



**Da Vinci Schools Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
November 1, 2011**

**Board Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Matt Wunder, Executive Director  
Tom Johnstone, Wiseburn Superintendent  
Tom Cox, Wiseburn Chief Business Officer  
Melanie Franko, Executive Assistant

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order by Don Brann at 10:06 a.m. on November 1, 2011, at Da Vinci Science conference room, 13500 Aviation Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA.

**Approval of Minutes**

Corrections were made to the September 15, 2011 meeting minutes, after which minutes were approved. First: Gary Wayland; Second: Cheryl Cook; Motion carries.

**From the Board**

- Cheryl, as a parent of an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student, commended Da Vinci Schools for its excellent teachers and increased rigor in curriculum.
- Don shared his perspective on how impressive our teachers are compared to teachers from other schools after working with teachers through his LMU teaching experience. He credited the Board for creating exceptional working conditions and how the Board has propelled the schools to move so far forward in such a short period of time.

**Closed Session**

**Action Items:**

See attached list of Board Approvals

Action/Commentary related to approvals:

- Clarify parameters on work to be performed by Sue Beauregard.
- Reword Senior Trip funding so as to not set an unrealistic precedent. Approval of Senior Package (item #4) took place after the issue was discussed during the meeting.
- Provide demographics (prior school) of DVIA students to the Board, as requested by Don.

**Discussion Items**

**1. Additional Board Members (Don Brann)**

- There was a general discussion regarding the addition of two Board members, which would more easily ensure a quorum at future Board meetings.
- Clarifications by Tom Cox:
  - With a Board of 7 members, the quorum needed would increase to 4 members.
  - The Charter states that the number of Board members must remain between 5 and 15.
  - The Charter also indicates that there should be parent representation on the Board.

- Timing: It is necessary to move quickly, but to be diligent in the selection process.
- Criteria: Some ideas mentioned as to the new Board member credentials were:
  - Don's preference is for a member who lives in the WSD and has a student at Da Vinci.
  - Tom Johnstone suggested that a parent be selected who has ties to the aerospace industry and who has children in WSD schools.
  - Gary pointed out that we should seek Board members who can help us in specific areas and who can assist in moving the Da Vinci mission forward.
- Process:
  - Step 1: Identify possible members.
  - Step 2: Meet with each individual to assess the likelihood of a good working relationship and the potential contributions of the candidate.
  - Step 3: Check the credentials of the most likely candidates.
- Action:
  - Send referrals to Don.
  - Ask the principals for suggestions due to their working relationships with parents.

## 2. Senior Package (Steve Wallis)

- Steve conveyed some thoughts behind the Senior Package:
  - Tying together the expenses for all senior activities helps parents plan and hopefully allows all seniors to participate.
  - It is important to have the first graduating class finish strong and leave with the feeling that Da Vinci did everything possible to make it a positive experience.
- Comments/Concerns
  - Don suggested having freshmen open an account to build up funds over three years to be able to pay for senior activities.
  - Steve indicated that in future years there will be time for fundraisers with the goal that each class be self-sufficient in hosting these activities.
  - Gary pointed out that the Board is setting a precedent this year and therefore needs to be cautious in its approach. He suggested 100% participation, i.e., that every student pays something (amount to be determined by staff).
  - It was also suggested to keep the total amount approved by the board consistent each year. If \$18,000 is to remain the total, that amount would be evenly divided between the two schools next year (\$9,000 each).
  - These guidelines were incorporated into the subsequent Board approval.

## 3. Academic Issues (Tom Johnstone)

- There was a brief discussion regarding the API score, and Steve indicated that Da Vinci will receive a score this year.
- Steve explained that there will be a score for Life Sciences even though students will be tested on some material that has not been studied. This should not significantly affect the API.
- Tom Johnstone requested that Matt and Steve address this and make a presentation on the API in general at the Wiseburn Board meeting or at the joint Board meeting.

#### **4. Financial Report (Tom Cox, Matt Wunder)**

- Tom, Matt, and Yolanda will compile an interim report for the January meeting which reviews all aspects of the financial statements and incorporates all changes that have been made. It will include the most recent guidelines regarding the trigger.
- The report to be filed with the County will be submitted at the latest possible date by which time they will already know the trigger.
- Tom pointed out that the trigger should not be the focus for this school year, but that it could affect next school year, given the state's ongoing financial difficulties.
- Tom also reported that the audit went well, and that he will provide the Audit report to the Board in January.
- With regard to the Audit, there are no significant problems, though there needs to be a review of some procedures e.g. attendance.

