



**Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2013**

<b>Board Members Present:</b>	<b>Staff Present:</b>
Don Brann, Vice President	Matthew Wunder, Executive Director, Da Vinci Schools
Art Lofton, Trustee (via conference)	Tom Johnstone, Superintendent, Wiseburn School District
Cheryl Cook, Secretary	Chris Jones, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Technology, WSD
Brian Meath, Treasurer	Dave Wilson, Director of Budget & Accounting, WSD
Israel Mora, Trustee	Tom Cox, Chief Financial Officer, Da Vinci Schools
Jennifer Morgan, Trustee	Steve Wallis, Principal, Da Vinci Science High School
	Nathan Barrymore, Principal, Da Vinci Communication High School
	Claudia and James Looney, Fundraising Consulting, LLC
	Yolanda Saldana-Bautista, Business Manager, Da Vinci Schools
	Sharon Coulter, Director of Development, Da Vinci Schools
	Carla Levenson, Enrollment/Communications, Da Vinci Schools
	Miles Denniston, Charter School Management Corporation
	Alison Wohlwerth, Enrollment, Da Vinci Schools
	Greg Naclerio, IT Database, Da Vinci Schools
	Jhezrel Valentine, Executive Assistant, Da Vinci Schools

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 5:33 P.M. by Dr. Don Brann.

**Approval of Minutes**

October 21, 2013 meeting Minutes:

First: Brian Meath; Second: Israel Mora; Motion carries 6-0.

**Board Approvals**

October 21, 2013 Board Approvals:

First: Brian Meath; Second: Cheryl Cook; Motion carries 6-0.

Approval item #9

First: Cheryl Cook; Second: Israel Mora; Motion carries 6 – 0



### **From the Board**

Mr. Lofton states there is a lot going on and he is hoping this will help to set the stage for the upcoming year.

Dr. Brann is impressed with the size of a donation from Northrop Grumman and wants to thank and acknowledge them for their contribution.

Mrs. Cook agrees and thinks it is an unbelievable amount.

Mr. Meath would like to acknowledge the incredible event that took place with the unification of the Wiseburn School District.

### **Special Presentation**

#### **Da Vinci Schools Assessment Report and Strategic Development Plan – Claudia and James Looney**

The Looney's presented their findings in a study to determine the feasibility of Da Vinci launching a capital campaign.

Mr. Looney states that they wanted to define the scope of this study. He wants to be clear that launching into a full scale feasibility study would have probably cost \$250,000, so they decided against that. Instead, they decided to define a plan that would maximize Da Vinci's scope. Mr. Looney further stating that it is helpful to know that they interviewed 21 individuals. "We looked at a number of reports, which are outlined in the prep memo included. We want to thank all of you who did participate. Comments were extremely helpful. It proved there was a significant degree of respect and admiration for Da Vinci and its cause to serve its students." Mr. Looney continues by asking, "What are the criteria for a successful report? The case for support must be strong and compelling. The organization must be viewed as sound. People do not give to organizations that do not manage their resources successfully. Leadership has to be deeply engaged at seeking support. It is the job of the leader of the organization to spend time cultivating donors." Mr. Looney continues, "There are volunteers who are willing and able to give. There is a sound operation plan to manage over time." Mr. Looney closes by stating that Claudia will talk about the findings.

Mrs. Looney starts by stating that she wants to reiterate that the last six items Jim was talking about are also needed for the capital campaign. Further stating that, "They're part of the fabric of a high performing operation. I just have to say that we fell in love with Da Vinci. We were so impressed with what you were able to do in four years. Da Vinci is kind of a hybrid model." Continuing, that Da Vinci's Board of Trustees were not recruited as a philanthropic board. She points out that the board has



to decide for themselves if they want to be a philanthropic board. 35% – 45% of all gifts come in from the Board of Directors. A small board indicates challenges in being successful.

Mrs. Looney continues. “It’s a new concept to the Wiseburn School Board. It’s a culture shift – very revealing to think about the alumni. You have to track them and how successful they are. You have to start looking at that because that will be an indicator of what you need to do in the future.” Continuing, “You need a bigger, robust fundraising team.” Mrs. Looney goes on to say that it was exciting to hear everybody talk about how they felt about Da Vinci. That it was just part of the fabric for why people will want to give money to Da Vinci. Noting that she also wants to talk about the alumni because Da Vinci will want to keep and grow their alumni.

Mrs. Looney states that donors are very proud of Wiseburn School District but there is confusion about the name on the building. She further states that they can point to examples of that in Los Angeles. Mrs. Looney explains that the board needs to talk about it and carefully handle before going further with a capital campaign. Mrs. Looney says that people were concerned about what would happen after the current leadership is gone. She states that those interviewed think that the executive director is wonderful and that all had incredible things to say about the school.

What the Looneys’ found is that there is a concern for rapid growth. Some concern about the new campus losing the flavor and environment, wondering when in the new facility, will they feel that sense of community?

In the Looneys’ findings, with regards to Internal Management, not everyone thought it would be possible to fund the new school. Although they were very positive about the fact that the board can become a philanthropic board, everyone is thrilled about the new facility. However, the ability to mount a capital campaign is a concern.

The Looneys’ found that about half the people surveyed were willing to volunteer. In fact, they were genuinely positive about it.

