

Kids Unlimited Academy, A Public Charter School

Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2015

12pm - 1pm

Board Members Present: Pedro Cabrera, Tom Cole, Linda Evans, Carol Fischer, Carolyn Hayes, Martha Ibarra, Sister Mary Pat Naumes, Frank Phillips, & Jeri Olson

Board Members Absent: Emilie Wylde

Staff Present: Jared Ware

Staff Absent: Lynn Eccleston (due to a WiLL Grant Meeting)

Community Members Present: Jane McAlvage

Next meeting: November 18, 2015

I. Review and Acceptance of the Minutes

Pedro Cabrera called the meeting to order and asked the board to review the minutes. Carol Fischer moved to approve the minutes and Linda Evans seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Pedro asked Martha Ibarra to introduce herself to the board again, since the previous board meeting had been held in the gym and there was significant background noise. Martha shared with the board her professional and life experiences moving to the Rogue Valley, having children in Kids Unlimited and now Kids Unlimited Academy.

Pedro asked the school if there was any plan in place to get students flu shots this year. Jared said he wasn't aware of any plans. Pedro suggested that Southern Oregon University might provide those shots through the nursing program.

II. Business & Finance Update

Jared Ware noted that there had been a recent meeting with the district and that had gone very well. He noted that Michelle Zundel was working with the charter leaders to streamline the review process. Jared noted that the Brad Earl had told the group that he didn't think October 15th was a reasonable deadline for the submittal of an audit, given that the district doesn't usually even wrap their own audit up that quickly. He agreed to offer waivers to any charter that needed one this year, and agreed that it should be changed to early December.

Jared noted that the reviews also likely would look differently this year as well.

Jared handed out binders to the board that included policies, past board minutes, and noted that he will continue to update the binders with more documents over time so that they can serve as a resource to board members.

Jared noted that the audit was completed and that Rick Brewster was coming to the next board meeting to present the audit. Jared noted that there were some recommendations related to continuing to create greater operational segregation between the two entities around things like purchasing, fundraising, and cost allocations that will need to be further documented and addressed.

Linda Evans suggested that they had a similar problem at the Jacksonville Inn and noted that when purchasing for multiple organizations perhaps a sub-total could be made for each organization rather than an allocation. I noted that was a really good idea.

Jared also added that things like the lease and contract should be reviewed again at the Finance Committee to make sure we have more procedures to keep the purchases expenses clearly separated as opposed to being based on allocations.

Jared noted that the auditors also asked KUA to reflect grants that KU receives if it impacts KUA's financials – even though the net impact would be zero. He added that they also discussed with us whether KUA should be paying for some of the services of Jane McAlvage if she's writing grants for expenses related to KUA.

Jared reviewed the first quarter financials with the board, and noted that the school was operating within budget for the first quarter – with the support of the charter school grant. He added that a big chunk of that grant would also provide some relief for next year as well since we would be purchasing furniture and textbooks for future years.

Frank Phillips asked what the cost per student for the school was at KUA. Jared noted that's been difficult to tease out so far, because there's been start-up costs each year due to the expansion and the acquisition of items like furniture and equipment each year, and he noted that we will begin to have some replacement costs before we're even finished expanding. Jared added that once we get to full capacity and we're not growing that his belief is there is a break-even point, but noted that any adjustment in the funding structure for charter schools – even a change like a 5% increase in ADMw for charter schools could have a dramatic impact.

Jared also noted that he and Tom would be working with some folks up in Portland and Salem to try and create more equity in the charter school funding structure.

Jared shared the payable owed to KU and what made that up, showing that about half of it is costs from the past, and about half of it is current payroll expenses that are to be reimbursed upon payment.

Jared noted that reviewing the lease to remove allocations from it would be one goal for the next finance committee meeting, so that we can cut down the cost sharing between the two entities.

Pedro asked when the earliest we could request renewal. Jared noted that in December we would have to submit that. Pedro asked if there was a budget that called for the growth plan. Jared noted that there was and that he would share it with the board prior to submittal for renewal.

Frank Phillips asked what the negative net assets on the balance sheet denoted, and Jared explained that was the debt that the school had after the second year, adding that it was all owed to the school, that the school had no debt.

III. Principal's Report

Pedro noted that Lynn Eccleston was absent due to attending the WiLL grant meeting for Kids Unlimited Academy. Jared added that Lynn had asked him to share the state report card with the board in her absence. He reviewed the data with the board. He noted there was really no basis of comparison or growth or rating, because it was the first year of Smarter Balanced assessment. Jared noted that there were some really promising parts of it and some areas where we acknowledge we still have work to do. Jared noted that our 3rd and 4th grade math scores were both very strong compared to schools with similar demographics. He noted that the 4th grade reading scores were also better than many of the other Title I schools in the district. He added that our 3rd grade reading scores were lower than we would have liked, but that we have put more interventions in place to support those students.

Finally Jared added that the report also showed that we still have work to do to support our ELL students, he noted that Lynn felt strongly that our ELL supports were continuing to improve for students, and that our additional interventions were supporting a lot of those students as well.

Frank asked if Jared thought the Singapore Math was helping with the math scores. Jared noted that he definitely felt that it did. Jared also added that the tests are really hard, they require typing skills, reading, and writing skills and the ability to explain answers. He noted that we also should consider ways to support students in developing the other skills that they will need to be successful on these tests. He added that there is a new writing curriculum at the school through Success For All and that would likely help students. He noted that a typing enrichment was also something that was worth considering.

Linda Evans asked what year we have students learning a keyboard. Jared noted that last year was really the first year we had usable technology in the school and it was towards the end or middle of the year.

The board asked other questions about interventions and how students were being supported to continue to improve in all the areas necessary to improve on the test. Jared noted some of the interventions and potential solutions that were in place, and added that Lynn could speak to it even more at the next board meeting.

Jared noted again that when broken out from the grade the 4th graders did really well in reading and math compared to similar schools in the district and across the state. Jared also noted 3rd graders did well in math, but struggled in reading.

Tom Cole added that it was important to provide different interventions for Latino students and parents. The parent piece being key, because it's important to give them resources to support their children at home as well.

Tom noted that the school was now addressing a need from parents to have more Latino parent nights and nights in Spanish just so that we could ask them what additional supports they needed. He also noted that we're having to really develop some more Spanish speaking staff internally to be able to really address questions directly, so that things don't get lost in translation at times for linguistic or cultural reasons.