

*Journey School
A California Public Charter School*

**October 25, 2011
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Approved January 26, 2012

6:30 p.m.

*At Journey School
27102 Foxborough
Aliso Viejo, Ca 92656
Journey School Office: (949) 448-7232
www.journeyschool.net*

Roll Call:

*Jon Kaplan, Council President: Present, arrived at 8 pm
Dr. Kris Powell, Council Vice President: Absent
Michael Corbo, Council Treasurer: Present
Jan Geisendorfer, Council Secretary: Present
Marc Damikolas, Council Member: Absent
Michelle Spieker, Council Member: Present
Colleen Patterson, Council Member: Present
VACANT: Parent Cabinet Member
Gavin Keller, Educational Trustee Member: Present*

Others present:

*Staff members: Shaheer Faltas, Bonnie River (arrived at 7:10 pm), Franci Sassin (administrative consultant)
CUSD liaison: Pam Watkins
Parents: Russ Skibsted, Marie Kenney*

AGENDA ITEM	
1	<i>Call to Order, Roll Call and Review of Norms/Roles</i> <i>The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm, Mike Corbo chaired the meeting until Jon Kaplan arrived.</i> <i>Franci Sassin was taking minutes.</i>
2	<i>Inspirational Passage</i> <i>Jan Geisendorfer read a quote by Plato about education, and a second quote about education,</i>

	<p>using Ambrose Pierce’s definition of a sweater.</p>
3	<p>Approval of Agenda</p> <p>NOTE: The order of the agenda may be changed without prior notice to the public.</p> <p>C. Patterson made a motion to approve the agenda, J. Geisendorfer seconded, the motion was approved unanimously.</p>
4	<p>PUBLIC COMMENT: One speaker requested to address the Council.</p> <p><i>Russ Skibsted: Mr. Skibsted said that he appreciated the efforts and speed by school staff when they found out that the new Mexican Monday vendor had peanut oil in their food, and the school now has found a different vendor, plus a back up. Russ would like to request that even the initial order that was done should be cancelled because it is not worth the risk to students with peanut allergies. He would like the Council to consider adopting a ‘no peanut’ policy at the school. He stated that Saddleback District has some schools which have a “no nut” policy, some have a firm segregation of types of foods, others make sure that food brought on campus does not have any peanuts in it. It is a big thing to the handful of students who have the problem. He believes that this type of policy would be in line with the school’s mission and philosophy.</i></p> <p><i>Pam Watkins from CUSD stated that no school in CUSD has “no nut” or peanut free policy, but they do provide nut free tables and send out letters to families to encourage them to be cautious. Some precautions that CUSD uses are to have health plans for students, students bring their own placemats, students are educated, the staff have Epi Pens. She said it was extremely difficult to enforce a “no nut” policy.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Skibsted suggested Journey School could take the lead on such a policy and the school has a community that would be able to do this.</i></p>
5	<p>CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:</p> <p>Items on Consent Agenda may be approved with one motion and vote for all but without discussion. If an item is to be discussed, it is removed from the Consent Agenda and moved to an Action Item immediately following the Consent Items.</p> <p>A. Approval of Minutes:</p> <p>i. Minutes from regular meeting Sept 22, 2011</p> <p>B. Ratify STRS/PERS reporting contract with OCDE</p> <p>C. Updated School Calendar 2011-12</p> <p>C Patterson made a motion to approve the consent agenda items, it was seconded by J. Geisendorfer and approved unanimously.</p>

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INFORMATION ITEMS:

A. Financial Report*: Report from ExED on Aug and Sept financials.

Larry Tamayo was unable to attend, but had sent the documents out to Council. Shaheer Faltas reported that it will be a tight year, and noted that the budget committee would be meeting soon.

Mike Corbo reviewed the dashboard and fiscal status. Shaheer Faltas noted that some new additional students and the updated Close the Gap donations are not yet showing up in the financial statements.

Colleen Patterson noted that the biggest wild card is what the state budget trigger will actually come in at. Projections for the state deficit are around 2.8 billion, and schools will only lose money if a 4 billion dollar deficit occurs at state. Therefore, it is currently looking like cuts will be about half of “worst case scenario”. She would be comfortable with a budget showing \$250 cut at this point.

B. Administrative Budget committee update: Update on status of budget revisions and timeline for adoption of revised budget

Mike Corbo, Russ Skibsted, Gavin Keller, Franci Sassin, Bonnie River, and Jon Kaplan are all members of the Administrators’ Budget Committee—the current discussion was reading having a new budget ready for October—however, the Committee is not ready to do that, but will likely bring a revised budget for the November meeting.

