

Highline Academy
Board Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2008
7808 Cherry Creek Drive South
6:15 pm

In attendance:, Tom Bulger, Ruth Kedzior, Rodney Perry, Jon Lowry, Jennifer Douglas, Kristen Summer, Frank Tuitt

Absent: Ron Johnson, Peter Zina

Guests: Tom Beck, **Tenenbaum**, Julie McDaniels, Kim Easton

Staff: Monica Henson, Gregg Gonzales, Tara Walling, Alyssa Whitehead-Bust, Penny Spath, Heather Donovan, Roberta Ford, Alison Magno, Natalie Neuhart, Patty Siclari, Raiza Guevera, Faye Ganley, Ken Kosten, Sarah Wilczak, Chris Ziemba, Mike Logan

I. Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM

II. Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve minutes from February 11, 2008 1st – Tom Bulger 2nd – Rodney Perry
MPU

III. Public Comment Period

None

IV. Final Budget Adoption

Jennifer began the discussion by raising the question if Highline is tracking to be on budget. She also brought up that presenting the budget by class is not an effective tool for the board to look at when looking at the budget.

Motion to approve the budget as given last month 1st - Tom Bulger 2nd - Frank Tuitt
MPU

The finance committee will make recommendations concerning what the board should track on the budget so the board does not track the entire budget. The finance committee will come up with a budget stoplight and will present periodic reports to the board (mainly concerns and recommendations for the board). Jennifer will meet with Tom Beck to review financial policies and present recommendations to the finance committee and then the full board. The finance committee will also meet to decide who to suggest to conduct the audit and the committee will recommend their findings to the board.

V. Principal Succession Plan

Alyssa began by presenting an agenda.

Faculty members will work with a partner to respond to one of three questions.

1. What qualities do you deem most valuable in future leader?

Flexibility, open and accepting, committed to mission, classroom experience, conflict and negotiating skills, creative problem solver, communication skills, courageous in charting new path, sense of humor, not afraid to lead by example, brilliance (background knowledge of subjects), uses research to back all ideas, collaboration in planning and execution (delegates too) passionate for future (kids and school), accessible, supports staff

2. What risks and fears are weighing most on your mind regarding this transition?

3. If you could ask the future principal candidate any question, what would it be?

a. Faculty Input

Roberta began by commenting that it will be a difficult process for someone to come in and step into Alyssa position. The process and candidate will need support from the staff.

Tara commented that embracing what the Highline staff already has built and become will be crucial. However the replacement will still need to bring changes with them to Highline. The staff would still like to be heard in decision making process.

Jon said that it would be nice to have staff involved in the process for finding a new principal

Tom Bulger asked the staff what has been good/bad about previous leadership change experience for those that have experienced one.

Roberta said that the staff was not involved in decision making process from her previous experience.

Ken shared that he ultimately lost his job because previous contributions by teachers not documented before the leadership change.

Alison shared that it felt like she had started all over again, like it was day one all over again.

Jennifer asked the staff how can everyone be involved in the process.

Heather commented that the decision making needs to be divided up into different staff roles (for example: board members, staff, administration, parent, etc)

Patty added that the interview process might be a part of faculty meeting.

Alyssa was supportive of that idea but the board will decide that ultimate direction and process of the interview process.

Roberta suggested that the staff should decide on a or a few representatives for interview process.

Frank asked what the role of parents should be in this process.

Roberta shared that the role of the parents is critical because parents entrust their children to Highline.

Alyssa asked Patty to share her knowledge as far as grieving process has gone for the staff and how the staff has reacted to the news of Alyssa's departure.

Patty began with sharing that the news was first shared with the mentor teachers and their reaction was at first dumbstruck. The mentor teachers cannot imagine coming

everyday and not having Alyssa as a leader. Most staff members if not all staff members have a personal relationship with Alyssa and want to please Alyssa as a leader. There needs to be a sense of the torch being passed on to the next new leader.

