



Endeavor Board Meeting Agenda: May 16, 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 in Endeavor's multi-purpose room. The process for submitting public comments was reviewed.

Present:

Lisa Springle, Steve McAdams, Margaret Holder, Christian Nechyba, Helen Harris, Andy Kristianson, Christine Northrup, DJ Hill (Larry Woolard arrived at 8:05 pm)

Brief Updates:

(1) Treasurer's Report

Margaret Holder

Margaret Holder provided the treasurer's report. The Regions Bank Money Market account had a balance of \$225,676.97, the Bank of America CD had a balance of \$202,676.87, the Harrington Bank account had a balance of \$225,000, and the operating account at First Citizen's had a balance of \$589,910.04. The finance committee meeting had been primarily devoted to a review of the draft budget, which would be addressed later.

(2) Director's Update

Steve McAdams

Steve McAdams reviewed a document on how Endeavor treats its teachers as professionals (see Appendix A). The goals of this review, including a promotion of volunteerism to protect teacher planning time and potential staff recruitment were briefly discussed.

(3) Leadership Team Update

Tonya Mills

Tonya Mills provided a leadership team update from second grade. She reviewed many topics pertaining to the second grade curriculum, including morning meeting, rotation of star students, differentiated assessment and testing in phonics, a poetry unit, publication of second grade books, typing and Microsoft review, reader's workshop, lexile benchmarking, insect study in science, "traveling" the US in 180 days in social studies, CGI and differentiated instruction in mathematics.

(4) Boosters Update

Lori Tolson

The end of year sports banquet would be held tomorrow night. New boosters board members had been elected, and included Beth Johnson as president, Michelle Kennedy as vice president, Sarah Salaz as secretary, Kim Day as treasurer, and Julianne Huguely and Alyssa Siar as at-large board members. 250 people are expected at the sports banquet. Registration for fall sports would be conducted at the end of May. Lisa Springle thanked the boosters on behalf of the board.

(5) Survey Update

Margaret Holder

Survey data had been collected successfully from 205 families and 35 staff members. The Board would organize and discuss the data at an upcoming board meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes

Christian Nechyba

Christian Nechyba moved for the approval of minutes from the April general board meeting. Andy Kristianson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss & Decide:

(1) Draft Budget Review

Margaret Holder

A large deficit was projected in the preliminary draft budget for the 2011-12 school year largely due to the fact that federal revenues would not be renewed for the coming school year and that a reduction of state revenue was also possible. Although the initial draft budget showed a projected deficit of \$363,000, a special finance committee meeting would be held next Monday, May 23 at 7:30 pm (following the PAWS general membership meeting) to begin to resolve this issue. The school did have a projected surplus of \$231,000 for the current school year, and had well over \$1 million in accumulated surpluses from the first three years of operation.

(2) Board Structure

**Helen Harris
Andy Kristianson**

Andy Kristianson stated that, as corporate governance liaison, he had received a written proposal from Helen Harris regarding board structure. Helen Harris reviewed the proposal, which included (1) a proposal to change the status of the administrative and staff board members from voting positions to ex officio/advisory positions, (2) a proposal to expand the size of the board from 9 to 15 members, and (3) a proposal to expand annual board recruitment (full proposal is attached as Appendix B). Four staff members (Leann Bove, Cindy Landwehr, Colleen Tavoracci, and Brad Ezell) spoke in opposition to removing the voting status of ECS staff board members. The board discussed the proposal. Helen Harris moved to make the school director an ex officio non-voting board member and to make the staff board member a non-voting advisory board

member. Margaret Holder seconded the motion. Helen Harris voted in favor of the motion. Lisa Springle, Andy Kristianson, DJ Hill, Christian Nechyba, and Margaret Holder voted against the motion. Steve McAdams and Christine Northrup abstained from the vote, and Larry Woolard was not present for this vote. Helen Harris moved to increase voting board membership from 9 to 15. Margaret Holder seconded the motion. Margaret Holder and Helen Harris voted in favor of the motion. Lisa Springle, Andy Kristianson, DJ Hill, Christian Nechyba, Steve McAdams, and Christine Northrup voted against the motion (Larry Woolard was not present for this vote). Andy Kristianson stated that the terms of four current board members ended on June 30: DJ Hill, Christian Nechyba, Christine Northrup, and Steve McAdams. All four had indicated a desire to run again. Discussions regarding board composition would be revisited in the context of school expansion in a permanent facility.