C. Administrative Update: including enrollment and facilities update, etc.

Shaheer Faltas had sent out a written update. In addition, at the meeting, he commented on the following and there was discussion as follows:

The multi year lease is very important, and is a crucial step on road to a permanent campus. He complimented teacher Amanda Simmons for her work on school safety. He commented on the improvements to the outdoor lighting, although it will have an impact on the utilities budget.

Mr. Faltas noted that he has not moved forward yet with a donation regarding the bathroom flooring. Regarding the project in Kindy to install a sink, there is no date yet, but CUSD has said that they will complete the project and cover the cost.

Mr. Faltas made some comments regarding the peanut allergy situation. He noted that in each class with allergic students, they have tried to have a class policy to not have any nuts in that class. The vendor in question does use the oil in some of their food, but none of that particular food would come on campus, although he recognized the concern regarding cross contamination. He will try to see how quickly they can get the new vendors. Mr. Faltas commented that the

bigger issue is balancing the needs of the individual with the group and this comes up in various arenas for the school. Most likely the other vendor will be in place by Nov 7, and next week will be minimum days so no lunches will be brought on campus anyway.

Michelle Speiker commented on the allergy situation since she has a daughter with nut allergies. She hasn't tried to ask the rest of the community to make a change, and she hasn't liked using 'separate tables' ideas. She recognizes the challenges of balancing everyone's needs.

Pam Watkins commented that there can be a false sense of security if a campus is called "nut free" because then parents get less vigilant. Also, it turns teachers into monitors and brings up issue of what to do with a student when s/he brings a Peanut Butter sandwich—what does that student then eat instead?

Comments were made by Council members to use the Compassionate Campus program to bring an awareness to this issue.

Russ Skibsted suggested that having the policy, even though it is not a guarantee, would still result in lessening the risk.

Multiple Council members made comments on the Gallery Walk event and how wonderful it was all around.

Mr. Faltas thanked Marie Kenney and the Parent Cabinet for the Harvest Faire festival, it is very important both to celebrate a connection with the natural world and also to bring the community together.

There was some discussion regarding the budgetary issues and where the biggest concerns are, and to focus on those bigger areas. Enrollment will likely be in the 280's by next week. Mr. Faltas noted that it is a very positive trend that no students have withdrawn this year since school started. There were families who had enrolled in multiple schools and did not return this fall.

Mr. Faltas noted that the school's messaging is not effective right now, and the Close the Gap donation program may be affected by this as well. He believes that work on Development for the school will help with this. The drop in participation in the program may also be due to some increased awareness by parents of the donation vs. fees issue.

Bonnie River commented on the Gallery Walk and wished we could have even more people coming from outside the Journey community to see how well the teachers do. Journey has 3 brand new teachers who have never taught Waldorf before, and they need a lot of acknowledgement (Kim Torrey, Shelley Glaze Kelly, Jennifer Hopps) for how well they have done so far especially in their preparation. The Compassionate Campus project has been fully embraced by the staff. The staff can already see the effects and Bonnie commented that it is designed to meet the school's current needs rather than being 'one size fits all'. She is currently working to find the common areas between Eco-literacy, Digital literacy, Social literacy (Compassionate Campus) so representatives from each area are meeting together weekly to see

how to integrate these and bring all three into a more cohesive curricular element.

Ms. River noted that faculty meetings are now 3 times per month, and there are child studies as well as artistic training. Those in the Hybrid program get to work with class clusters so they can see what other teachers in same grade are doing and collaborate with other Waldorf teachers all over Western region.

D. Business Office/HR update: Update on compliance reporting: CBEDS count, payroll system, including new bank account

Franci Sassin updated the Council on these issues.

E. Faculty Update

Gavin Keller reported that Parent teacher conferences and first trimester reports were coming up in the next few weeks. Teachers were excited about the Gallery Walk and students enjoyed the letters left by their parents.

Mr. Faltas noted that teachers will be addressing student attendance during the Parent Teacher conferences using a printed Aeries report of each student's attendance.

Gavin received feedback from faculty regarding "why" you teach at Journey. Some of the comments were:

Active community, Continuing Education for Waldorf/Masters, beautiful curriculum, supportive, creativity, community, unlike any other school ever taught at.

F. Parent Cabinet Update:

Marie commented on how great the Gallery Walk was, and also how much parents and the students are enjoying the Compassionate Campus project and talking about it and benefiting from it. She reported on upcoming events as follows:

The Harvest Faire is coming up, she will send paper and email reminders for attendance. Getting more volunteers as well.

The "Race to Nowhere" has a second showing coming up, they will likely be using Renaissance Sports facility for free on Sunday, November the 20th, there will be ticket sales based on the agreement with RTN to do a paid event. Journey will have an enrollment rep at the event.

