



Endeavor Charter School Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes October 26, 2009

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Endeavor Charter School Board of Directors was called to order at 7 pm on 10/26/2009 at Endeavor Charter School's multi-purpose room by DJ Hill. He also reviewed that the board had an informational session last week regarding a personnel issue.

Present:

DJ Hill, Heather Reifschneider, Steve McAdams, Christi Whiteside, Christian Nechyba, Larry Woolard, Margaret Holder, Joseph House. Late arrival: Andy Kristianson (present for entire high school discussion)

Approval of Minutes:

Christian Nechyba asked for approval of minutes from the September board meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Finance Committee Report

Larry Woolard stated that Endeavor currently has a balance of \$201,000 in its Bank of America account, and \$366,758 in its First Citizens account. The school is in a sound financial position. He stated that as we continue into this school year, we will remain vigilant and watch expenditures.

Margaret Holder reported on the draft of Endeavor's audit. She reported a good audit with a clean opinion, with only two small compliance issues. The final audit report would hopefully be ready by this Friday. Work would then begin on the tax return (990). DPI expected a dozen or so issues to emerge on an audit, but Endeavor only had two, which is

wonderful for a first year school. DJ Hill added that the audit went phenomenally well, and expressed his thanks to Eileen Underkoffler for all her hard work.

Part-time Teaching Positions

DJ Hill requested that this discussion be delayed to allow for the high school discussion.

Stakeholders Update

DJ Hill requested updates from major Endeavor stakeholder groups, including the enrichment program, PAWS, the athletics program, and the Foundation.

Enrichment Program: Tamara Santana reported that the first quarter, including track-out camps, was very successful. Track-out camps for second quarter will be running the week of January 5.

PAWS: Karin Reed reported that PAWS was dispersing a \$14,580 field trip fund for defraying field trip cost for all Endeavor families. The "Lion's Share" was in progress, and represented the big push fundraiser for the year, with a goal of \$100 per student. Safety patrol was beginning a new carpool plan, in which each grade was assigned one week per quarter. This will not be as big of a commitment as some people think, and would generally require a time commitment from 3 pm until 3:45 pm. The sign-up roster was listed on the website, and parents can sign up online. PAWS was funding a significant number of teacher grants; 23 grants totaling over \$5,000. DJ Hill thanked PAWS on behalf of the board.

Athletics: Lori Tolson reported that the Endeavor Pride soccer team had won two games, tennis had won five matches, and cross country came in first several times. Basketball season started today. Home games are being played at the First Korean Baptist Church. The Fall Fan Zone fundraiser was planned for Sunday, November 8. The teachers vs. boys soccer game was played today. Spirit wear orders were due November 4. DJ Hill added that the sports program exists only thanks to a committed group of parents.

Foundation: Steve Santana stated that the Foundation was responsible for getting the school into a new facility by summer 2013. They were in the process of refining cost estimates and fundraising approaches. The most important issue remained how to raise capital. The Foundation has hired a development firm to help raise capital; they were interviewing staff members, parents, and stakeholders to pull together a report. The Foundation's finance committee was also refining models and working to better understand what operating expenses are going to look like. Another goal would be how

we can buy and purchase land earlier due to current economic conditions and inexpensive land prices. The design committee, headed by Lisa Springle, was doing research also. This included green/sustainable building approaches. The land search was currently focused on a 10-20 minute commute from the current site. DJ Hill added that green building approaches initially cost 1-3% more, but represented long term savings and grant potential.

Parent Survey Response Summary

DJ Hill reviewed the board's response to last spring's parent survey. He stated that a lot of progress had been made on a lot of issues; 6 of 10 issues had already addressed. He added that a lot of people give a lot of time to the school. We wanted to build on that foundation of volunteerism, and, in dialogue with the PAWS leadership, would like to set an expectation of 3 volunteer hours per month per family. Karin Reed added that volunteerism did not just mean in school opportunities - many out of school volunteerism opportunities existed, especially for working parents.