"Big Picture" Topics:

Land Due Diligence Process

DJ Hill

DJ Hill stated that the school had entered an exclusive period of discussion with the owners of the Burlington Mills property on Capital Boulevard. Four key areas of evaluation would include:

- (1) *Developer Selection*: Asa Rogerson was leading developer interviews. It would be beneficial to identify a developer to both capitalize the project and provide professional expertise.
- (2) *Legal Due Diligence*: Andy Kristianson was leading this effort.
- (3) *Economic Due Diligence*: John Collar was leading this effort, and Margaret Holder would serve as the ECS Board liaison.
- (4) *Environmental Due Diligence*: Erik Hall was assembling a team to look at environmental issues, and Christian Nechyba would serve as ECS Board liaison on environmental issues.

From the letter of intent, the 90-day goal was to try to reach a bargain in conceptual terms with the owners. The 60-day goal would be to begin to engage the owners in discussions. Satisfaction of environmental conditions and school control over other property tenants was important. The goal would be to occupy a new facility within 2-3 years.

Public Comments:

Caroline Tatum-Carter requested that three parent comments be appended to the December 20 special board meeting minutes.

Closed Session:

Andy Kristianson moved that the board go into closed session to discuss personnel topics, in accordance with statute 143.318.11 (a) (6), and to approve minutes from a prior closed meeting, in accordance with statute 143.318.11 (a) (1). Christian Nechyba seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The board went into closed session at 9:10 pm. In closed session, Andy Kristianson moved for approval of minutes from the March 7, 2011 closed board meeting. Christian Nechyba seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved. The board returned to open session at 10:29 pm.

Adjournment:

Lisa Springle adjourned the meeting at 10:30 pm.

Proposed Upcoming Board Topics:

Survey Results

Land Due Diligence Update

Teacher Performance Review Process

Appendix A: Endeavor Teachers Are Treated as Professionals

The philosophy behind how we as a school treat our teachers is stated in Endeavor's charter, "We believe teachers are professional and should be treated as such." Treating teachers as professionals directly benefits students because teachers are consequently happier with their jobs, making them more willing to go the extra mile when necessary and to return the following year.

The school and Board of Directors' respect for teachers manifests itself in many ways. Among these ways are

1. from the words of one teacher: "in my opinion, number one is that we are not only allowed, but encouraged to plan and perform our daily teaching in the ways that we see fit our students and our classrooms the best. We are given the support that we need without having lesson plan templates or methods forced upon us. We are encouraged to use collaborative teaching, innovation and creativity when deciding on the best ways to teach the standard course of study. This shows that teachers are trusted";
2. freeing up lunch and recess with a dedicated teacher and volunteers to allow teachers valuable time away from students each day so they can recharge and refocus;
3. encouraging teachers to continue learning through workshops, guest speakers, team collaboration, lateral planning, independent book studies;
4. employing a technology expert who assists teachers and students in the classroom, trouble shoots tech problems, oversees staff computers, runs training sessions for teachers to understand available technology;
5. providing an individual laptop computer for each teacher to use in school and out of school;
6. employing two dedicated curriculum coordinators to assist teachers in ways like finding and researching appropriate materials, field trips, speakers, team teaching, demonstration teaching, removing small groups from classes for remediation or enrichment, streamlining curriculums to avoid re-teaching over the years, providing another set of eyes and ears for myriad situations like conferences, lesson ideas, parent conferences;
7. providing a teacher representative on the Board of Directors;
8. employing a part-time Teacher Services Coordinator who handles requirements like keeping track of license renewal, mentoring requirements, continuing education hours and activities, graduation demands, serving as a link between high schools and Endeavor families, scheduling professional development, training qualified substitutes, enrolling students in virtual school;
9. setting aside \$350 per teacher each year for continuing education that the teacher decides upon;

10. awarding every full time teacher 12 days a year to use as sick days, mental health days, or for whatever need arises –with no questions asked;
11. giving each teacher two hours of common planning time each week to plan with their team and to conference with other teachers, administration, and parents as appropriate, complete required procedures;
12. seeking input in decisions as appropriate –for instance, with interviewing new teachers who will work on their team or in their curriculum, with calendar suggestions and approval, with best-practices applications throughout the school, with a Leadership Team made up of teachers who collaborate in the creation of school policies and procedures;
13. freeing teachers from many of the time-devouring demands of typical schools, like duties and committees that do not directly affect student learning;
14. providing an open-door policy to speak with administrators about issues (no huge bureaucracy like a central office that requires days of wait time), anonymous suggestion box to the Board of Directors;
15. providing a safe environment (teachers asked for security system which the Board provided);
16. avoiding such corporate concepts as factory-style time clocks and all they imply about lack of professionalism;
17. creating anonymous staff surveys about the administration, office, and Board of Directors;
18. allowing copying as needed –no codes or limitations and volunteers allowed to run copies;
19. asking for teacher input on supplies to be ordered and providing opportunities for them to reorder as appropriate;
20. following the Wake County pay scale as a minimum;
21. developing a communication policy with input from staff and parents to facilitate teachers being treated with the respect they deserve;
22. encouraging teachers to work with a consultant to develop a teacher evaluation policy and accompanying forms to best fit requirements of the teachers rather than the administrators;
23. providing all teachers with keys to their rooms so they may come in over weekends and track-outs if they choose to do so (most schools do not allow this privilege); and
24. allowing teachers to leave the building during school hours (not instructional time) to take care of personal business that must be done during business hours.

