



Endeavor Board Meeting: January 24, 2011

Call to Order

Lisa Springle

Lisa Springle called to order the regular meeting of the Endeavor Charter School Board of Directors at 7 pm on January 17, 2011 in Endeavor's multi-purpose room.

Present

Lisa Springle, Steve McAdams, Christine Northrup, Larry Woolard, Margaret Holder, Helen Harris, DJ Hill, Andy Kristianson. Christian Nechyba arrived at 7:20 pm.

Treasurer's Report

Larry Woolard

The Regions Bank money market account balance this month was \$225,421.09. The First Citizen's Bank operating balance was \$588,440.31. The Bank of America CD balance was \$202,610.24. Larry Woolard made a motion to allow the Director, the Chair, or the Treasurer to apply for a credit card with First Citizens Bank, with a limit not to exceed \$10,000. The card would be secured with \$10,000 transferred from the First Citizens operating account. Margaret Holder seconded the motion. All board members present unanimously approved the motion.

Parent Teacher Expectations

Jim Dotson

Jim Dotson reviewed recommendations from the parent-teacher expectations task force (attached). Beth Gentile reviewed changes implemented at the K-2 level, including a uniform newsletter format and uniform language on the school website. Liz Wood reviewed changes in grades 3-5, including a shift to grade-level websites, and the goal of moving to electronic communication over the next two quarters. Homework will not be posted online in order to encourage student responsibility in recording homework assignments. She thanked Melissa Bonsted for her help with this transition. Jim Dotson stated that Robin Thoman was unable to attend, but a similar process was being implemented at grades 6-8.

The board discussed the recommendations, including how the board should be involved in the conflict resolution/violated expectations process. The board thanked Jim Dotson and the task force for their recommendations. It was agreed that Helen Harris, as the board communications representative, would develop the recommendations of the task force into two separate policies (parent-teacher expectations and a more general communications policy), and would report back to the board at the February meeting.

Leadership Update

Liz Wood

Liz Wood provided a leadership team update on the third grade curriculum. She reviewed the third grade mini-economy unit, a biography unit in reading which would include public speaking presentations, and the fractions/geometry math unit.

Minutes

Christian Nechyba

Christian Nechyba moved for approval of the minutes from the December 13 board meeting, and the special board meetings of December 20 and January 10. There was a brief discussion on what information was appropriate for inclusion in closed session minutes. Andy Kristianson seconded the motion for approval. The minutes from December 13 were unanimously approved. DJ Hill, Steve McAdams, Margaret Holder, Christian Nechyba, Christine Northrup, Larry Woolard, Andy Kristianson, and Lisa Springle voted to approve the minutes from December 20 and January 10. Christine Northrup abstained from the vote regarding the December 20 minutes, as she was not present at this meeting. Helen Harris abstained from the vote to approve the minutes from December 20 and January 10.

Enrichment Update

Tamara Santana

Tamara Santana reported that 103 students were enrolled in second quarter enrichment classes, including 75 students in ensembles, 8 in the tutoring program, and 17 parents in the parent education program. The next parent education event on Organizing Students for Success would be held on February 8.

Foundation Update

Steve Santana

Steve Santana and DJ Hill reported that the Endeavor Foundation was actively seeking suitable land for a permanent facility. It was likely that the Foundation would ask the ECS board to move quickly when an appropriate piece of real estate was identified. DJ Hill reviewed that three ECS board members were on the Foundation board (Lisa Springle, Andy Kristianson, and Steve McAdams), but that the final decision regarding land would come back to the entire ECS Board. Asa Rogerson stated that the Foundation was conducting a broad search for potential land options, including options which might fall outside the original 22-30 acre parameters.

Security System

Steve Santana

Steve Santana reported that the school's new security system was operational, and was providing 24-hour monitoring. Lisa Springle thanked him for his efforts, adding that the staff felt much better about the school's security.

Graduation

Maija McAdams

Maija McAdams reported that the eight grade graduation committee had come up with a budget, which had increased from last year due to the increased number of graduates. The graduation budget had been approved in finance committee.