#### **5. Funding Determination (Tom Cox, Matt Wunder)**

- If more than 20% of a school's ADA is a result of Independent Study, than it must have the state's approval on the funding it receives.
- At issue is the fact that WSD approved 140 students for the K-8 program, which now has 228 students.
- The plan is to receive the determination letter for each school by year-end and to only send it to the state if it is favorable.

#### **6. Facilities (Tom Cox, Matt Wunder)**

- Space planning is an ongoing issue with an immediate need for portables at Design and Science.
- In planning for next school year, Tom Johnstone indicated that they will be watching what is happening with the county facility and whether it would be prudent to give them verbal notification.
- Each school will need to indicate the number of classrooms required for next school year and how each classroom will be used.
- Matt spoke with Bob Tarnofsky who will take a look at any unused space.
- Tom Cox is looking into the Utah property, and whether the current tenant will be moving out.
- Don is working with Marc Shramm to pursue the OCF location, which could be held in reserve in case the need arises. The number of students in the K-8 program is dependent on having the space to house them.

#### **7. Retirement Plans (Tom Cox, Gary Wayland, Matt Wunder)**

- There was a brief discussion regarding the various choices for retirement plans for both certificated and classified staff. Since there are a number of alternatives, Gary suggested that he and Tom Cox research the alternatives and come back to the Board with more information at the next Board meeting.

## 8. College Counseling (Counseling Team)

- After an explanation of her background, Tristen Gire gave a quick update:
  - 20% of the students in the Senior class have already submitted college applications.
  - The goal is to have 100% submit applications by January.
- Francisca Marquez gave an update on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade college program.
- The Science counselors meet with seniors 3 times a week, with 25 in a class. Activities include essays, resumes, applications, and college representatives' visits.
- There have been 19 college representatives who have already visited Da Vinci, which has helped expose the students to the possibilities that exist for applications.
- An important tool in marketing Da Vinci was the college counselor conference that Tristen and Karen attended in New Orleans in the fall.
- Gary met previously with the whole counseling staff and congratulated them on the great job they are doing.
- One issue that arose was the lack of funds for college applications.
  - Every senior has to apply to at least 4 schools.
  - The counselors obtain fee waivers from the colleges whenever possible.
  - The application fee for Cal State is \$55, which some students cannot pay.
  - 10 students are on hold, unable to apply due to lack of funds.
- 11<sup>th</sup> grade program includes the following:
  - College seminars take place twice a week. The topics cover everything related to the college preparation and application process.
  - Topics include A-G requirements, applications, SAT test preparation, PSAT, essays, skill assessments and strategies, and college visits.
- Since there are no seniors at Design, the counselors are working with juniors on college lists, mock interviews, questions to ask, what it takes to get into and succeed in college, etc.
- Karen reiterated the value of using tools like Naviance in the college application process.
- Matt reiterated that Da Vinci Schools have a "college-going culture" embedded in the curriculum.

## 9. Internship Program (Melanie Franko)

- Due to time constraints, there was a very brief presentation of the new Internship Program, with the following highlights:
  - The overall Real World Learning Program will not be limited to internships. It will eventually be an umbrella for all career-related activities, including career days, company visits, job shadow opportunities, mentor relationships, etc.
  - The larger corporate relationships will take more time to build due to organizational constraints relating to the background and age of the students. The more immediate source for student internships will most likely lie with retail locations and small businesses.
  - Very recent changes have been implemented to better accommodate the student schedule. Rather than seek placements of one full day per week for 5 weeks, Science prefers to structure it as a seminar whereby the student works 2 afternoons per week.
  - The seminar will be an option available to all students, which keeps the number of students at a manageable level. Not all Da Vinci students will complete an internship assignment.
  - The initial weeks of the internship seminar will consist of classes on professional conduct and careers.
  - Students who cannot participate in a school-year internship, should seek a summer internship position.



## **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:10 p.m., at which time there was a celebration for Dr. Brann's 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. Employees were also thanked and recognized for the extra effort put forth this summer to be able to welcome students at all three school sites.

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