Appendix B: Corporate Governance Proposal

As Endeavor Charter School enters its 4th year of operation, the Endeavor Board of Directors has many projects, challenges, and decisions ahead that will shape the future of the school. The following proposals are made in an effort to strengthen the Board.

Proposal 1

Staff input on topics, issues, and proposals in front of the Board are critical to ensure the Board has purposeful discussions and makes informed decisions. However, this input can be sought without putting staff in conflicted positions. In addition, all Board members should be able to participate and vote on most, if not all, discussions and decisions instead of being excused from these activities because of conflicts due to being an employee of the school. Thus, voting members of the Board should not include staff members of the school.

a. The Director of the school should not be a voting member of the Board, but instead, participate as an ex officio member of the Board. The Director will share his/her opinion on topics and actively participate in discussions without having a vote. There should be a separation between the Director and the Board since the Director works for and reports to the Board. This separation follows guidelines regarding best practices of Boards in that management is the responsibility of administration while governance is the responsibility of the Board. Having the Director as a voting member on the Board blurs the line between management and governance. Even DPI recommends that the Director not be a voting member of the Board. Furthermore, the Director has a stronger voice when not a member of the Board where his/her vote is diluted by the other members.

b. The staff representative to the Board should not be a voting member, but instead, participate as an advisor or group of advisors. As an advisor(s), staff can provide input without being put into a conflicted position of voting. Having the responsibility of a vote puts the staff representative in a position where he/she may have to act in opposition to the opinion of their immediate supervisor, the school Director. In addition, all members of the Board should be able to vote on most, if not all, topics. In reality, the staff representative is excused from many of the Board discussions and votes because of conflicts. This proposal to shift the staff representative to an advisory role from a voting role is not to be deemed a negative reflection on the participation of the current staff representative. In fact, it is a testament to the professionalism and valued participation of the current staff representative that an advisory role be created while alleviating the pressure associated with a voting position.

Proposal 2

Due to the magnitude of the decisions facing the Board over the coming years and the potential scope of work associated with the relocation of the school, increasing the number of voting Board members from 9 to 15 would follow many best practices for charter school Boards and provide greater representation of the community the Board serves.

- a. From the Effective Governing Board Guidebook, “While it is difficult to specify an appropriate size for all charter school Boards, in general, a Board should range in number from 11 to 21 members”. Marci Cornell Feist presented at the Charter meeting in February and also recommends that Boards have between 11 and 15 members. Even Joel Medley made a statement to the fact that Marci has convinced him that a larger Board is better.
- b. The downside to a smaller Board is that decisions are made with votes which are determined by 5 (and sometimes 4) members, which is not as likely to represent the diversity of its community.
- c. Suggested path to move forward:
 - Step 1) May 17th – a general request for individuals interested in a Board position can be sent via email and also published on the ECS website (as was done when prior positions were open) with a 2 week window for applicants to reply (May 17th – May 31st).
 - Step 2) Interviews can then be conducted over the course of the next 2-3 weeks (June 1 – 20)
 - Step 3) A special Board meeting for the elections can be scheduled before the end of June. Depending on the number of applicants, the process can be shortened or expanded. Just as previous positions have been filled outside of the ‘normal’ election period, new expansion members could also be added over a course of a few months (i.e., 2 members added in June, 2 added in July, 2 added in August).

Proposal 3

Board recruitment should be a yearly process. Every spring, a robust search should be conducted to find individuals interested in serving on the ECS Board. Current Board members with expiring terms can be re-elected to a second term but they would be considered along with all other candidates. Currently, it seems that applicants for Board membership are only sought if a current Board member is not interested in re-election.

- a. The process currently in place that staggers the expiration of Board members’ terms, provides “consistency” and “understanding” in how the Board and school functions. This alleviates concerns that adding new member will disrupt the working of the Board and the school.
- a. Individuals interested in Board membership from outside the school community (i.e., individuals that are not parents of students at the school) should be sought. It has been recommended that adding one at a time is difficult for the new member. To ease this transition on the Board, it is suggested that 2-3 “non-parent” members be added at one time. It would be great if Endeavor could move to a Board that has some outside members but given the fact that terms expire in a couple of months, maybe the Board can

work over the course of the next year to recruit some "non-parent" members for election in 2012.