

Highline Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2008
7808 Cherry Creek Drive South
6:15 pm

In attendance: Ron Johnson, Jon Lowry, Jennifer Douglas, Ruth Kedior, Kristen Summer, Peter Zina, Rodney Perry, Frank Tuitt

Staff: Alison Magno, Monica Henson, Gregg Gonzalez, Tara Walling, Alyssa Whitehead-Bust

I. Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

The meeting was called to order at 6:20 P.M.

II. Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes from December 10, 2007: Jennifer 1st, Kristen 2nd. MPU Jon commented that there are still outstanding minutes from August. A decision was made to revisit the August minutes at the February board meeting.

III. Public Comment Period

No comments

IV. Board Candidate Recommendation – Tom Bulger

Motion to appoint Tom Bulger to a seat on the board
Jon 1st Peter 2nd, MPU

V. Fundraising Updates

Due to time restraints the fundraising updates will be tabled until the February meeting

VI. Administrative Reports

a. Administrative Updates

Alyssa began her administrative updates commenting on the most current enrollment numbers. So far this January there are 223 new lottery applications compared to last year when there were 234 new lottery applications. This year there are more kindergarten applicants than last school year. The greatest enrollment concern is 8th grade because we are currently under enrolled in 7th grade this school year. Historically 8th grade applicants are turned in late in the school year. This year Highline is not marketing for 8th grade students due to the cost and the need to welcome the new students to the school.

The next administrative update is the honor roll percents from first trimester: In 05-06 58% of students were on the honor roll; in 06-07 52% of students were on the honor roll; and this school year (07-08) 65.25% of students are on the honor roll. Alyssa explained the increase is due to the academic growth of the school, our intervention program has been a success this year, and teachers invest more time in students to make sure they succeed in their academics. Alyssa expressed a personal concern about the low

proficiency rates in middle school. She expressed that middle school proficiency will always be lower than the rates for elementary students because the inclusion of Spanish and FAAT into their honor roll ranking.

The incident report sent out showed a higher incident reporting for students of color which includes mainly new students to Highline. This is due to the struggle to adjust to Highline Academy rules and expectations. The returning students that have multiple incidents are students who will continue to struggle due to multiple issues.

Alyssa also assured the Board that the February report will include more answers to the questions being asked by the Board.

Lastly, Alyssa reported on the HR status of Highline. She will not know about staff returning to Highline until the budget is approved by the Board. There will be 2 maternity leaves this spring, but both are planning on returning to Highline next school year. Historically, Highline has a relatively high return rate.

b. Financial report

Monica reviewed the financial updates. Currently we are operating at a loss. However, we receive our final DPS payment Tuesday, January 15th.

Ron asked Monica if Highline is currently operating out of compliance. Monica stated that we are not.

Currently Highline is using the reserve fund so that checks are not being held (cash flow). Jennifer and Peter will draft a policy change and present this policy change at the next Board meeting delineating funds between Board funds and funds used by the Administration. Policy needs to be drafted and voted in before next December when the same issue comes up again (using Board funds instead of holding checks). Currently all items have been approved by the Board and only a few essential items are being used for cash flow purposes.

Alyssa stated that a high priority item the Board should look at is investing options that are more aggressive than current investments. This issue was on Barb's plate. Jennifer agreed to review investment policies for the board reserve.

c. Lottery Updates

Alyssa stated that in Highline's original charter a goal was set to have 30% of the student population be on the free or reduced lunch program (FRL). This goal was based off of research showing that the ideal percentage of FRL students in school without affecting academics is 40%. Each school year this percentage has been in decline (04-05 at 37.5%; 05-06 at 31.8%; and 06-07 at 31%). Alyssa reminded the Board that we get our FRL numbers from DPS and we do not use our own internal data for the FRL percentage (which would be slightly higher than what is reported by DPS). Alyssa brought up the fact that other schools (DSST and Odyssey) run separate lottery systems in order to get 30% of vacant seats filled by FRL applicants in order to meet the FRL goal. Since

Highline no longer needs federal funds (due to start up being over), Highline has the possibility to run two separate lotteries if our goal continues to be threatened.

Board members debated whether this issue should be a Board issue and whether or not the Board has enough information to act on this issue. The conclusion for this debate was brought up by Ron stating that this would be a great issue to bring up at the Board retreat as a case to study – how do we hold the Board and Administration accountable for this goal in the charter?

VII. Pre-K Discussion

Jon presented this issue to the Board members. He brought up that pre-k is important in the development of child and this issue meets our mission if we can fund the program. There are still a lot of unknowns about the issue (classroom space, funding, what do we need to do to get up and running, and when would we open the program?). Frank mentioned that DU may be interested in a partnership with Highline in opening a pre-k program. Ultimately, Tara Walling volunteered to look into the specifics into opening a pre-k program at Highline. She is hoping to report to the Board by February or March so the Board can decide whether or not to pursue the venture.

VIII. Action Items

High School Application:

Alyssa reported that 85% of the high school charter application is finished. The portions that are not finished are the budget, facility plan, and enrollment letters of support. She stated that the difficult part of the application is the facility plan. Frank stated that DU still has a stake in the development of the high school and that DU students would be available to Highline to use to finish the application.

Therefore, Jon raised the motion to invest \$3000 into working on both the high school and ECE plans. Frank 2nd.

Discussion – Jennifer expressed that this is not a good use of Alyssa’s time and board time given upcoming transitions. Jennifer also mentioned that the school may be eligible for more startup funding if it is separate from Highline K-8, and that several K-8 charter expansions to high school in Colorado have struggled or failed. Jennifer stated the school is not stable enough to justify this type of expansion, particularly in the middle school which is most directly linked to high school. Ruth brought up the questions of how a high school can be self-supporting. There was general agreement that if the application moves forward, that it moves forward with the understanding that this expansion would not drain resources from K-8.

Favor: Ron, Ruth, Kristen, Peter, Rodney and Frank

Opposed: Jennifer

One point of debate that was still up in the air was whether or not the high school should be tied to Highline Academy or a separate entity. The decision must be made by August when the application is submitted. April would be an ideal time for that vote.

Meanwhile, now is a good time to be investing time into DPS in order to ensure that the application be accepted favorably.

A facilities committee was suggested by Jon because of the need to find a building being a priority. Jon, Ruth and Rodney expressed interest in being on the facilities committee and beginning work right away.

The last action item on the agenda was the website redevelopment. Alyssa proposed to redesign the website but expressed that enrollment has not been reliant on the website. She suggested that the board invest some money in the budget toward a new website design.

Ron suggested to move to executive session. Frank and Jon – 2nd
No Discussion

IX. Executive Session to Discuss Personal Matter

X. Adjournment