Board Structure

Lisa Springle

Lisa Springle stated that the board's committee structure had created problems with efficiency and proposed an alternate structure. The finance committee had functioned well, and this committee would be retained in the new structure and would continue to meet before general board meetings. In place of the other committees, the board would appoint specific board members to be responsible for specific topics. These board members would then bring actionable proposals to the entire board as needed. Responsibilities of each board member would be as follows:

Lisa Springle: Board chair, high school, stakeholders (with Helen Harris), DPI liaison (with Steve McAdams), press liaison (with Steve McAdams)

DJ Hill: Personnel

Andy Kristianson: Corporate governance

Christian Nechyba: Board secretary, board website, health/safety, grievance, PAWS

Helen Harris: Communication, technology, stakeholders (with Lisa Springle), fundraising liaison

Margaret Holder: Audit (with Larry Woolard), surveys (with Christine Northrup)

Larry Woolard: Audit (with Margaret Holder), sports, enrichment

Steve McAdams: Lease agent liaison, press liaison and DPI liaison (with Lisa Springle)

Christine Northrup: staff liaison, staff consultant on surveys

Website Maintenance

Christian Nechyba

Christian Nechyba stated that as board secretary, he would take over maintenance of the board section of the website. Board members would contact him with suggestions.

Board Selection Process

Andy Kristianson

Andy Kristianson stated that, according to both Endeavor's non-profit articles of incorporation and its bylaws, Endeavor was a non-member corporation and that its directors are responsible for electing directors. If the school were to change from the current process by which directors elected board members to a process of parents electing members of the board, the school would need to amend its bylaws and articles of incorporation, and amend its IRS status. Amending the articles of incorporation and IRS status would be simple, but amending the school's articles of incorporation would require resubmitting the school's charter for approval. The board had been previously advised by its DPI consultant to avoid amending its bylaws. Decisions on who would be eligible to vote in such elections would also be complicated. Given this information, the board took no action to change the manner in which board members are selected. The board discussed the best ways to communicate open positions to the school community.

Public Comments

Lisa Springle

A question regarding parent-teacher communication and web-based communication and the burdens it would create for teachers was addressed by Liz Wood.

Personnel Discussion

Andy Kristianson moved that the board go into closed session to discuss a personnel issue, in accordance with statute 143.318.11 (a) (6). Margaret Holder seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, and the board moved into closed session at 9:45 pm.

The board reconvened in public session at 10:15 pm. Steve McAdams moved to retain Jay Thanner as an independent contractor for the second semester of the 2010-11 school year. Lisa Springle seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Lisa Springle

Lisa Springle adjourned the meeting at 10:20 pm.

ADDENDUM TO BOARD MINUTES: Parent/Teacher Expectations Task Force Recommendations (Preliminary)

1. The Issue:

Endeavor Charter School needs to develop, implement, and live according to clear expectations within our community to honor our different stakeholders.

It is significant because unclear or unrealistic expectations will be the source of continual misunderstanding and frustration, despite our good intentions.

The ideal outcome is a set of expectations that are jointly developed and agreed upon by all stakeholder groups along with a plan to live according to them.

2. The Expectations:

Parent-to-Teacher Expectations

Teacher-to-Parent Expectations

3. Parent Expectations of Teachers: Goal = Maximize student learning

Fundamental Principles / Understanding:

- Recognizing the different needs of grade-level groups, parents want consistent policies and procedures within these groups:
 - Grades K-2
 - Grades 3-5
 - Grades 6-8
- Minimum standards/expectations for **all**
 - Not about me, you... but “Endeavor Community”

A. Communication expectations from Teachers to Parents:

- Parents believe enhanced communication will alleviate many of the perceived and real “issues” / “challenges”
- **A complete and consistent communication strategy developed to streamline communication methods across a “grade-level grouping” (referenced above)**
 - **Electronic is preferred/ primary communication method** for communicating information (to minimize paper, increase timeliness, and save money).