Medical Update

Christian Nechyba provided an update on the influenza pandemic and its impact on Endeavor. A school-based seasonal flu vaccine clinic would be held at Endeavor on November 9 from 3:45 - 7:45 pm. This clinic would be organized through the Wake County Health Department and would provide free flu shots for all students aged 5-18. Endeavor would also try to host an H1N1 influenza vaccination clinic once more vaccine became available, and if this could be coordinated through the health department. We continue to emphasize that students with febrile respiratory illnesses must be excluded from school until fever free for at least 24 hours, and able to function normally within the school setting. Faculty are doing a good job reinforcing basic infection control measures (hand washing, etc.) with students. It is unlikely that temporary school closure will become necessary, but this would be considered in consultation with public health officials if rates of absenteeism become unusually elevated and the school was not able to function normally.

High School

High School Committee Summary:

Lisa Springle provided a summary of the high school committee's work and conclusions. The high school committee was formed in response to interest by the board. DJ Hill stated that the board began looking into high school only because of the vision of the school founders, including Christi Whiteside and Steve McAdams, and that interest in a

high school was based on the school's success. Lisa Springle continued that in an initial survey conducted by the high school committee, out of 220 responses, 94% of Endeavor families were extremely or somewhat interested in an Endeavor high school. The committee researched existing charter high schools, including Raleigh Charter and Franklin Academy, and learned about these school's successes and difficulties. The administration of Franklin Academy expressed regret about not having its high school and lower school on the same property. Dr. Humble at Raleigh Charter suggested a gradual start to a high school (one grade at a time). The high school committee created a vision to follow Endeavor's core values. About 500 students seemed to be the magic number for a charter high school; this would require recruiting 50% of high school students from outside the Endeavor community. This would be a way to raise outside enrollment into the school at the high school level. The high school might open with 9th and maybe 10th grade, and then expand. Students would get new viewpoints from students recruited from outside the K-8 school. Endeavor wouldn't have a problem recruiting from outside given the RCHS experience. Guidance counsellors and teachers would be involved with students from 9th to 12th grade. High schools only need to have 50% of teachers certified; this would allow flexibility for teachers to come from different backgrounds, and allow for a diversity of classes. The high school committee created a mission statement by applying the K-8 mission statement to high school. Personalized, experiential, and extended learning were emphasized. Personalized education meant a smaller school, giving students ownership of their educational path, and giving students leadership roles. Experiential learning was consistent with the "learn by doing" philosophy. Extended learning would involve community service. The school would be in a great location for extended learning, with universities and RTP close by.

Christian Nechyba presented his perspective as board liaison to the high school committee. He stated that almost everyone at the PAWS meeting the previous week could agree on two basic points: (1) The foremost priority that we should set for the foundation is the creation of a quality permanent school facility for our K-8 students by the time our current lease expires in 4 years, which is not all that far away. A renewal of our Forum Drive lease or a relocation to a new leased location is not desired by anyone. This goal is challenging and requires a focused and vigorous effort. (2) The vast majority of the Endeavor community desires the eventual expansion of Endeavor to the high school level, as evidenced by the results of the previous high school survey and the feedback from the PAWS meeting last week, and a charter high school which rises to Endeavor's mission and quality would be a great asset to our broader community. He stated that the primary challenge was how to balance these two points. There were distinct advantages to recognizing a long-term goal of high school expansion and expressing board support for this goal because (1) It improves the fundraising options for the foundation by creating a broader long-term vision for the school. (2) It will make current members of

the Endeavor community more invested in the long term future of our school. (3) It will create ongoing interest within the broader community about Endeavor's long-term mission. The vision laid out for a long-term high school expansion by the high school committee seemed realistic, and its proposed mission statement is consistent with Endeavor's values. He continued that he didn't believe the board had enough information about the land options available at this time to commit to the short term purchase of a specific amount of land. He believed the foundation should look at a broad variety of land options, and would need to be flexible in terms of the long-term high school vision. In the short term the school's #1 priority had to be leaving Forum Drive in 4 years. If a larger land purchase (one that could accommodate a high school) made this goal untenable, the board should wait on high school land and consider a 2-campus solution in the future. If, on the other hand, a large land purchase (big enough to accommodate a K-12 school, about 30 acres) comes cheap and in a good location, the board would need to consider that as a good solution. A high school can happen on a single K-12 campus, or it can happen as a separate campus, and the board needed to consider both options depending on the realities of the real estate market. But our high school vision should not distract us from our #1 priority - leaving Forum Drive by 2013. He didn't believe that this is the time to limit the foundation's options as they begin their search for an Endeavor permanent site.

