



**Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
June 22, 2011**

Board Members Present:

Chet Pipkin, President
Don Brann, Vice President
Cheryl Cook, Secretary
Gary Wayland, Treasurer
Art Lofton, Trustee

Staff Present:

Matt Wunder, Executive Director
Nicole Temple, Principal-DVIA
Stephanie Fujinami, DVIA Office Manager
Colleen O'Boyle, Principal-Design
Tom Johnstone, Wiseburn Superintendent
Tom Cox, Wiseburn Chief Business Officer
Melanie Franko, Executive Assistant

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chet Pipkin at 9:13 a.m. on June 22, 2011, at Da Vinci School of Design, 12501 S. Isis Avenue, Hawthorne, CA.

Approval of Minutes

May 20, 2011 minutes were unanimously approved.
First: Don Brann; Second: Art Lofton; Motion carries.

From the Board

- Cheryl and other board members were impressed with the new facility and conveyed how pleased they are to be a part of the School's progress and growth.
- Don relayed the positive comments he heard about Da Vinci from as far away as the Pacific Palisades when he attended a school reception.
- Art thanked everyone – students and staff – for Sandra Evers-Manly's successful visit.
- Tom Johnstone extended thanks to Don Brann for his efforts both publicly and behind the scenes in El Segundo to improve the perception of Da Vinci as an asset rather than a threat.

Discussion Items

1. Financial Report (Tom Cox, Matt Wunder)

- Tom Cox explained the uncertainty of the funding situation since Governor Brown had just vetoed the budget passed by the Democrats. At this time, flat funding is expected.
- Gary pointed out that for the first time in history, the state contribution to University of California at Berkeley was less than 20%, which illustrates the increasing need for fundraising at all schools.
- Chet thanked Tom Cox for his diligence and support.
- **ACTION:** Since Tom is required to submit an adopted budget to the county, he will submit the April 14, 2011 budget combined with the K-8 (DVIA) budget, which is a conservative budget for Da Vinci.

There was a pause in the formal meeting to welcome and make the acquaintance of Jessica Flores, representative of the Riordan Foundation. Her tour was arranged by Dr. Ray Haynes, who was also recognized by Matt and congratulated by the Board for his recent designation as Fellow of the ASEE.



2. Counseling Plan (Colleen O'Boyle)

- Colleen explained the two different types of counselors needed - College Counselor and Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Counselor – and the differences in their responsibilities. In general, the college counselor brings in college representatives and markets the school, whereas the PPS Counselor verifies that students have the proper credits and are on track for graduation. Part of Colleen's decision to structure the Counseling Program in this way was based on research of public schools (Manhattan Beach, Redondo Beach, etc.) as well as private schools (Marlborough, Harbor Day, etc.). She found that most successful programs consisted of academic advisors (or PPS counselors) as well as college counselors. Pam Yarborough shared with Colleen that of 2300 seniors, 95% were college-bound at Mira Costa.
- Art inquired regarding metrics that track the number of students that start college vs. the number that finish college. That information is not readily available at most schools, and Gary indicated that the Manhattan Beach Ed Foundation has requested the same information. Art suggested that we attempt to keep in touch with our graduates, even if it is informally.
- Colleen spoke highly of Tristen's credentials and that she backs her 100%.
- The evening college nights have been successful as a means to get parents to attend and to "buy in" early on, especially since some students will be the first person in their family to go to college.
- In response to Chet's question regarding staffing, Colleen indicated that this school year each counselor would have 28 seniors (in addition to juniors), with average SAT scores of 1400-1700.
- When asked by Art as to how early students start test prep at Da Vinci, Colleen explained that the College Prep program will start in the 9th grade and will be aligned with the Advisory Program. All 9th graders attend College Prep workshops and have College Board accounts. Cheryl spoke of the SAT Prep test links that were offered through Da Vinci.
- Art and Gary both discussed the importance of establishing relationships with college counselors at such schools as UCLA and Berkeley (Gary: Preparation, Performance, Politics), as well as the possibility of gaining access to university representatives via Da Vinci's industry partners who have established and valuable ties in place. One mentioned by Art is the tie-in between Carnegie Mellon and Steve Smith.
- Colleen clarified that College Counselors will maintain a realistic selection of colleges, with 30-40 representatives coming to campus, while they continue to market and promote Da Vinci. The PPS Counselors will conduct quarterly credit checks, determine if summer school is necessary, assess students' strengths and weaknesses, while conducting behavior meetings and assessments.
- One remaining hurdle is the A-G course submissions to the UC system to allow Da Vinci students to participate in the ELC program that offers the top 10% automatic admission into a UC school. These submissions must be completed for the class of 2013, but in the meantime, Da Vinci students can apply to UC schools via the regular application process. All new courses at Da Vinci in the future must be submitted on a timely basis to the UC system for approval.
- The counseling teams will receive assistance from LMU interns.