Alyssa then asked how does the board screen for someone with a personal touch appealing to the emotional factor of the staff.

Patty added that passion is needed quality in the new leader.

Roberta shared that they should have the new candidates write in response to “what if” questions and then have the candidates present their answers to a group. Because everyone is so proud about Alyssa’s communication style and articulation, Highline definitely needs communication skills in the new leader.

Tom brought up that a hiring committee would screen applicants. He also reminded everyone that the candidates will be screening Highline as well.

Roberta requested that the initial screening should still have a writing process.

Rodney asked about a possible time line in order to begin this process.

Heather expressed that previously Highline found an excellent leader in the 11th hour (Alyssa).

Tara commented that probably some staff members will be hesitant to sign a contract not knowing who the new leader will be or knowing the new leader.

Next was Alyssa’s presentation to the board:

Board Brainstorm:

Key Issues Identification

What issues are at stake in this decision?

- Cost
- Time
- Competency to lead a search/ train a successor
- Faculty retention/professional culture maintenance
- Family retention
- Mission and values maintenance
- 4 C’s – chemistry, character, competency, calling
- Faculty input?
- Others?

What else would others like to add?

- Strategic growth
- Process needs to be equitable (open and fair)
- Parental input is crucial

Parent survey top priorities:

1. Proven success in organization and leadership
2. Education/teaching experience
3. Retention of excellent teachers
4. Commitment to HA Mission (Equity and Core Knowledge)
5. Friendly, open, approachable, and enthusiastic
6. Genuine caring/love of students and their successes
7. Experience as vice principal or principal

After Alyssa's presentation to the board members, they placed green dots next to the factors most important to them.

- 6 votes – mission and values/maintenance
- 5 votes – 4 C's
- 4 votes – Faculty retention
- 3 votes – Equitable process
- 1 vote – cost
- 1 vote – competency to lead a search/train a successor
- 1 vote – strategic growth/ innovation

Alyssa then led the group in a conversation about the pro's and risks for each option. Are there any added pro's and risks not listed?

1. Externally- Led Search

Pro – It has been done before and it worked (However, the only reason it was used is due to grant money)

Risks – contingency not available for head of school, higher cost

2. Internally-Led Search

Pros – did it once already, school already has model, sweat equity, Board able to respond to input, Board has skills and experience of hiring

Risks – financial issue/stability perception, responsibility to honor feedback

3. Internal development/training/ residency

Pros – Learning organization to train employees, learn to know the person throughout the year

Risks – possible passing over other candidates

Cost – hour to two hours a week the principal investment of time (minimal time), travel costs to best schools, principal salary

4. Hybrid

Pros –

Risks – (opportunity costs should be added to each option)

b. Education Options

c. Board Brainstorm

d. Recommendations

Move to Executive Session 1st – Jon Lowry 2nd - Frank Tuitt All in favor

Board discussion/vote on a direction

Variables

1. Residency vs. little training

Draw national candidates, little experience, someone with track record

Frank commented that there is a need to spend time with each candidate.

Kim brought up that this is a time sensitive issue. She asked if someone with a track record be open to job in 09.

Jon expressed that Highline does not have enough money in the budget to get someone with experience. We will not have qualified candidates beating down HA's door.

Frank commented that there already is a process in place to get qualified administrators and teachers. He expressed that the process is one that is trusted by the staff members.

Jon asked if there was a consensus for the residency option?

1st - Tom Bulger 2nd – Frank Tuitt MPU

2. Internal candidates only vs. internal & external

Motion for internal and external

1st - Ruth 2nd – Frank Tuitt MPU

3. Board led search vs. recruiter

Alyssa commented that Highline cannot afford head-hunter.

Frank motioned not to use an external recruiter 2nd – Kristen Summer MPU

Tom wanted to amend motion to add committee for selection of candidates

Alyssa added that there was a need for a point person so no more time is wasted on this issue.

Who is going to lead this?