PAWS: Karin Reed provided an executive summary of the PAWS discussion on the high school topic the previous week. Those in attendance were overwhelmingly in favor of the idea, and lots of direct offers to help were received. About 30 people voiced opinions. Parents were asked to give names and grades of children. No one was opposed to the high school concept, but some expressed concerns, and expressed a preference for focusing on K-8. She stated that it was a testament to the success of the school that high school expansion was desired by the school community. Some professionals in attendance stated that land and construction prices were currently at rock bottom. It was also expressed that a charter high school would fulfill a huge need. There were concerns expressed about fundraising for a K-8 vs. a K-12 school. The board was asked to think about future generations who would benefit, and the view was expressed that this was a great opportunity given the charter school cap. It was stated that a huge audience from outside Endeavor was watching and waiting. If students were at Endeavor through 12th grade, some expressed that they would be more willing to invest resources and time. Economies of scale were discussed for a K-12 school. Land development professionals suggested that this was the time to buy land. Some suggested portables and renting to accelerate high school implementation.

Foundation: Steve Santana presented the perspective from the Endeavor Foundation. He stated that he agreed with all said. He stated that a bigger vision creates a bigger product to sell, opens opportunities, and leads to more potential money to buy the land. It might

cost an additional \$800,000 for larger piece of land that would accommodate high school. It may mean that we would need a lower cost facility if we invest in a larger piece of land. It would help planning to have a unified long-term vision.

Andy Kristianson stated that our current charter is for a K-8 school. Our DPI liaison had been asked what would be needed to expand the charter. We were encouraged by DPI to fill out a growth form reviewing our long-term vision. Aisa Rogerson asked how long this process with DPI would take. Andy Kristianson stated that it was a fairly quick process, and that our DPI liaison had been positive about how the possibility of a high school expansion would be received by DPI. DJ Hill added that Jean Krufft, our DPI liaison, had made extraordinarily positive comments about Endeavor.

Public Questions & Comments: Lauren Brockman Balla stated that her children were in 4th and 6th grade and that she viewed the question of high school as more urgent because of this. She expressed her desire to see a high school for Endeavor. Steve Hemphill stated that he had a daughter in 4th grade. He stated that once you get the will to create a high school, the money will be there. He stated that a high school would provide a long-term benefit to the community for perhaps a hundred years. Amy Marshall, a teacher at Raleigh Charter High School, stated that she was impressed at Endeavor's organization and energy and stated that she was there to cheer the school on. Robin Vincent, who stated she had a kindergarten and 4th grade student, as well as a middle child at a base school, said that she was not sure about the high school decision. She wanted nothing to jeopardize Endeavor's K-8 program. Judy Hart expressed her support for an Endeavor high school. Maria Triollo, who had a 4th grade child, related a story about a UNC student who stated that Wakefield High School didn't prepare him for college, whereas charter high school students were better prepared for college.

Board Comments: Margaret Holder stated that she had seen the benefit of Endeavor for her second grader student. She stated that she could see the benefit of a school that went from start to finish with the Endeavor mission. Larry Woolard stated that he had a 4th and a 6th grader, and that the Endeavor program gives students much more than a standard public school. He stated that somehow we would be able to make a high school happen, and expressed his support for the K-12 initiative. Andy Kristianson stated that as a parent he was somewhat torn; he worried that a K-12 Endeavor school could overly shelter students, and that the world doesn't take care of you the way Endeavor does. As a board member, he stated that, though he liked the idea, he had in his profession also seen a lot of failed dreams. He expressed a desire to keep the door open to a high school initiative without creating excessive risk. DJ Hill addressed some economic concerns as it relates to high school. He cited Magellan Charter School, which is in a relatively small space. He stated that asking if we want a high school was similar to asking if we want a

