

**Hill View Montessori Charter Public School
Regular Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 12, 2006**

Board Members Present:

Ed Maguire, Nandesh Palanisamy, Ross Povenmire, Shaw Rosen, Kelly Martin, Peg Roberts, David Kelly, Veronica O'Brien

Board Members Not Present:

Paul Accardi

Other Attendees:

Melanie Wilson, John Nolan, Leah Lewkowski, Nancy Parshley (note taker)

Shaw called meeting to order.

Minutes of the last month's board meeting was reviewed.

Comment made regarding benchmarks and action items. Action items should be bolded.

Make it an agenda item for next meeting – bold action items.

Need more information regarding the Town Meeting to be added to last month's minutes.

Would like to have the minutes be amended to reflect this and to add that Paul Accardi was not present at the last meeting.

Subject for town meeting was discussed as an update on the Charter, where are we at as far as the charter promises.

Ed motioned to accept minutes as amended. Nandesh 2nd

Minutes accepted as amended.

ED report parent conferences – about 10 families did not attend and alternative meetings have been set up. Asked the board about having someone take the minutes to hire someone. ED put it out to the staff and parent volunteers. If no response, put add in newspaper. **All in favor: Unanimous**

Call from DOE re: more slots not chartered for K-8, chartered K-7 granted. Changes now grant for total grades, and total number of slots that we will ever need. Need to resubmit charter app. and request for 320 slots, more than what we need, but could be used for 4 year olds. If we're going to try to add 40 new kindergartners, we should request 40 slots for each grade level.

Does the DOE want us to throw away our current proposal and re-do it? Peg – yes. The DOE is recommending we put the request in for the extra slots now because if we don't do it now, we will not have enough slots for our students when they reach grade 8. We will make sure that Haverhill is aware of it. The renewal process would be started at 3 ½ yrs and then we would have a total of 6 years for the new charter.

Can this be tied (extra slots) in with the charter renewal? Yes if the renewal is timely, if its not we won't have enough slots on the kindergarten end. What's the difference of doing it now and doing it later? Charter renewal is very involved process. We aren't sure if we can apply for our renewal until the middle of March 2008. Shaw spoke to the Mass Charter School Office and stated the representative stated he was surprised that we would be applying for new slots and also be doing the renewal at the same time.

A discussion continued regarding the conversations with the DOE and a request was made to have Peg double check with the DOE for clarification.

BOT member asked if the extra slots were going to create any space problems. No because we're not adding classrooms, but trying to fill the kindergarten slots. Eventually 263, requested 243 slots. "Feels that if we give a blanket approval for 320 slots, we will lose the small neighborhood feel to our school."

Conversation continued regarding the current situation regarding the enrollment and what's been happening, no real attrition. Not sure if we'll ever use all of the additional slots and if we don't the DOE will request us to give them back. The expansion process currently is leading us up into the high 290's without adding the new kindergarten students. Questioned if this would strain our relationship with HPS by asking for the total 320 slots? If we take in the 40 kindergarten students each year we will eventually need those 40 slots in the upper grades. Our current charter is for 240 slots. Attrition generally doesn't occur until around grade 6 when kids get more involved in sports, extra curricula activities, etc. The original plan had the attrition would start at grade 2, but because that hasn't happened, that's why we're in the situation we have now.

Next item – Terra Nova results when will they be coming? Not until late November, early December.

What will the results show? Strengths and weaknesses are – if they aren't good, what actions will be taken? The value to the school is to guide instruction and the teachers and administrators will use the results to develop their plans for improving instruction.

Next item - heard there have been a number of suspensions and was wondering how many have occurred over the past 2 years.

Peg – happen when serious things happen, we follow the code of conduct our rate is low when compared with the state

Will our numbers be going up, yes especially as our students get older.

Shaw requested that more information between the state's numbers and HVM's be given to the board.

Peg – we are having more issues with the upper elementary grades and Nancy & Melanie have instituted an anti-bullying program

Shaw – if it gets too high, then we should get that info.

The conversation then moved onto the Individual Learning Agreements (ILA's). The new ILA's seem less individualized and related more to the grade levels. This year's ILA's were revised by using the criteria from the frameworks, plus we're adding a rubric which will be finalized in January.

Melanie – goals are more generalized – for the students returning they should have been more individualized, but not so at the lower/1st years. The rubric's purpose is to show more information, but not creating more work for the teachers, need to work on the qualifiers and also refine the goals, also added on the cultural and to make it easier to read/look at. Hopefully they will be easier to read and give more information to the parents.

A conversation continued regarding the new ILA's and if they reflect what is in the charter. BOT wants to make sure we're doing what we promised. **A request was made that the ED and Administrators look at the charter to ensure we are being true to the charter and report back at the next meeting.**

Shaw – asked that David move the item 7 A up to now.

No objections

A discussion regarding the ED evaluation process and what tools should be used, discarded, etc. The staff survey asks the staff to assess/evaluate what the ED does, but they have no idea what the survey is asking. Not everyone has the same amount of information available to them. It needs to be much more streamlined. A lot easier than presenting 19 pages of information, very confusing too many competing thoughts and ideas. Should the number of questions be cut?

January board meeting – each member would get 2 pages about the leadership skills of the ED with %'s and a score.

Three pages, 1 page summary of staff and 1 page summary of parents' responses, Backing it up to a due date of December 22nd.

The advisory committee is meeting in November and needs to look at the survey.

Current tool is way too cumbersome, need to change the tool. Can't do the survey too much late. What's the recommended time frame?

