



**Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2012**

Board Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Matthew Wunder, Executive Director, Da Vinci Schools
Tom Johnstone, Superintendent, Wiseburn School District
Tom Cox, Consultant/former WSD Chief Business Official
Dave Wilson, WSD Budget/Accounting Director
Colleen O'Boyle, Principal, Da Vinci Design High School
Nicole Tempel Assisi, Director of New School Development
Principal, Da Vinci Innovation Academy
Steve Wallis, Principal, Da Vinci Science High School
Nathan Barrymore, Principal, Da Vinci Tech High School
Yolanda Saldana-Bautista, Director of Business Operations

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. on December 10th, 2012, at Wiseburn School District Board Room, 13500 Aviation Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA.

Approval of Minutes

November 14th, 2012 minutes were approved.

First: Gary Wayland; Second: Don Brann; Motion carries.

From the Board

Cheryl expressed her gratitude as a parent for the excellent college application process, noting in particular the insightful personal statements. Matt indicated that there is a fund for college application fees. Colleen explained that one of the responsibilities of the college counselors is to see that all seniors apply to at least three schools.

Action Items

See attached list of Board Approvals.

Discussion Items

1. Financial Update (Dave Wilson, Tom Cox)

- The budget was revised to reflect:
 - Enrollment actuals (twenty less students than anticipated)
 - Compensation adjustments (funds moved from reserves to actual expenses)
- Reserves as a percentage of expenditures decreased from 17.38% to 15.27%.
- The impact of the fiscal cliff is still unknown, but flat funding will remain the status quo.

2. New School (Nicole Tempel Assisi, Nathan Barrymore)



- Progress:
 - Visited other schools and met with grant recipients
 - Established school schedule, calendar, course plan
 - Drafted MOU with Antioch
 - Researched facilities alternatives
- The biggest challenge at this point is locating a facility, and it is requested that a Board member be designated to guide the search.
- Antioch facility: Antioch is an easy partner to work with, but sharing classrooms would be a challenge. More information as to the viability of this option will be available in January, once Antioch knows more regarding their move downtown and their ability to expand at their current location in Culver City.
- West L.A. College: There is sufficient space to place portables which would be customized and dedicated to Da Vinci. This would also be a cost effective alternative. Antioch would be a more desirable partner, but WLA College would offer more desirable space.
- Per Tex Boggs in a conference call, Antioch should have its' Conditional Use Permit in January. At this point, it is not clear how many classrooms Antioch can offer Da Vinci. The chancellor of Antioch has approved of the Da Vinci program and partnership, and Tex indicated that he has had a great experience working with Da Vinci.
- With regard to the other alternative sites, most board members felt the Crenshaw Blvd. site would not be attractive. Also, since the Prairie Avenue site is located next to a middle school which feeds into a public high school, Don suggested searching further in the Westchester/Culver City area.
- The Board requires a school that will be financially sound and in the black each year. Nathan and Nicole indicated that once the new school is fully enrolled, it will have financials similar to the other Da Vinci high schools. Some fundraising will be needed to run the school in the beginning, but this will not be necessary with full enrollment.
- Da Vinci Design opened with three cohorts of 64 (192 students) and Da Vinci Tech. will start with approximately 160 students.
- Regarding college partnerships, Da Vinci currently has a relationship with Foothill College, and the goal is to work with them on a program to offer a Bachelor's degree. However, since students are limited to a maximum of 7 credits at no cost at Foothill, it will be necessary to seek additional college partners.
- Esther Hugo is assisting in the development of a 5-year plan, and a next step is to have approval for her to formalize the MOU between Da Vinci and Foothill.
- Foothill has a track record in assisting low income students achieve college success, whereas El Camino College has different priorities. There are no jurisdiction problems since the Foothill classes are offered as an online alternative.
- Gary indicated that the MOU should be revised so that item #6 reflects the information regarding 7 unit maximum per quarter. Per the draft course schedule, all college courses are 4 units, thus a student could not take two classes at Foothill at a time. Though Foothill recommended that Da Vinci find a second partner, Foothill would still want to be the accrediting institution.
- Currently 30 Da Vinci Science students take College Physics via a Foothill online course. They watch a video recording of the lecture, with a Da Vinci teacher on site who assists. The lab is facilitated by a Northrop Grumman engineer, who has been outstanding. One challenge is time - 4 hours a week is not sufficient for both the lecture and lab. Though this is a class of talented students, most are struggling due to the rigorous course content.



- Regarding the timeline, it is crucial to move forward quickly, since more information, e.g. school location, administration and teaching team, etc., will be pertinent in order to recruit students. Information meetings to recruit students begin in 2013.
- Dave Walrath's recommendation is to get legal opinions regarding the 5th year enrollment. If that does not resolve the issue, then it may be necessary to pursue it on a county level, then on a state level. The goal is to verify that a 13th year of school (i.e., 5th year of high school) is allowed, in order to shift the cost of college from the family to the government. It will most likely be necessary to take the legal opinion to the CDE.
- Nicole explained that the usual path is to receive an AA degree, then spend two more years to obtain a Bachelor's degree. However, colleges now offer an AAT which has a special sequence, so that after receiving it, the state college guarantees that you only need 60 more credits for a Bachelor's degree.
- Gary clarified the checklist in order to move forward:
 - MOU with two partners
 - Facilities contract in place
 - Budget
 - Funding matches in place (i.e. received)
 - Identify new teacher
 - Legal understanding of ADA
- When asked the "drop dead date" as to whether this project would proceed, it was determined to be January 31st.
- Colleen indicated that she already has candidates for the Nathan's Economics teaching position, but wondered what would happen if all the pieces did not fall into place and the project did not move forward.
- Chet pointed out the financial risk and that some funds would need to be spent even though the project was not guaranteed to proceed. The Board then approved expenditures related to Esther Hugo and Nathan Barrymore, as reflected in the Board Approvals.

3. Accounting Practices (Gary Wayland)

- The current arrangement of having two checkbooks (WSD plus QuickBooks) is no longer realistic due to the change in leadership (Tom's departure) and the growth of the organization.
- It was proposed to have ExED conduct a review of Da Vinci back office Operations, Policies and Procedures and make recommendations. This was subsequently approved.

4. Enrollment (Don Brann)

- With the possibility of Da Vinci blending into one charter, an issue to be discussed is whether WSD students should be able to attend Da Vinci, even if they are non-residents. Parameters to consider are the length of time they have to attend WSD schools before receiving automatic acceptance, and whether performance standards should be instituted.
- One concern is how many places would remain for other students if a larger number of WSD students transferred. Don Brann and Tom Johnstone will make a recommendation.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.