The Looneys’ determined that Da Vinci is definitely at a crossroads when it comes to building a program. Suggesting it (Da Vinci) can stay where it is and only become *minimum*, or it can produce a program that will create success in the future. The Looney’s further state that they believe they have a plan that will prepare Da Vinci for philanthropic success in the future.

The Looneys’ suggestion is that Da Vinci should establish a Da Vinci Foundation for philanthropic endeavors that would be an organization that has a management board or ownership board, having only certain powers and oversight. Stating the board would have to be focused by individuals who are able to leverage their reach.

The Looneys’ conclude that they believe an immediate capital campaign is not feasible, stating that Da Vinci does not have the donor base to support a capital campaign.

Mrs. Morgan requests clarification as to why the Board of Trustees is not adequate.



Mr. Looney answers by stating that a Board of Regents becomes a reservoir of individual donors, who will in two to three years make a capital donation. They will then reach out to others and may also have leverage to family, foundations and other things.

Mr. Mora wants to clarify that if Da Vinci does not hire additional people then they should not attempt to start a capital campaign?

Mrs. Looney responds by saying that they simply do not have the board members to give, but it can be turned around with a new board, but it will take staffing and energy and cultivation.

Mr. Looney adds that they believe that everyone is looking for a model in education that works. Further stating that they believe the potential is there.

Mr. Lofton states that he thinks that what they have done is viable, but to truly leverage it and take it to the next level is a different skill set for people to be able to open doors. Suggesting money, resources, vision and networking are needed. Mr. Lofton states that he thinks that it can be value added to Da Vinci to take it to the next level.

Mrs. Cook asks if the Looney's are recommending that Da Vinci start with their current Board of Regents.

Mrs. Looney responds that they should and the Board of Regents would be the fundraising arm of the organization. Also, that there is a lot of work that would need to be done behind the scenes.

Mrs. Looney adds that some of Da Vinci's current Board of Regents will not want to take on those responsibilities.

### **Financial Update – Dave Wilson, Yolanda Saldana-Bautista, Miles Denniston**

Mr. Denniston reports that the income statements for July – October is exactly where it should be at this time, that although it looks like a loss for the year, it is not. Further stating, deferrals are much different than last year, but will be shorter in time.

Dr. Wunder adds that they are also trying to understand Title I. Suggesting that they are not exactly sure how much labor is involved in it, but they think the money is there and that hopefully, it won't be a case of there being too many strings attached.

Dr. Brann responds by saying he doubts if they'll want to leave the money on the table if it involves six figures and up. Saying they'll want to find a way to get the funds.

Dr. Wunder says it might be one FTE in terms of managing it.

Mr. Cox states that Wiseburn Title I money used to be a certain amount, but now it's dropped down significantly low.



Mr. Denniston adds that the money is significant.

Mr. Denniston also states that with regard to the balance sheet, Da Vinci is showing that they have more assets than liabilities, which is a good thing. Mr. Denniston adds that Da Vinci is doing fine from a balance sheet perspective.

### **Enrollment Update – Carla Levenson, Alison Wohlwerth, Greg Naclerio**

Mrs. Levenson reports that there's a lot of *firsts* that's happening in terms of enrollment at Da Vinci. That overall, Da Vinci is 25% of the way there. And that it's a very clean user friendly application. Mrs. Levenson goes on to say that although the application looks friendly, it's actually very complex with lots of different levels – further stating that it could not be possible without the help and expertise of Greg Naclerio. Also, Da Vinci has printed and Spanish versions of the application online. Mrs. Levenson says that they're enrollment deadline is February 28, 2014, and they have been reaching out making sure Dana Middle School is aware of the dates.

Mrs. Levenson reports that another first is that they're conducting an online lottery. They called over 1200 names one at a time and that was all happening online. They are hoping to have a live feed as well, so people can watch it. Mrs. Levenson concludes that they are going to fewer road shows due to this online system -- the road shows aren't needed as much.

Mrs. Levenson concludes the presentation by stating the online system is saving them a great amount of time. They no longer have to do data entry. Families are getting a confirmation, which was not possible before, due to the volume and manpower.

### **Visitors and Board of Regents Update – Sharon Coulter**

Mrs. Coulter states that she and Dr. Wunder recruited 37 people for the Board of Regents and they were all very excited to be on the board. They've recruited people from all different industries. It was determined that the first meeting would be a call to action to find out what they would be interested in doing. It was a great first meeting. They specifically didn't want the first meeting to be about how much money they could give, knowing that those who have the capacity to give will come forth.

Dr. Wunder added that the Board of Regents really wants their monies to have impact.

Dr. Wunder states that it has been suggested by some that Da Vinci build more schools. However, Dr. Wunder does not feel that would be the right course to take. Dr. Wunder states that such a route would put them at risk of diluting what they already have.

Dr. Wunder suggests that Da Vinci needs to talk about other ways to raise money. He points out that they have had so many entities from all around wanting to come and visit the sites.



Dr. Wunder concludes that there have been a lot of visitors, but they never know where a visit may lead. In terms of funding priorities, one of the first things they need to do is track the graduates. They are going to need money and a dedicated person for database maintenance.

**Closed Session**

Meeting entered into Closed Session at 7:40 P.M.

**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.