There is a Book Fair in November at Barnes and Noble, the Journey teachers will read aloud and will have teacher wish list and a Waldorf friendly book list. Parents can also buy online.

Fairy Market is scheduled for Dec 12 and 13.

They still need more participation in Parent Cabinet, for example, they still need an 8th grade rep and a Council rep. and the 7th and 4th reps have not been able to attend regularly. They are

	<p><i>discussing ways to recruit more parent involvement.</i></p> <p>G. Report on <i>Follow-up for Previous Board Items</i>*</p> <p><i>Mike Corbo put together a calendar with board meeting dates and school events.</i></p> <p><i>Jan Geisendorfer reviewed the follow up list and got updates on certain items.</i></p> <p><i>Shaheer Faltas noted that wireless connectivity finally seems to be solved, thanks to Frank Whittaker.</i></p>
7	<p>DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS: Current and school business</p> <p>A. Annual Audit: Review and acceptance of annual audit</p> <p><i>Copies of the final audit were distributed, as provided by the audit firm. The group discussed how well the audit went, and that it is a benefit to the school to have good auditors as partners.</i></p> <p><i>J. Geisendorfer made a motion to accept the audit report, it was seconded by C. Patterson, and approved unanimously.</i></p> <p>B. Proposition 39 application for 2012-13: Approval of submission of Prop 39 application for Journey facilities for 2012-13.</p> <p><i>Following a brief discussion, M. Corbo made a motion to authorize Administration to finalize any language needed and to submit the Proposition 39 request for facilities by the November 1st deadline. The motion was seconded by M. Speiker and approved unanimously.</i></p>
8	<p>DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS: Planning</p> <p>A. Strategic Planning: Discussion regarding development of school's goals and priorities for inclusion in the Strategic Plan for 2011-12 and 2012-13.</p> <p><i>The Council reviewed document put together by Mr. Faltas, which were proposed ideas to consider for Strategic Planning. He went over the template and thought that the Council could decide on their 3-5 top priorities.</i></p> <p><i>Mike Corbo commented that the guidance of the document was helpful. He noted that spending time on strategic planning for an established school should be very important, and that as much as 80% of the time of the Council should be spent on this time of planning and long term strategy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council agreed that for this meeting they would focus on #4:</i></p> <p><i>(Jon Kaplan joined meeting at this time)</i></p> <p><i>Five priorities were established:</i></p>

1. *Make development a priority*
2. *Set up Administrative Development Committee—may move this into the 501 c3 once it is set up.*
3. *Set up 501 c3*
4. *Make a narrative for each of the ‘ fundable programs’*
5. *Hire a development director*

The Council made a recommendation and gave direction to Administration to work on the 501c 3 project.

The Council then discussed how best to work on the Strategic Planning, for example, one longer focused session vs. working on it through board meetings.

Pam Watkins recommends having stakeholder input and make it a long term process, and to keep in mind that the product is not as important as the process.

For next Strategic Planning session at the next Council meeting, the plan is to devote an hour again, and for everyone to come prepared with feedback. The Council chose Big Rock #5 to focus on next, but this could be pending change if something important comes up before next meeting.

B. Financial Development:

- i. Fiscal projects underway**
- ii. Report on development work from last year and follow up**
- iii. Report on 501 c3 status**

Michelle Speiker reviewed the work done last year by Debra Lambrecht. She summarized as follows: the school is mature enough and has done really well with its program and special projects, and so really it just needs to put together its message and get it out there. Telling a narrative, and guiding the narrative -- “how to tell the story of JS”. If development becomes a priority for the whole community it will be able to proceed. Ecoliteracy would be the easiest one to target first because there is a big audience and the school would have a tangible project to fund. The next step would be to identify grants, as well as identify the actual needs to be funded. Other ideas for increasing revenue were having the school offering summer programs, community speakers, using the campus all year round and becoming a Waldorf training site. An additional important item is that the Permanent campus project is also fundable.

Colleen Patterson reported on the resources for starting a non profit, both the logistics as well as bigger picture governance issues.

She noted that the school would need to identify the initial board of directors and seat them.

There was a question on revitalizing the old Foundation corporation.

Franci Sassin commented regarding how to be sure that the two boards have agreement on what their respective roles are and what the checks and balances are.

Colleen Patterson recommends that school Administration should have ultimate control over who is on Foundation board, so that those individuals are fully committed and are always working in coordination with the school's goals. Ms. Patterson also noted that the school would always have the ability to sever ties with the Foundation and they would then they risk losing their IRS status, so the school could in this way have some level of control over their activities.