- 3rd Qtr – move away from paper, 4th Qtr – electronic is the standard, Fall 2011 – exclusive!
- **A hard copy** of all e-mail communication can be obtained in the school office at any time (sensitivity to families without computer access)
- **Minimize “stuff”** in the Tuesday folder. Communicate FYI material electronically NOT via hard copy (i.e.- “Spirit Night at Restaurant X”)
- **Student / Teacher / Parent concerns** should be communicated face-to-face / 1:1 (or phone-to-phone), **not via e-mail** (meeting should be requested, scheduled, and topic provided ahead of time).
- Improved plan for “**meet-the-teacher night**” to inform parents of grade-level policies and key information, review expectations, and time for Q& A. Teachers will guide parents through their website (academics page and staff page).
- **A mid-year “parent / teacher”** night to highlight policies, what is and is not working, and to review parent / teacher **expectations**.

B. Where can I find the latest information? The website – Academics Page / Staff Page

- **“New” Grade-Level Page** that will host a grade-level calendar, policies and procedures for that grade, newsletter (if applicable) and a link to each staff member’s page.
- **Test / Project due dates** will be coordinated among the grade-level team, with the goal of not having more than 2 on a given day
- Changes to key dates will be communicated by a “**Change Button**” on the staff page and via email to parents
- **Policies / Procedures** for the grade level will be communicated on the new master grade-level page

C. Accountability: Our Community holds ITSELF Accountable!

- Group-level “expert” identified for each tool (website, agenda...)
- Teachers “train” parents and students to use the website (refer them to website for answers to questions)
- Grade level groups hold one another accountable
- Administration holds all accountable (helps identify the issue of “can’t / won’t” and makes it possible for all teachers to understand and adhere to the minimum standard)

D. Use of the “AGENDA” as the primary tool for students’ daily homework, tests and projects (grade 3-8)

- Each grade-level group should identify “an agenda expert” to train and help others in that group
- **Goal = to teach responsibility** to students and provide consistency among all grades / teachers
- ALL **changes** to test or project assignments will be noted in student’s “Agenda,” AND communicated by e-mail to parents and updated on the “academics page”
- **Time will be set aside** at the end of each class / day to record assignments in the “Agenda.” The due date will ALWAYS be included as well as benchmarks for large projects as applicable
- **Each grade-level group will consistently spot-check and grade the use of the “agenda”**
- It is the **parent’s responsibility** to ensure their child has their “Agenda” completed and reinforce the use of the “Agenda” at home

E. Forgotten Items

Goal: To teach responsibility. When students fail to bring items with them at the beginning of the day, the following policy is to be followed:

Items: homework, projects, lunch...

- **Zero for homework** (not major assignments such as projects or papers, but daily homework) not turned in at the beginning of the class – each grade-level will develop, communicate and follow the standard. However, each grade-level will also agree to drop a certain number of homework grades per quarter (the exact number will be communicated to parents and students at the beginning of the year) with the understanding that a few forgotten or incomplete homework assignments will not unduly damage a student’s grade
- Policy will be developed, communicated to parents and students, and posted on “academics page” (January ‘11)

Guidelines for all “forgotten” items:

- Students may call home only during recess or at lunch
- Parents should leave all forgotten items in the school office (do not take it directly to a classroom)
- Students can get a pass only at recess or lunch and collect the items parents bring to school
- It is not the office / teacher’s responsibility to get the items left at the office to the student

4. Teacher Expectations of Parents: Goal: Maximize student learning.

A. Parent – Teacher 1:1 Communication

Goal: The Endeavor Community wants to protect the “instructional hours of the day for all classrooms”: 8:20am – 3:45pm.

