she uses FOCUS for her courses.

Madge Smith spoke to advocate for Mr. Hussey on behalf of her 6th grader. He has connected with her son better than anyone else.

Joel Preminger spoke to echo the comments of other parents on behalf of Mr. Hussey.

Mr. Preminger then explained that running for the Board did not reflect negatively on his appreciation of Mr. Glossop's involvement in the school. Instead, he wants to see term limits for parents with students in the school. Mr. Preminger asked that the Policy Committee consider the issue. Mr. Frischknecht assigned the issue to Ms. MacDonald on behalf of the Policy Committee.

Denise Chasen expressed her concern that Mr. Hussey would not be returning next year. Mr. Hussey helped Ms. Chasen with the decision to send their son to ASD and has continued to check in with him almost every day. As a guidance counselor, Mr. Hussey has been top notch.

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3. Approval of Board Minutes from the Prior Meeting

Ms. MacDonald moved to approve the minutes from the May meeting. Ms. Lavallee seconded. All voted in favor.

4. Items of Board Business – N/A

5. Board Member Nominations and Renewals

- a. *Departures* – Mr. Donovan, who is Vice Chairman and head of Strategic Planning Committee, has resigned. Mr. Frischknecht thanked Mr. Donovan for his service and dedication on behalf of the school.
- b. *Renewals* – Mr. Glossop was elected by the parents in the parent election.

Ms. Lavallee moved that the results of the parent election in favor of Mr. Glossop be ratified so that Mr. Glossop can rejoin the Board. Ms. Holden seconded. All voted in favor, with Mr. Glossop abstaining.

Ms. Holden's, Ms. Lavallee's and Mr. Jackson's terms are up for renewal. All three have expressed an interest in renewing their term.

Mr. Glossop moved that Ms. Holden be renewed for two more years. Ms. Lavallee seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Ms. Holden abstaining.

Mr. Glossop moved that Ms. Lavallee be renewed for another term. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. All voted in favor with Ms. Lavallee abstaining.

Ms. MacDonald moved that Mr. Jackson be renewed for another term. Ms. Lavallee seconded the motion. All voted in favor with Mr. Jackson abstaining.

Mr. Jackson indicated he would renew for one year term.

- c. *New Board Members* - Mr. Frischknecht said that he is actively recruiting new external Board members and is currently having conversations with three individuals. At the moment, there are two external Board seats available – more at Board discretion. Should anyone know of a good candidate, please refer the name to Mr. Frischknecht or Ms. Cava.
- d. *Officer Nominations* - Mr. White has resigned as Board Treasurer. Mr. Donovan has resigned from the Board leaving the Vice Chair position open. Ms. Holden has committed for another year as Secretary. Mr. Glossop is the ASD Clerk of the Board.

Ms. Lavallee nominated Ms. MacDonald for the position of Vice Chair. Mr. Glossop seconded. All voted in favor, with Ms. MacDonald abstaining.

Mr. Jackson nominated Ms. Lavallee for the position of Treasurer. Mr. Bonner seconded. All voted in favor, with Ms. Lavallee abstaining.

Mr. Glossop nominated Ms. Holden for the position of Secretary. Ms. Lavallee seconded. All voted in favor, with Ms. Holden abstaining.

6. Committee Organizational Review

Mr. Frischknecht recommended dissolving the Curriculum committee and delegating the authority to the Administration, saying the Board is holding back the process rather than helping it. Ms. MacDonald said the committee has done its job

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in setting up the curriculum, and now Ms. Cava and her team are best suited to keep it going.

Ms. Holden asked that the Board continue to approve changes to the Program of Studies. Mr. Bonner added the Board should be able to vote on changes department by department. Mr. Glossop suggested approving policies for approving curriculum changes. Ms. Lavallee expressed concern about the time required to review, discuss and approve the Program of Studies.

After further discussion, the Board agreed that the Policy Committee would present a policy for the Board to provide oversight to the curriculum, with a vote on changes annually. This policy would be brought to the Board in September. Ms. Cava concurred with this approach.

Mr. Frischknecht proposed creating a Communication committee to address the concerns raised several months ago by Mr. Bonner. The Board discussed the role of the committee.

Ms. Lavallee moved to create the Communication committee. Ms. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bonner accepted the position of Chair of Communication. Mr. Bonner invited Mr. Preminger to be vice chair which Mr. Preminger accepted.

Ms. Holden nominated Mr. Jackson as Chair of Strategic Planning & Finance. Ms. Lavallee seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Glossop strongly suggested that every committee have a standing rhythm of meetings which is publicized.

Ms. Lavallee will take over as Chair of the Personnel Committee.

The Student Affairs Committee has never met and will be removed from the list.

7. Board Chair and Director's Comment

Mr. Frischknecht: This year the Board faced operational issues: Admissions and enrollment issues and the Director's departure. The Board became more involved with the administration and found issues with disarray in the office, lack of leadership and accountability and financial issues.

The Board stepped in to turn things around. This seemed to some as the Board overstepping its boundaries; others embraced the involvement. A reporting structure was created, a strong Director identified and a strong leader of the business office was hired. The Board sought a change in culture among administration, faculty and parents.

