

*Journey School
A California Public Charter School*

March 22, 2012
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Approved on April 26, 2012

6:30 p.m.

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

*Jon Kaplan, Council President: PRESENT BY PHONE
Dr. Kris Powell, Council Vice President: PRESENT
Michael Corbo, Council Treasurer: PRESENT BY PHONE
Jan Geisendorfer, Council Secretary: PRESENT
Michelle Spieker, Council Member: ARRIVED at 6:50 pm
Colleen Patterson, Council Member: ABSENT
Alyson Berger, Educational Trustee Member: PRESENT
VACANT: Council Member
VACANT: Parent Cabinet Member*

GUESTS: Administration: Bonnie River, Shaheer Faltas, Franci Sassin, CUSD liaison Pam Watkins (left at 9:20 pm), Parent Cabinet Co-Chair Marie Kenney

AGENDA ITEM	
1	<p>Call to Order, Roll Call and Review of Norms/Roles</p> <p>Franci Sassin will take minutes, Shaheer Faltas and Jan Geisendorfer will co-chair since they are present in person, Jon will participate on the phone, but not chair the meeting</p> <p>Jon Kaplan and Mike Corbo participated from locations where the agenda had been publicly posted.</p> <p>Since Mike Corbo is not in California, he decided to abstain from voting as long as there was a quorum without him.</p> <p>NOTE: A roll call vote was used throughout the meeting because members were participating by phone call/teleconference.</p>

2	<p><i>Inspirational Passage and Council Recognitions</i></p> <p>Aly Berger, Bonnie River and Shaheer Faltas recited the verse that they use before staff meetings.</p> <p>Jan Geisendorfer read a selection of quotes from Henry Ford, Michael Jordan and Ben Franklin about teamwork, based on the good work the Council has been doing the past few meetings.</p>
3	<p><i>Approval of Agenda*</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: The order of the agenda may be changed without prior notice to the public.</i></p> <p>Kris Powell made a motion to approve the agenda, it was seconded by Ms. Geisendorfer and approved unanimously by a roll call vote. Mike Corbo abstained.</p>
4	<p><i>PUBLIC COMMENT:</i></p> <p>Mr. Kaplan wanted to express appreciation to Shaheer from his family for dealing with the lice issue promptly this past week.</p>
5	<p><i>CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A. Approval of Minutes:* Minutes from regular meeting Feb 23, 2012</i> <i>B. Copier purchase and service agreement*:</i> Ratification of copier purchase and service agreement with Absolute Document Solutions <i>C. Authorization for electronic wire transfers (EFT)*:</i> Approval of resolution authorizing EFTs from OCDE Treasury account to Wells Fargo accounts <i>D. Ratification of Second Interim Financial Report*:</i> Ratification of the report submitted to CUSD showing fiscal position and budget through Jan 31, 2012 <p>A motion was made to approve all items on the consent agenda by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Kaplan, and approved by a roll call vote unanimously, with Mr. Corbo abstaining.</p>
6	<p><i>AUDIT COMMITTEE</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A. Approval of 2011 tax returns*:</i> Approval of 990 and 199 tax returns and authorization to submit to appropriate agencies <p>Ms. Spieker joined the meeting at 6:50 pm.</p> <p>The Council reviewed the tax returns and a few minor items to be edited were noted.</p> <p>Ms. Powell made a motion to approve tax returns with necessary modifications to the draft by staff as discussed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Geisendorfer and approved unanimously by a</p>

roll call vote. Mr. Corbo abstained.

B. *Audit engagement letter: Approval of audit engagement with Vicente, Lloyd and Stutzman for 2011-12 audit**

There was a question regarding the level of auditing of the Parent Cabinet accounts. Dr. Sassin responded that typically Parent Cabinet provides all the basic financial information, and the accounts could be subject to more in depth auditing as long as they are held under the school's corporation, but that has not occurred in the past

The Council discussed the cost of the audit and if it was reasonable. It was noted that the cost was similar to previous years, and that the firm has given Journey discounted rates based on efficiency of working with same firm and providing a lot of the required material ahead of time. There is a "minimum" cost for any size school, and this is typical.

Ms. Geisendorfer made a motion to approve the audit engagement, Ms. Powell seconded, and it was approved by a roll call vote unanimously with Mr. Corbo abstaining.

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INFORMATION ITEMS: Reports

A. *Financial Report: February financials and state budget updates**

Larry Tamayo was not able to make the meeting so Shaheer reviewed the summary narrative.

CUSD liaison Pam Watkins commented on the financial situation at CUSD, where they will have a \$30-48 million deficit for 12-13. They are in the process to make significant cuts at district and school site level and are beginning discussions with all three bargaining units regarding: pay freezes, class size increases, rollbacks, and pay cuts. All four items are needed to balance budget.

Shaheer noted that despite the school's reserves and conservative spending, a budget will need to be adopted that will be challenging due to the assumption of cuts next year.

B. *Administrative Update: Including report on enrollment and 2012 lottery and 12-13 school calendar.**

Shaheer discussed the Big Rocks that he uses as a compass as he makes decisions, and he can use these to set priorities.

