



**Wiseburn School District/Da Vinci Schools
Joint Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2011**

Da Vinci Board Members Present:

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

Wiseburn School District Board Members Present:

Nelson Martinez, President
Roger Banuelos, Clerk
Susan Andriacchi, Member
Dennis Curtis, Member
Israel Mora, Member

Administration Present:

Matt Wunder, Da Vinci Executive Director
Tom Johnstone, Wiseburn Superintendent
Tom Cox, Wiseburn Chief Business Officer
Steve Wallis, Da Vinci Science Principal

Staff Present:

Melanie Franko, Executive Assistant

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Nelson Martinez at 7:20 a.m. on December 13, 2011, at Wiseburn School District Boardroom, 13530 Aviation Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA.

Opening Statements

- Nelson commented on the impressive accomplishments of Da Vinci Schools and the need to plan for the future, keeping in mind WSD's goal for unification in future years.
- Chet shared that the Da Vinci Board seeks a common vision, and will help wherever possible to have a unified district. The Da Vinci Board members are very proud of the Da Vinci model, which can set a standard that inspires public education to produce higher quality schools. The Da Vinci Board greatly respects and is grateful to the WSD Board for the positive working relationship, and appreciates how the two organizations work together. A key element is the leadership of Dr. Wunder and his magnificent team who exhibit overwhelming passion, compassion, and commitment.



Discussion Items

1. Curriculum/Testing Issues

- Everyone agreed that they want an API this year.
- The cycle for the science curriculum is Physics, Chemistry, Biology, with another round of Physics offered senior year.
- There was an in-depth discussion of the math curriculum, and this topic will be readdressed next month. At issue is whether Algebra 1 should be offered to the freshman class. Even though it is an 8th grade course per state standards, a large percentage of students have not passed Algebra 1 before ninth grade. A significant percentage of students at local high schools enroll in Algebra I in ninth grade, and the concern is whether Da Vinci should offer both Algebra 1 and Geometry in ninth grade (with both Geometry and Algebra 2 offered in tenth grade, and Algebra 2 and Trigonometry offered to eleventh grade students.)

2. Early College Options

- The difference between Early College classes and Advanced Placement courses was discussed.
- The advantages to an Early College program are:
 - Colleges seem to accept Early College credits more readily than Advanced Placement.
 - With Early College classes, the time needed to finish a college degree post-Da Vinci is cut significantly (up to 50%).
 - The same applies to college expenses, which are significantly reduced.
 - Passing a college class during high school boosts confidence and “bragging rights”. It is a tremendous motivator to first generation students by showing them that college is possible.
 - Early college provides a natural bridge between high school and college, so that the student is already in the college-bound frame of mind, and does not question the transition.
 - Advanced placement tests require a tremendous investment of time for perhaps little or no reward if the student does not succeed on the test.
 - Early college allows students to try different courses without any financial investment.
- The other aspect of an Early College program discussed was the selection of an Early College partner.
 - El Camino College has been a reluctant partner, which has hindered the Da Vinci program.
 - The lesson learned is the necessity to find a private 4-year institution interested in collaborating over the long-term.
 - Two colleges, Antioch and Marymount, have expressed interest and appear to be viable candidates. Both schools believe in the Da Vinci mission. They have additional incentive, since the Da Vinci students could potentially become Antioch or Marymount graduates due to the likelihood that some students will continue with the program begun at Da Vinci.
 - An additional benefit to Da Vinci is the fact that these institutions would work with Da Vinci teachers so that the Da Vinci teachers would be qualified to teach Early College classes on site.
 - The Da Vinci Early College Program has already received funding via a \$100,000 grant.



3. Memorandum of Understanding

- A Memorandum of Understanding is critical for the two Boards to remain aligned. It will be the guiding light for the values and mission over the long-term.
- The vision is that of one campus with a high school population of 1100-1200 students.
- The MOU needs to be strengthened to reflect the K-8 portion, now that the Innovation Academy is in place. A revised draft of the MOU will be sent in January.
- It was requested to have regular updates of key metrics
- With regard to regular meetings, it was decided that there should be three joint Board meetings per year. A tentative date mentioned for the next meeting is Friday, April 20th at 7:15.

4. Unification

- Feeder districts did not have an interest in unification, since they wish to remain K-8 with no interest in having a high school.
- WSD has been approached by Centinela Valley who does have interest in unification.
- The three prong approach to gain approval would begin with the State Board of Education, then move on to the legislature and ultimately utilize joint power of attorney, if necessary. A unification vote would not take place until 2013 under this scenario.

5. High School Facility

- The discussion of the new high school design focused on the process and the services of David Stephen.
- Process:
 - The community should be actively involved in the building design. Plans need to incorporate the thoughts of the end users, who need to be included in creating the vision.
 - The environmental review is taking longer than anticipated.
 - The State Superintendent just published 21st century building guidelines which need to be considered.
- David Stephen
 - David Stephen is a highly-qualified architect who designed such projects as High Tech High.
 - He would not bid to be the building architect. His job would be to design a building that captures the vision and ideas of the community.
 - His process could begin now since his work is not dependent on the particular piece of property. He would begin resolving issues, translating needs, and initiating discussions while political issues and the EIR are being resolved.
 - New Tech HS in Napa illustrates how school design needs to allow for options and flexibility in the future.
 - The anticipated cost of his services is \$25,000 - \$30,000, but it would result in lower architectural costs as well as avoiding potential pitfalls later in the process.



6. Da Vinci Innovation Academy

- The success has been surprising, but the facilities have been maximized and therefore there are no plans to expand.
- There is an opportunity for a 5-day at home program where students come to DVIA one or two times a week. Parents are requesting this type of program.
- It is important that each step be solid and to not grow too fast. K-8 growth needs to be carefully planned.
- There is still an effort to utilize the Oceanside Fellowship site, and this is being pursued through the City of El Segundo.
- The DVIA 8th graders will have priority to enter Da Vinci (after residents) in order to provide a continuum.
- Facilities in general are a challenge for the coming school year:
 - If DVIA moves, there will not be a problem for Science.
 - If DVIA stays in its current location, Science will need three modular buildings to accommodate the additional 75 high school students. Also, if the K-8 program has enrollment of 230 (115 at a time), it needs 7 classrooms, and only currently has 5 classrooms.
 - At Design there is a whole new grade level entering, which equates to an additional six classrooms (four for core classes and two for electives).
 - Design's options are dependent on the situation with SELPA, which is a difficult program to move. Relocating ½ of the SELPA program would solve the problems at the Design campus.
 - WSD Board members may tour the K-8 program at their next facilities meeting.

Closing Comments:

- The positive Wiseburn School District/Da Vinci Schools relationship is unique among charter schools. Typically, a charter school does not enjoy such support from the charter organization.
- The challenge is to work closely together to preserve the common goal to serve the students in the best possible way.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.