Shaw stated, I have an issue with surveys to be used to evaluate a person's performance, it's not valid and it's not right, especially if you don't have every one complete it. It's very one sided. Didn't find them useful last year, left a lot of '?'s blank.

David – I think your right, it needs to be results oriented. We are trying to develop a whole new tool

Shaw – Kelly and David, do you want to ask for more members for the committee - need two more members – accountability and a chair

Questions were asked about the goals, are they the ED's goals, the school's goals or the BOT's goals? Are they all in one?

Ross & Shaw will join that committee and report back next month.

Old Business -

2006-2007 BOT Goals

Ed- passed out handout DRAFT of Academic goals, Communication goal not being presented tonight. The other three haven't been worked on. This document needs to be worked on a lot more. Very spirited discussion regarding each line item. We're tackling one per night. This is just an update. Scope of Montessori with the state framework. Trying to find a way that doesn't hurt the Montessori philosophy/method. Want to have the board be aware of any problems, i.e.: problems of if students are way behind, we want to know about it.

Melanie – March 15th for upper elementary, not March 1st.

Nandesh – we have two documents that look a lot alike and I don't fully understand why Ed – the accountability plan is a 5 year plan and we want to make this for this year, wrestling match is if we put it as 65% now, it doesn't really reflect what we're aiming for. The qualifier is that these are our 5 year goals, but we're aiming for this now in the 3rd year. There are still things that need to be filled in.

David – there's a disconnect between the goals and the measurements, we get everyone there no matter what

Ed – the individual child is the key here, objective A.4.2 – we added to address David's? Plan is to have this one to you for a vote at next month's meeting and be able to give you a draft of the communication one.

Shaw – can you tell us when we would have a complete set of goals?

Ed – I would suggest that the board approve one at time

Shaw – we requested that we have all of them for tonight. I'm concerned that we aren't going to have them ready for this year. I understand that these two are the most difficult, but I would like to know when they'll all be done.

Why can't this all be happening concurrently?

Ed – it can happen concurrently, I can call the other 2 committees

Veronica – this sounds that it's taking a long time, do you have enough representation from each group, will this burn people out?

Ed – I don't really know about the other goals, I don't think they're going to create a lot of burnout

Shaw – requested Ed be in touch with the other subcommittees, and everyone go back and look at the notes from the retreat

Asked do you need them resent to each group

Melanie – I would request that the subcommittee take into account the objectives related to the accountability plan and not address the others that don't? The sequencing and mapping – doesn't need to be done for the accountability plan

Ed – responded, the BOT is concerned about being kept informed about where the students are

Kelly – we can't let Montessori suffer

Peg – that's the biggest struggle as being a public Montessori school

Ed- if this does ruin the spirit of the school, and then it shouldn't be there

Peg – we will struggle with this and we may not come up with an answer this year

Leah Lewkowski – I'm concerned that if the charter isn't renewed and my child has to go back to the public school, I need to be assured that my child has been taught what their going to be tested on.

Break at 7:57pm

Returned 8:15 pm

Update on November Student Presentation – Peg one of the classes will make a presentation

Shaw – low key, not a major production, can be in the classroom

10 minutes

Town Meeting Update – next steps – faithfulness to the charter and do in January

Next meeting set a date; Topic will be Faithfulness to the Charter

Hill View Happenings – letter from the chair

If February is too far out, possible a letter from the chair to give an update might be a good idea.

New Business:

A. MCAS Results - concerned that in surrounding towns that it's given as a report, my thought is that we put this information to good use. Good news – publicize, Bad news – how do we fix it.

Peg – didn't use as a whole/collectively, no real patterns found, but this year we have TEST Wiz and we plan to use it internally, Nancy will analyze the results and then the reports will be given to the teachers to use.

We need an overall plan – marketing, pr, academically, etc. what type of future action do you want for this?

Ed – request from Peg what we’re going to do with it?

Shaw – a communications plan needs to be in place, good or bad

Ed – the overall plan of how the school uses this information

Shaw – results used for individual academic planning, tends toward school, etc.

Ross – might make sense to have a plan in mind to communicating the results to HPS and provide our interpretation of what those results say

Peg – we need to be honest and upfront about what our results show and then if there are issues we make them our goals for next year

Shaw – right now we could prepare a draft press release with key points/messages ready

Sending this task to the PR committee to develop the communication part and Peg will do the education piece

Peg – Charter renewal – attended training last spring, her understanding is that you have 3 1/2 years under your belt. So you can’t really apply until your 4th year. This time next year is when we need to start.

Peg will double check it.

C. Policy for confirming residency for children coming off wait list

Request for the Trustees to develop a policy

Peg – it’s part of the process

It would be part of the enrollment policy, need to double check

John Nolan – questioned about the attrition issue

Peg – addressed this, this would be so if we didn’t replace these children, now we have a huge wait list and if we aren’t going to replace these slots, it brings up a whole other issue.

The assumption was that people would leave and that we wouldn’t have people to fill those slots. The other piece was when we stop taking in new children. The other issue is that our budget is based upon 100% filled slots.

The decision was made last year by the board because it felt it was too early to really set a policy.

A parent asked about a modular update. Veronica – we’re dealing with some problems, can’t really report on the status right now.

Executive Session

Veronica requested that the board go into an executive session for the following reason:

To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the governmental body with a person, firm, or corporation.

Shaw called a roll call vote.

Unanimous

BOT went into Executive Session at approximately 9:15 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.