He wants to keep the focus and maintain the momentum that has been built over the past year. How can we best lead the community during difficult fiscal times so that the burden is shared fairly and it strengthens the ties of the community? There was some discussion regarding the relative roles of the Council and administrative budget committee in the specific choices made in the budget.

C. *Educational Director Update*: including update on the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support

Bonnie River showed video clips from various classes at Journey School—she went from class to

class earlier in the day to see what students were doing.

Bonnie commented on what the teachers are working on and how they are implementing various Waldorf practices through the different grades.

She noted that the rhythms of mentoring meetings is improving and also dove-tailing very well with the Waldorf training. Journey is on the way to becoming a model school as teachers walk the line back and forth between Waldorf and state standards. Preparing students for STAR testing is good example of this in action, for example, 5th grade life science is more spread out in the Waldorf curriculum but since it is tested in 5th there will be a guest teacher to work on some of the life science concepts with the class in preparation for the upcoming test.

Bonnie is working on the teacher evaluations. SST work, especially in 2nd and 3rd grades, has been coming together very well, interventions are working well for students. IEP work is also going very well as JS has a good working relationship with the CUSD SpED team, the team is felt to be part of the school community and the JS community is very comfortable with the CUSD staff.

The first Kindergarten orientation for new families happened already. They informally surveyed new families with one question “why did you choose Journey? and overwhelmingly (>90%) chose it for Waldorf education.

They also surveyed Journey students: “What do you love best about Journey?” and the responses came out over and over that it was about the way a student is well known by their teachers—they feel the teachers know and care about them.

*D. **Budget Committee Update:** Update on progress of Administrative Budget Committee*

The Administrative Budget Committee is meeting the first Wednesday of each month. The fiscal challenges in 12-13 will be greater. Harder decisions will have to be made because the reserves are being depleted. The pledge commitments for next year are just starting to come in. The committee has started work to develop priorities for budget cuts. It is using the worst case scenario for state funding for next year. They are using the most realistic enrollment figures available now. Increasing class size is likely to be one of the ways to help with the budget.

They are focusing on expenses which are within the control of the Council vs. fixed costs, such as rent, which are not.

A big part of the solution will have to be revenue enhancements in addition to cuts. Lots of good things are going on at Journey and there is a confident that the parents will step up and continue to help close the budget gap.

Everyone is excited about the work of the Development Group but it will take a while to get this going and so the school must address the upcoming year realistically. They are trying to look for balanced solutions and will bring forward more specific suggestions at the next meeting. Many of the programs that have been put into place in recent years are essential to Waldorf so it is a high priority to keep them.

Amanda Simmons is on the budget committee for faculty. The administrative budget committee makes recommendations to the Council and it is very transparent process. Tough decisions still need to be made but it will be a collaborative process. Amanda is working on a teacher survey regarding various budget cut scenarios to see which ones the teachers prefer. There is a need to get commitments from all stakeholders: teachers, administration and parents to assist in making the budget work and the school successful.

It was noted that the bigger the school is the better the funding picture, so future years will be improved by the double tracking now in place.

There was some discussion regarding the amounts that need to be brought in to avoid cuts to programs, and the how important the participation rate for the Close The Gap program was, even if some parents are not able to give the suggested donation. If someone can only give a very small amount it makes a big difference to getting grants. Therefore, by doing even a small amount one can make a contribution by getting the school better positioned for grants.

The Council should plan on adopting a budget in May, but June would the latest in order to mee the state deadline.

E. Faculty Update

Alyson Berger reported that at the last Faculty meeting they had a healthy discussion of how teachers can help with budget issues. There was unanimous agreement that grades classes could go up to 28 but not exceed 30, noting that the cap is currently at 26. The teachers are willing to help in this capacity. They also acknowledged how well the auction went, especially in celebrating Journey with the community. It was an uplifting and inspiring event.

Teachers have invited board members to come into classrooms any time. The best way to get a feel for the educational program is to come in to observe. Tours are good time but it is OK to come anytime although try to avoid interrupting in the middle of the story 10 am is a good time of day. Also only take photos with permission.

F. Parent Cabinet Update

Marie Kenney presented the update:

The auction went extremely well. They are still closing out the financials, but the estimated net was around \$30K, which is better than anticipated. It was a good cross section of the community that attended. The timing of the auction seemed better this year.

They will be preparing PC's budget for next year and will be looking for priorities from our budget committee to inform that.

There is a book fair next week and they will also have lunch fund raiser that will benefit 8th

grade class fund and there is the upcoming April 21 Earth Day fundraiser.

PC is still working on the leadership transition, including finding a good PC Council representative.

G. Report on *Follow-up for Previous Board Items**

Mike Corbo announced that there is a charter school finance workshop on April 5. Let Franci know if anyone has any interest.

Shaheer has followed up on fence in parking lot but there are personnel transitions at CUSD so it is a slow process.

Shaheer has been posting stories of alumni on website and also collecting survey data as well.