Jon brought up that one board member along with external support (Kim Easton) should lead this committee

Kristen, Frank, Ruth, and Jennifer all shared their interest in being on this committee.

Jennifer shared that a committee would do all the leg work and then report their findings to the board.

Tom brought up that there may be too many members on the committee.

What would the committee's role be?

Jon brought up the suggested for the committee to constitute themselves, define community input, move forward for application and define the job description. Alyssa should serve on committee to give input on residency.

Jennifer asked if the job description should be voted on by board.

Alyssa shared that the job description has already been written and the staff has already given their input on that job description.

Frank commented that the staff and parent community has already been asked for their input so we have enough to go off of to begin the process.

Tom Beck brought up that an advisory committee and a selection committee is typical model for schools to use for this process.

Motion to constitute a committee of four board members to set up the hiring process, have self as committee, illicit community involvement, write a job description, write and deliver announcement of the job, create the time lines for action items, add Alyssa to committee as ad hoc member, call special board meeting if necessary, and the ultimate end would be to recommend finalists to the whole board

1st – Tom Bulger 2nd – Frank Tuitt MPU

VI. Election Process/Board Chair Succession Plan

Postponed until Ron can attend

VII. Administrative Reports

a. Administrative Updates

Gregg began his report on discipline by stating that the discipline gap in middle school year to date is narrowing. This issue has been the focus of admin and the discipline teams. The frequency in discipline issues is increasing for the frequent flyer students. Gregg also shared that the elementary discipline gap is growing because interventions started later for elementary students.

Alyssa began her administrative update with enrollment stats. For next school year HA is underenrolled in the 8th grade and this is a concern for HA. There are 258 on the wait list which is higher than last year's wait list. Typically we get 7th and 8th grade applicants over the summer. The African American population numbers are in decline and the multi-racial candidates has increased for new applicants to HA. The FTE is based on Full enrollment with a 10% attrition.

Next Alyssa presented the proficiency report for 2nd trimester. Math is now above the 80% goal proficiency goal set for the year. The ethnicity data is improving in regards to the achievement gap. Overall HQA is gaining ground.

Alyssa also announced that DPS announced a new RFP process for schools. Schools no longer need to wait until September to submit charter applications. Therefore, HA can submit a charter application in May. DPS has possible facilities available that could co-house with other schools. Therefore DPS can help with the facility issue if HA submit it high school charter in May. The application template could be different than the one we already wrote about. The May deadline does not seem as important now with the principal selection process on the board's plate. Also the high school is not on admin's focus for next year. April would be a good time to discuss this option after we check out DPS website.

b. Financial Reports

Monica began her report by stating that the 2007 property tax rebate is in. Capital construction checks will soon be in soon from DPS (not in next year's budget).

VIII. ECE Report

Tara began her report out by stating that she has contacted DPS and CDE and August is a doable start date for a new ECE program. There are 9000 slots open for ECE so DPS needs HA rather than HA needing DPS. The only con is that it is crunch time and time is not in our favor.

Jon expressed his concern about finding a facility, creating a budget, hiring a staff, defining administrative control and getting texts for the ECE program.

Alyssa clarified that Tara only brought up that HA has not missed any DPS deadlines for applying for ECE.

Kim brought up a concern about getting licensed.

Alyssa asked if there are board members who feel strongly about starting ECE coming this upcoming school year. DU would have ambition to help with ECE program so if someone wanted to make motion, there would be support.

Jon brought up that the board focus is the principal selection process and the high school. The ECE licensure seems too detailed for the board to take on.

Kim stated that it comes down to facilities. Highline would need a staff member charged with working on getting this ready for a January charge.

Jennifer brought up that strategic planning for the board would be useful to set goals before we commit to expanding the school.

IX. Update on Retreat Action Items

Tom Bulger will be meeting with Jennifer later this month.

Tom Beck needs some time to revise end statement and then will share with the board.

X. Executive Session to Discuss Legal Matters

Motion to move to executive session Frank 1st and Kristen 2nd

XI. Adjournment