vacation. It was easy to support the idea, but the risk side was potentially monstrous. It would create a more complex and much bigger project. He stated that even discussing high school 16 months into the school's creation was gratifying and ludicrous at the same time. Heather Reifschneider expressed her belief that if you build it they will come. She stated that there was also no money when Endeavor opened last year, and that this didn't hinder the school's success. Joey House stated that he had once served as a police officer in a high school. His son decided to go back to public school because of other benefits, such as band, a cafeteria, and a library. He stated that if you plan on a high school, the time to do it was now. Steve McAdams stated that we have a long way to go with what we want to do here in the K-8 school. He stated that he was not sure how one could create both a K-8 and a high school at the same time. Christi Whiteside stated that she had a 6th grade student and a kindergartener at Endeavor. She worried about having "used up" our "this is meant to be" spirit. She stated that the idea of creating a high school now "scared [her] to death."

Further Public Comment: Aisa Rogerson suggested that the Endeavor community decide the high school question based on how much money they can raise. Steve Santana stated that the school needed to be even more conscious about the risk due to the large numbers of stakeholders. If a high school was to be created, the board had to also demonstrate due diligence in finding a leader, establishing a curriculum, etc. Eileen Underkoffler inquired about a partnership with Raleigh Charter High School. Steve Santana stated that RCHS did not wish to move more than 2 miles away from its present location. Lisa Springle pointed out that we haven't talked about people who will teach at the school and write the curriculum. She had researched the board structure of other K-12 schools. A charter school in Rocky Mount had a headmaster who oversees the entire school and directors for each level of the school. Christian Nechyba stated that Woods Charter had a similar administrative structure. Karin Reed stated that the vision for the school will drive the level of commitment. Jason Anderson inquired about federal grants, and DJ Hill stated that these were largely for "shovel ready" projects and rural schools. Ken Clark, who had a kindergarten and 2nd grade student, asked the board not to kill the high school idea because of fear. Tamara Santana added that building a high school one grade at a time would be much easier.

Board Votes:

Christian Nechyba proposed votes on the following two resolutions:

(1) We support the expansion of Endeavor Charter School to include grades 9-12. Such an expansion would be an asset to both Endeavor and the broader community.

This resolution passed unanimously.

(2) We continue to recognize that the priority set for the Endeavor Foundation is the creation of a permanent facility for our K-8 school, and that this goal must be secure by the time our current lease expires.

This resolution also passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Billy Cashion stated that this vote was an important first step. Building costs were discussed, and Aisa Rogerson stated that \$80-100 per square foot could provide a "bare bones" school building facility, whereas \$140-150 per square foot was more typical for a Wake County public school. DJ Hill stated that it would be difficult to stay at the Forum Drive location after our current lease expires, due to the fact that lease terms would likely be much less favorable if the lease needed to be renewed. Aisa Rogerson expressed his belief that a building timeline should be dependent on the success of fundraising. Joey House also discussed the possibility of financing construction with bonds. Christian Nechyba proposed language for a third resolution asking that the Endeavor Foundation continue to look at a broad range of land options, including those that would accommodate a K-8 school (as a first phase) and those that would accommodate a complete K-12 school, but no vote was taken on this resolution. Margaret Holder expressed support for continuing to explore the option of creating a high school on a shorter timeline, possibly in a leased facility. Christian Nechyba expressed his opposition to the idea of a high school before the construction of a permanent K-8 facility.

DJ Hill proposed that at the November board meeting all committee chairs from the Endeavor Foundation be prepared to present on their progress. He stated that a timeline needed to be a data-driven and finance-driven decision. He asked that Larry Woolard and Margaret Holder make decisions about financial reserves moving forward, and comment on risk tolerance on land/construction debt. He also asked for thoughts on the percentage of total revenue we were willing to spend on facilities.

Close

DJ Hill closed the board meeting at 10 pm.

Minutes submitted by Christian Nechyba.