Shaheer had looked at fiscal impact of transitional kindy—at this time it looks like there are very few students applying in this age range.

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

A. *Student allergy issues:* Discussion of current practices regarding students with allergies to nuts and/or other allergies.

Russ Skibsted had asked to table this item until next meeting. As no one was in attendance who wanted to comment on this item it will be tabled until next meeting.

B. *Administrator evaluation process: Discussion of process, forms and timeline for 360 degree evaluation of Administrator and Education Director**

Marisol Giron, Jan Geisendorfer and Kris Powell met and Marisol put the survey into an Excel format. The group combined two different measures: the Leadership Capacity Scale with the evaluation questions from the 360 evaluation last year. The questions were divided into categories. There was a discussion regarding using Survey Monkey vs. Excel so that results could be more easily compiled. There was a discussion regarding which staff to survey and the role of parents. Also, that it is important to be clear on what the tool is being used for. The Council needs to let the groups know what their role is: either it is a 360 survey that is used to inform the evaluation that the board would do vs. a 360 evaluation in and of itself. There was discussion regarding which group/entity is responsible for doing administrative evaluation, and the best process. Ms. Geisendorfer noted that the process worked well last year, and so this year the attempt is to try to simplify and streamline that process.

It was noted that there could be analysis of the data brought in which would then be brought to the board in closed session.

As far as timeline the goal is to provide the survey to all parties prior to the next board

	<p>meeting and then following meeting will have results analyzed for presentation. It was noted that the IDEAL timeline for administrative evaluations would be midyear and no later than teacher evaluations are occurring.</p> <p>It was also noted that this year the roles between Administration and Ed Director are not well defined, so the council will need caution in deciding if the “job” is being done when the job was never well defined to start with.</p>
9	<p>DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS: Planning</p> <p>A. Financial Development:</p> <p>i. Report on 501 c3 Foundation status</p> <p>Franci Sassin reported that the past Journey Foundation President held a meeting to resign and appoint 3 Foundation board members: Colleen Patterson, Michelle Spieker, and Amy Capelle. Ms. Patterson is now researching any issues with Franchise Tax Board needed to get the corporation active. The current bylaws state that Council appoints a majority of the foundation board. The new Foundation will get back to the Council on how and when that might happen. Possibly this could happen at the next Council meeting.</p> <p>ii. Development Projects: Update on projects for remainder of 2011-12 school year related to launch of development office.</p> <p>Michelle Spieker has volunteered to be an interim Development Coordinator. The initial donation offered has a ‘match’ required to fully implement it, so that there is an ability to fund the development office for at least 3 years. The Development group is working on the details of this and on possible milestones for the donation to target. There are already some projects in place and many ideas being worked on, especially some to work on getting more large donors.</p> <p>The rainwater demonstration site will be launching that was developed from an 8th grade student project. There is a lot of community interest from both media and from city and district partners.</p>
10	<p>Board Training and Development:</p> <p>A. Update on Board activities*: <i>annual calendar of training activities and board calendar for school activities</i></p> <p>There is a financial training coming up and there are no other updates.</p> <p>B. Review of reporting on Student Outcomes from charter*: <i>Overview and discussion of plan for reporting to Council on Student Outcomes #1 through #4 from Journey Charter</i></p> <p>Shaheer developed a draft calendar reporting process and cycle so that there are outcomes always being reported at each meeting. It was noted that the Council needs to</p>

	<p>have the item earlier in the meeting so that they don't run out of time.</p> <p>C. Board Terms and Board Succession Planning*: Discussion of current and future openings on Journey School Council, Board member criteria, and timeline for recruitment/nomination process.</p> <p>The Council reviewed the bylaws regarding the Nominating Committee.</p> <p>Michelle Spieker and Alyson Berger volunteered to be on the Committee. There would also need to be at least one additional person to complete formation.</p> <p>D. Council Composition Policy*: Consideration of adopting a policy and the elements of such a policy.</p> <p>Franci Sassin framed the conversation for what the policy would add. It primarily would be addressing not so much the capacity but the roles, such as parent vs. community vs. staff.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding whether the total number of trustees should change.</p> <p>An idea was also raised to see if Parent Cabinet would want to have its nominees go through the nomination process and then let PC still approve/appoint the person.</p> <p>E. Conflict of Interest and Form 700s*: Discussion of requirements and timeline for Form 700 submission to Orange County Clerk of the Board</p> <p>Franci Sassin noted that several members still need to file. She will continue to work on it to meet the deadlines. Questions were raised regarding the requirement to file and there was a brief discussion regarding the requirements.</p>
11	<p>A. CLOSED SESSION: The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the following: Pursuant to Government Code §54957: Public Employment, Title: Education Director</p> <p>At 9:27 pm the Council voted unanimously to enter closed session. In addition to the Council members, the following guests invited into closed session who have worked on this matter and needed to report to the Board: Shaheer Faltas, Franci Sassin, Bonnie River.</p> <p>The Council voted unanimously to move out of closed session at 9:51.</p>
12	<p>Adjournment : The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm.</p>