Gavin Keller, working with Administration, will be the conduit on development work with faculty.

Bonnie River agreed to work on questions regarding development for the parent, and will work with Parent Cabinet on that.

The Council agreed that the PURPOSE of the 501 c3 should be defined in a motion for the next Council meeting.

The Council discussed the role of a development director, the job description, and pay. Various arrangements were discussed, such as using a consultant vs. using current staff vs. trying to bring someone on specifically. Using someone local who knows community was suggested.

9 **Board Training and Development:**

A. Follow up from Board GOVERNANCE training: Report on board training of Oct 20.

The Council members who attended the training reported to the rest of the group. Some key points included what the board should look like at this stage, and is it moving towards that. The Council members believe it has especially been moving in this direction the last 12 months. There was discussion regarding the composition of the board, including the role of teachers. One comment was that the professionals who work with boards usually say that as a board evolves, it moves away from having members who are very involved with the organization on a day to day level. An example might be using alumni parents to provide a transition from having active parents on the board. Council members agreed that looking at composition ideal was good topic and that looking at the job description for a board was important. Items should include: being responsible, being ambassadors, sponsoring the organization in various ways, having appropriate terms, and the role of governance vs. management.

Succession planning was also a key topic to consider. Various resources are available to assist the Council in this work and will be shared among the Council members as soon as possible.

B. Board training annual calendar of activities and board calendar for school activities

This topic was discussed earlier in meeting under 'follow up'.

C. Board roles at school activities

This topic was discussed earlier in meeting under 'follow up'.

D. Board composition and election/appointment of members

An in depth discussion occurred regarding the request by Faculty to appoint two seats on the Council. There were questions raised about the wording in the charter regarding faculty representation.

Shaheer Faltas pointed out that due to wording in the charter, appointing two seats would require a charter revision. The school and would need to find out if that would be a material revision to the charter which would require CUSD approval, but right now, there is no clear answer to this.

Mr. Keller pointed out that faculty was interested in having additional input and a more active role in governance. Various opportunities to assist with this were discussed. It was generally agreed that additional faculty members could attend Council meetings, and that Council members could start going to faculty meetings occasionally also. Bonnie River pointed out that in order to make good decisions, the philosophy of the board must be informed by the strongest constituency of Waldorf, that is, the teachers.

The Council wanted the message to faculty to be focused on "how can we support and engage faculty right now?"

E. Analysis of Student Outcomes from charter: Examination and discussion of Student Outcome #3 and Outcome #4.

Shaheer Faltas asked to postpone discussion until next meeting and in the meantime, for Council members to think about what proof would show we have reached these outcomes. These outcomes relate to Eco-literacy and Compassionate Campus.

10 CLOSED SESSION: The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the matters described below:

A motion was made to move into closed session at 9:33 by Mike Corbo, seconded by Jon Kaplan, and, approved Unanimously.

Shaheer Faltas, Franci Sassin and Bonnie River were invited to attend closed session in their role as Administration. All others left the meeting. Gavin Keller left the meeting for part of closed session at 9:40, returned at 10 pm, left again at 10:45 for item 10B, and returned at 11:00 pm.

A. Pursuant to Government Code §54957: Public Employee Performance Evaluation,

Title(s): Administrator, Teacher, Specialty Teacher, Instructional Support

B. Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6: Conference with Labor Negotiators:

Agency Representative: Shaheer Faltas

Employee organization: Journey Teachers' Association

Jon Kaplan made a motion to adjourn from closed session into open session at 11:00 pm, it was seconded by Mike Corbo and approved unanimously.

11 DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

A. Staffing Plan and Hiring*: *Approval of Administrative recommendations for updates to staffing plan*

A motion was made to approve staffing plan as presented by Mike Corbo, seconded by Jon Kaplan. The vote was: 4 approved, 2 opposed, so the motion passes.

B. Employee salary freeze from 2008-09: *Effects of salary freeze on certificated employees who were at Journey School in 2008-09*

Gavin Keller gave background on this item first. He reported that each year teachers receive credit for a "year of service at JS", and a pay increase for that. In 2008-09 there was a salary freeze and to date, for 09-10 and 10-11 and 11-12, the contracts do not recognize the 08-09 year. This affects 4 teacher who were here in the 2008-09 school year. Entire faculty is requesting that this be recognized in current contract and in future contracts, which would therefore have a fiscal impact of 6000 this year, and also in future years if those employees were to remain at Journey.

After discussion of whether the Council could take action on this topic, a motion was made by Colleen Patterson to refer this issue back to negotiations. It was seconded by Jon Kaplan and the vote was as follows: 5 approved, 1 opposed, so the motion passed.

12 Adjournment at 11:05 pm