Counseling Plan – Staffing (Colleen O’Boyle)

- Chet: It is important to figure out-
what we need to do + the outcome we need to achieve ==> right structure and staffing
- Chet: The Board is sensitive to the transition, and the need to keep Colleen’s knowledge and momentum. They need to hear from Colleen and Matt, either “we’ve got it” or “here’s the gap.”
- Chet: There is an overwhelming consensus on the part of the Board for mgmt. to “get it right.” The Board is sold on the “need” for additional staff, but is this the model that solves the issue?
- Colleen: This is the structure for a strong counseling team.
- Gary: We have to get it right in the first 1-2 years, and it will be crucial to know everything about the 56 seniors.
- Chet: Leverage off the expertise of the Board. **MUST COME THROUGH!**
- **ACTION:** Staff must report continuously on risks, and gaps – **SPEAK UP!**
- **ACTION:** Board analyzed the new staffing plan and agreed to the incremental \$144,000 (with benefits approximating 25%) in salary expense in addition to professional development expense of \$20,000.

3. New Vista Designs (Matt Wunder)

- Cheryl asked for clarification regarding David Stephen’s role. Matt explained that, though David Stephen would not be the actual architect for the high school project, he would be the individual who could translate the vision of Da Vinci’s needs and the community’s expectations into input for the architect who would oversee the construction. Many state-of-the-art schools, such as High Tech High, are a result of David’s unique background as an educator and architect, and his ability to articulate a project-based facility’s needs.
- Issue: It was suggested that this would require the approval of WSD as well as Da Vinci.
- Issue: There was concern as to whether the project architect would prefer to fulfill this role.
- Issue: Don discussed the crucial importance of involving the end users in the design process.
- Issue: Gary cautioned that the ultimate decision-makers must be involved from the beginning, given his past experience, and that WSD needs to buy in and participate.
- Art suggested that it would helpful to know what architectural firms David has worked with. In addition, Matt will be discussing this type of relationship in his meeting with Gensler the following week. Art also emphasized the importance of getting the requirements correct upfront and having all key stakeholders involved upfront.
- Chet referred to David’s impressive track record and the importance of past performance as an indicator. As for the desire of an architectural firm to fulfill this role, he indicated that it depends upon the architect.
- There needs to be a process and mechanism for integrating all the necessary “voices” in the planning stages of the new facility.



- Tom Johnstone pointed out that they do not need to have the land before progressing, and that they are not all that far from the RFP.
- **ACTION:** Matt should meet with Nelson and Roger, the two main WSD board members working on the project. The expense to use New Vista Designs is clearly a cost of building the school, and the funds would come from WSD bond money. The Board acknowledged the expertise of David Stephen, but there is a need to discern the decision-makers and other individuals who should be involved in the process.

4. Design School Plan (Colleen O'Boyle)

- The A-G course requirements are intact and embedded in the Design School curriculum.
- By Senior year, each Design student will have a Design Portfolio.
- 1st year – drawing and art; 2nd year – incorporate graphics; 3rd year – declare one of 4 majors: architecture, game/toy, graphic, or industrial (ties in the engineering emphasis)
- There will be academic seminars and MyStudio (portfolio work) sessions all four years.
- “Immersionships” will combine internships with experiences and mentors in the field.
- Questions posed by Gary: 1) World Cultures (Colleen would prefer to change to English Writing – supported by Chet) 2) Health class (not required at charter schools) 3) Government in year 4 – have one semester government and one semester Economics instead of all government
- Chet suggested “Strength Inventory” to enumerate personality assets and traits.
- Other ideas/terms that could be considered: Sustainability Engineering, Urban Planning or Sustainables, Quality Engineering.
- Da Vinci summer school is focusing on geometry and filling in gaps, especially in preparation for the SAT. Summer classes are also offered through Mira Costa.
- The subject of summer internships was discussed. Art mentioned the HIT program at Northrop Grumman, and Chet commented that Verbum Dei is the best at internships (Corporate Work Study Program), and that they would be willing to work with us.
- **ACTION:** Chet stressed that Colleen must speak up if needs are not being met, and asked that she keep the Board informed.

5. Strategic Planning and Operational Objectives (Matt Wunder)

- Due to time limitations, Matt conducted a brief discussion concerning strategic planning and the fact that the more immediate needs are actually operational, not strategic, issues. The dialogue concerned how to approach tackling multiple and significant projects in a timely manner without burdening the Board Members’ schedules. Thirteen themes have been outlined that require action.
- Art suggested packaging topics together into “bite-size” chunks, and perhaps allocating 3-4 hours to see how much can be accomplished effectively in that amount of time. He also inquired as to the possibility of some virtual meetings, which may provide Board members more options.



- **ACTION:**
 - Chet asked that Matt prioritize the projects, and then group them for multiple short planning sessions.
 - The key to successfully engage the Board will be preparation work on the issues along with “To Do’s” for the Board whereby they have “read and comment by” dates.

Closed session

Action Items:

See attached list of Board Approvals

Upcoming Events

Next Board meeting date to be determined

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:13 p.m.