The business office has gotten to the bottom of the school's finances and liabilities. In a short period of time they reconstructed books so that a "close to" balanced budget could be created and followed. Ms. Harmon worked with the Treasurer to get through four years of audits. The charter reauthorization has been filed with the state.

New leadership has been created with a new Director, Business Manager and stable Guidance office. We will increase the student population to close to 450 students last year. Ms. Cava has created a plan now to accommodate that growth. The

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school's image in the media is now much more positive thanks to the administration and the Outreach Committee. The school has stronger relations and trust with the state Department of Education.

In 2012/13, the school needs to continue focusing on sustainability because of the strain of the new facility on resources. The school will have to retain revenue by retaining students and will work with local companies for additional financial support. The school will also need to focus on stability of operations and continuing quality.

Ms. Gelman asked about the benefits for faculty. Mr. Frischknecht said that the retirement program for teachers is not accepting any new enrollees in New Hampshire.

Ms. Cava – Priorities for 2012/13: We must assure a continuing environment for the safety, personal growth and distinguished academic achievement of ASD students during a period of accelerated growth in enrollment. This includes creating a personalized, positive and orderly school environment and also strengthening the quality of teaching and learning.

Priority 1: Ms. Cava recommends structuring the school into three smaller learning communities: Lower division (grade 6) focused on exploration, a middle division (grades 7-9) focused on engagement and an upper division of grades 10-12. She would like to develop student advisories to track and support each student. Disciplinary issues would first be the responsibility of classroom teachers and then delegated to guidance staff.

Priority 2: The Director will take the primary role in fulfilling goals around quality of teaching and learning. The Director will lead the school in this, such as in designing the curriculum. Teachers will take responsibility for emphasizing what individual teachers and collaborating groups of teachers can offer the ASD students' learning experience.

All school expenditures must be directly relevant to either Priority 1 or 2.

Ms. Gelman asked how Ms. Cava will gather feedback on which learning experiences' were particularly effective. Ms. Cava explained that there will be a curriculum lead in each department whose role will be to gather that information. Mr. Myers added that a survey has been given to students of IBC II and III with the final that has been very useful.

8. Director's Report

- a. *Field Trip Requests* –Ms. Lisa Moser shared the details of a trip to China that is being considered for next year. It will only be open to students of Mandarin 4 and 5 next year.

**Ms. Holden moved that the Board approve the continued planning of the trip.
Ms. Lavallee seconded. All voted in favor.**

Ms. Moser shared the details of a trip to Washington, D.C. for 10-12 grade students. This is a minimum of 45 students.

**Ms. Lavallee moved that the Board approve the continued planning of the trip.
Mr. Glossop seconded. All voted in favor.**

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- b. *Amendment to ASD Admissions Policy* – The school has a handful of openings available for next year. 185 students participated in the lottery; 180 will enroll. Of the 275 currently enrolled students, the school projects 23 will not return, or around 10% (less than in prior years). Of those who will not return, reasons were: The school being in Nashua (~20%), the academic program doesn't fit (~40%), or the students are looking for something that is not available at ASD (~40%). To fill the remaining 23 spots, the administration would like to re-open admissions.

Ms. MacDonald walked the Board through the proposed changes.

Mr. Glossop moved that the amended policy as shown with the one mentioned be accepted for final approval. Mr. Bonner seconded. All voted in favor.

- c. *Additional Faculty Position* - Ms. Cava has decided the school will need 4 6th grades instead of 3 based on a higher number of 6th graders. Now there will be approximately the same number of students in each grade. Ms. MacDonald asked how the position would be funded. Ms. Cava clarified that this would be covered by reallocating other faculty needs.

Ms. Holden moved that the Board approve the 4th 6th grade position on the condition that it can be covered within the approved budget for faculty salaries. Ms. Lavalley seconded. All voted in favor.

- d. *Bring Your Own Device* – Ms. Cava shared an initiative encouraging students to bring their own equipment. This will allow students to work collaboratively and have access to the latest information. Ms. Cava is working with ASDEF to come up with programs for those students who are unable to purchase their own equipment.

Ms. Holden asked if this would eliminate the school policy that discourages middle school students from bringing their laptops. Ms. Cava said the new initiative would be encouraged all the way down to 6th graders. Ms. Holden expressed her approval for the concept but asked that the administration create a lot of guidance for the school and for parents on how to manage the learning environment for students with their own laptops. The Board discussed the logistics of the devices as part of the curriculum and the technology needs.

The Board formed a general consensus behind Ms. Cava's recommendation. The Policy Committee will look at the existing policies to see if any changes or new policies are required.

- e. *Program of Studies* – Current Events class is currently listed as a year. Ms. Cava requested that the Current Events class is offered as a single semester.

Mr. Glossop moved that the Director should be allowed to make small scale adjustments to the Program of Studies at her discretion. Ms. Lavalley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

- f. *Budget* – Ms. Harmon shared the budget to the Board. The numbers are preliminary. The 2011-12 budget includes a proposed bridge loan of \$100,000 to aid cash flow over the summer. The Strategic Planning committee was asked to review and approve the budget within the next few weeks.

9. Next Meeting

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The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 11, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will include policy review.

The Board meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Idina Holden
Secretary