

**Highline Academy**  
Board Meeting Minutes  
December 10, 2007  
7808 Cherry Creek Drive South  
6:15 pm

*In attendance:* Jon Lowry, Ron Johnson, Jennifer Douglas, Ruth Kedzior, Kristin Summer

*Absent:* Peter Zina, Rodney Perry, Frank Tuitt,

*Guests:* Tom Bulger, Andy Gift

*Staff:* Alyssa Whitehead Bust, Greg Gonzales, Monica Hensen

**Actions/Votes Taken:**

- Section VII: Motion to hire consultant(s) not to exceed \$10,000  
Motion to hire scribe for board meeting through school year

**Attachments:**

- Minutes from 11.12.07
- Committee Overview Presentation
- Financial Updates

**I. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM. A quorum was established.**

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

Move to approve minutes from November: Jon 1<sup>st</sup>, Kristen 2<sup>nd</sup>, MPU. However, Jon clarified that the minutes from a board telephone meeting on 8.1.07 required a correction noting that a motion was taken to submit an application HA to be considered as an expansion charter to include a high school but no vote was taken so the motion failed.

**III. No Public Comment**

**IV. Board Candidate Introduction**

Jennifer announced that Tracey Peters withdrew her candidacy.

Andy and Tom each spent a few minutes provided the board with their background information.

**V. Board SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)**

Alyssa facilitated an exercise for the board to evaluate itself. She started the facilitation by reviewing survey results from a survey many board members took known as the Habermen test which is a statistically relevant survey to screen faculty and school administrators in urban settings. The results from the sub skills category demonstrated the board scored low on being sensitive to diversity and having an ability to solve problems but scored high in personal accountability, being a bottom up representative

and creating a common vision. Subskills tie to an ability to lead a school in urban districts.

Alyssa noted equity is the school's #1 value and although it is hard to measure, the Haberman survey offers a statistically valid measure to score the school. The board was divided into subgroups for the SWOT and identified the following summaries:

**Strengths:** The board has desire to succeed and has a strong commitment to the school. This is validated by the commitment demonstrated on the board, number of kids enrolled in school, more people with diverse backgrounds. Without channeling these strength the board and school could fail. The board needs to communicate more the parent body and needs to be more relevant to the HA community.

**Opportunities:** Long-term facility planning, Improved Public Relations, Reaching out to the External Community and Board Improvement are all opportunities for the board. This is validated by an approaching decision point to renew the lease, a need to move to a committee structure on the board and develop a formal fundraising campaign, and by staff and parent perceptions.

**Weaknesses:** The board needs to align with the school's vision/mission/values, needs to board development and better monitoring. This is validating through a lack of focus, the board not functioning at a high level and having to work with an unwieldy mission statement.

**Threats:** There are no immediate threats to the school but long-term issues are external measurements such as the DPS scorecard that may not accurately reflect the school's progress, the inability to fund a more suitable facility, and an external view from the staff and parents of how they perceive the board. Each threat can decrease the viability of the school. However, conversations for reform have started with the intent to minimize each of the threats.

## **VI. Administrative Reports**

**a. Administrative Updates:** Alyssa spoke about a need to create an 18 mos. plan for the school. Jennifer asked if the wall padding project in the gym was complete and Alyssa confirmed it had been done.

**b. Academic Progress Monitoring:** Alyssa said the board gets academic reporting on an ongoing basis and in February the board will receive a comprehensive snapshot of the last 9 months, the end of the last school year to the beginning of the current school year. Previously, Lindsey Friedman requested less information sharing so the board could move to strategic monitoring. The board has three priorities: Independent Academic Progress (Stanford 10), College Persistence (not measurable in short term) Internal Benchmark Proficiencies (data examining, academic leadership team, mid-course corrections). Alyssa said Race/Ethnicity is most important to closing the achievement gap. Through a board survey, the board's highest focus is on language arts and math and internally, staff is tackling language arts.

Long-term Strategic Planning: Data comes from the CSAP (once a year, late winter), Stanford 10 and Internal Assessments

**c. Financial Updates:** Monica reviewed the financial updates. We are currently over budget on maintenance, with a significant upcoming expenditure—the maintenance of our rooftop HVAC units. To date, we have been able to manage other expenses down to keep our overall expense line in balance. However, it is possible at some point we might need to ask for assistance from Board reserve. In the meantime, the HVAC maintenance work will be done on a staggered schedule to offset expenses.

## **VII. Presentation on Committee Structure**

Jennifer Douglas outline the need for increased parent involvement and non-board member involvement on the board, and using best practices for charter schools, presented a standing and adhoc committee structure model for the board to consider. Suggesting Standing Committees: Academic Excellence, Finance, Governance (Executive Committee) and Development (Fundraising). Suggested Adhoc Committees: Facility, Community Relations, School Expansion (High School/Preschool). Jennifer noted the need for job descriptions to be written. Presentation Discussion: Tom questioned the usefulness of committees and the need for follow through and Jennifer stressed the importance for board members to hold each other accountable. Kristin shared a concern for being able to recruit parents and Ruth noted that networking outside the parent community is also important.

## **VIII. Action Items**

Ron discussed the recap of the Executive Meeting on 11.26.07 and conveyed the need to hire a consultant to work with the board over the next year. Jon questioned the need for hiring a consultant and whether moving away from the Committee of a Whole makes sense. He conveyed his sense that things are going ok and these steps may be unnecessary. Tom and Jon asked what services the board needs and Alyssa said the two consultants recommended would work in tandem. Marci would jump start the process and provide an intense charter school governance education and Tom would provide on going accountability and board coaching. Jon sees a potential conflict of interest in hiring Tom. Jennifer expressed caution in overpaying for services. Debate focused on what the appropriate expenditure allotment should be to hire consultant(s).

**MOTION:** The Executive Committee can hire a consultant(s) not to exceed \$10,000.

Ruth made the motion; second by Kristin. Approve: Ron, Jon, Ruth, Kristin. Oppose: Jennifer

**MOTION:** Will the board authorize \$500 to hire a scribe through the school year.

Jennifer made the motion, second by Ruth. MPU

## **IX Other Business and Adjournment**

Tom suggested a photographer be at the next meeting to take a group photo of the board so the board can have increased visibility in the school

Ruth asked if there needed to be a special election to fill Barb's seat as she was an elected board member. It was clarified that a person who has served less than one half of a term, an elected board seat has to have a special election.

Jennifer suggested the board seat go to the person who received the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest votes in the recent election and suggested for the time being the board remain out of compliance on this matter.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:** Jon 1<sup>st</sup>, Jennifer 2<sup>nd</sup>, MPU.