- Parents and Teachers are both expected to use the “**open communication policy**” to schedule conferences to discuss issues / concerns
- **The community is committed to a “no surprise” culture**
- Parents and Teachers should respond to e-mails and phone calls **within 1 business day (a 24-hour period)**
- Teachers are not expected to check e-mail during the day
- Teachers’ home phone numbers may be available in the directory but should not be used

B. A “Safety Hotline” will be created for parents to communicate urgent information to the administration, who will then notify the teacher(s) as appropriate

- Issues can be communicated “**live**” **directly to the Administration but NOT to the teacher**
- The Hotline should be used only for “**Urgent Issues**” **regarding child safety** (i.e. bullying, a weapon or banned substance at school)

C. Issues requiring a notification to parents from teachers or to teachers from parents within 24 hours: Any issue regarding “unusual / uncharacteristic behavior” or “life-change situations that may lead to uncharacteristic behavior” in the student should be communicated between Parent / Teacher within this 24-hour time period

- Parents / Teachers send an e-mail marked “URGENT” in the e-mail heading. If e-mail is not available or if child safety is a concern notify the administration (via the Safety Hotline if after school hours) who will notify the teacher
- **Issues of “parental or teacher frustration” do NOT fulfill “Urgent” criteria**

D. Respect

Goal: To acknowledge and handle all issues between a parent, teacher, and administration 1:1 as quickly as possible and in a respectful manner.

- Parent, Teacher or Administrator sends an e-mail; “I request a conference with you at your earliest convenience regarding ... **(topic)**”. All messages should be responded to within one business day
- **Goal should always be a “face-to-face” (or voice-to-voice) conference, NOT a dialogue via e-mail**
- Discussions should take place out of the child’s presence, unless both agree to include them
- Respect for teacher and administrator authority must be taught and demonstrated inside and outside the classroom, by both students and parents

E. Respect must be demonstrated at all times.

- Raised voices, loss of control of emotions or lack of respect from either party is a reason from any involved party to immediately postpone the meeting
- The school (Administration and Staff) will not tolerate emotional discussions in public areas of the school as they are disruptive to the instruction of the students
- Upset parents / teachers should request a private conference where they can speak freely (yet with respect) as noted above
- “Ranting” or disrespectful e-mails will also not be tolerated within our community. E-mail is NOT the appropriate forum to air disagreements or resolve problems. Disrespectful emails from any party may be escalated to the administration and ultimately the board of directors as necessary.

F. Conflict Resolution. Goal: The Endeavor Community is committed to exposing issues and effectively dealing with them. While an individual may not be happy with the solution / action: Parents, Teachers, Administration and the Board will hold ourselves accountable for choosing what is believed to be the “best course or action for the entire Endeavor Community.”

- a. If 1:1 resolution fails, a meeting should be scheduled with the Administration or with a Board Member if there is concern with the Administration
- b. **The Endeavor Community is committed to NOT gossip, spread rumors, or rally others without FIRST following the policy.** Talk to those with whom you have an issue before you talk to others outside of the issue about it!

- G.** Parents expect and understand that all children and parents are treated consistently and that no preferential treatment is given based upon parental involvement or funds contributed.

- 5. Violated Expectations Process:** Expectations are of no value if they are not written, communicated, agreed to, implemented and then lived. The following guidelines will help us “LIVE” these expectations as we continue to strive for excellence within the Endeavor Community. We should EXPECT ISSUES – don’t hide from them – take necessary steps to DEAL WITH THEM APPROPRIATELY.

Teachers not meeting Expectations	Parents not meeting Expectations
1. Talk with the teacher (discuss / understand) (face-to-face / voice-to-voice)	1. Talk with the parent (discuss / understand) (face-to-face/ voice-to-voice)
2. Provide specific behavioral examples	2. Provide specific behavioral examples
3. Involve administration next only after a 1:1 resolution has been attempted but has been unsuccessful	3. Involve administration next only after a 1:1 resolution has been attempted but has been unsuccessful
4. Our standard is to find a resolution within 3 business days	4. Our standard is to find a resolution within 3 business days
5. Finally, if there is still no resolution after completing steps 1-4 above, notify a Board Member	5. Finally, if there is still no resolution after completing steps 1-4 above, notify a Board Member