



Minutes – Approved  
Ocean Charter School Board Retreat Meeting  
January 30, 2011

**Called to Order by Fran Montano, Board Chairman, and Convened at 9:14am.**

Present: Su Addison, Lori Andrade, Elizabeth Brownlow, Stephanie Edwards, Charlie Francis, Jason Haas, Kristy Mack-Fett, Joan Jaekel, Fran Montano and Romy Nourafchan.

Guillermo Modini and Nile Park were absent.

A quorum was present.

Faculty members Megan Kearns and Alyssa Unger-Silverman attended the meeting.

**Open Forum**

Parents Josh Campbell, Robert Berger and Sheila Walton spoke at Open Forum.

Director, North Campus, Kristy Mack-Fett read an email to the Board from faculty member Karen Fenswick regarding the proposed Hybrid Teacher Training Program.

Fran Montano expressed his concern that the faculty was unaware of the Board Retreat despite a November Board meeting announcement. He admitted that we all need to embody better communication starting from the top, and asked all present to consider, “How did I contribute to this problem?” and “What did I miss?” to learn and improve.

Introductions were made for all Board members, Administration, faculty and parents present.

**Ice Breaker**

Fran Montano led an exercise where all present broke off into four groups and were charged with naming three ways that each person in the group was unique from other members of the group, as well as commonalities for all members of that group.

**Clarifying the Waldorf Approach**

The Board reviewed the OCS Mission and Vision, the “10 Things We Agree that We do at Ocean Charter School” document from the OCTA contract and the Hybrid Teacher Training proposal. Executive Director Stephanie Edwards described the history of the term “whole-child” in the OCS charter because it was written at the height of the Dan Dugan court case which made it illegal to use the term “Waldorf” as a public Waldorf school. Charlie Francis asked if all board members understand whether OCS is an arts school or



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an arts-integrated school. Jason Haas noted the OCS Mission and Vision does not explicitly state that OCS is a public school, which is often a source of confusion for parent expectations. Romy Nourafchan, Community Board member, stated that the “10 Things...” document is more concrete than the OCS Mission and Vision for someone who is not familiar with OCS. Dean Kubani suggested that it be rewritten for greater clarity in the upcoming charter renewal. Stephanie Edwards requested that until then, the Board pass a motion to affirm that OCS is using Waldorf educational methods in a public setting, so that it is clear to the community what we do. This clarification will also be done as a part of the OCS Strategic Plan process.

**ACTION ITEM:** Stephanie Edwards will draft a statement describing OCS for Board approval at the February 2011 Board meeting.

Joan Jaekel asked faculty members Megan Kearns and Alyssa Unger-Silverman how the “10 Things We Agree that We do at Ocean Charter School” document lived in their daily classrooms. Alyssa Unger-Silverman discussed the learning curve and reality of delivering a story every day and Megan Kearns offered the challenges of using and surrounding the students with natural materials at North Campus. Both agreed with the general intent of the “10 Things...” document. Kristy Mack-Fett described it as a living, breathing document that is a decent start but needs to be reworked through negotiations. She stated that it is one thing to read it and entirely another to have the skills to execute and fully understand its meaning.

The Board discussed the Waldorf Teacher Training Program of Steiner College, a 3-year US-accredited Waldorf hybrid teacher training program for public schools, which the OCS Administration proposed to the Board and faculty. There are politics and legalities involved with the use of the term “Waldorf”, and this program was developed to establish a standard for public schools who want to use Waldorf methods. The OCS Administration holds firm that only through a whole-faculty training program can our school truly deliver Waldorf educational methods to teach public standards. Members of the OCS faculty have various concerns about the program, such as the individuals involved in the program, program demands, if participation is mandatory for renewal, the seeming urgency of our participation in this particular round, and the lack of alternatives such as peer to peer mentoring for those who already have accreditation or equivalent work experience. Stephanie Edwards feels the urgency is not due to legalities, but for the stability of our school we need our entire faculty to have the training and confidence to deliver our curriculum. She conceded that other motivating factors to participate now were lower costs as a pilot, the availability of interest free loans and the opportunity to



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collaborate with another Southern California public Waldorf school. She reassured the Board that the program gives credit for what the faculty already does every day, such as Main Lesson plans and chalkboard drawings, in addition to meeting with other participating schools a few times a year. The Board agreed that OCS Administration needs to further discuss this hybrid training program with the faculty, so they fully understand its benefits and the reality of daily participation, and have the opportunity to recommend options. It was agreed that even if Waldorf Teacher Training Program of Steiner College is an appropriate whole-faculty training program for OCS, it was not ideal timing to participate in the middle of the current school year. Joan Jaekel stated there is a huge Waldorf charter movement, and as the largest Waldorf charter in the country, OCS could negotiate a training program that is best suited to our school.

The Board agreed they would need a full proposal including financials in order to vote on the OCS participation in the Waldorf Teacher Training Program of Steiner College.

Jason Haas noted that since Joan Jaekel is on the Board of Trustees at Steiner College, she would need to recuse from a vote regarding OCS participation in the Waldorf Teacher Training Program of Steiner College.

**ACTION ITEM:** Fran Montano will agendize an update on the hybrid training program for the February 2011 Board meeting.

**ACTION ITEM:** Lori Andrade will distribute the current Board of Trustees Contact information to the Board.

### **Strategic Plan**

The Board reviewed 2010-2011 OCS Budget revisions, ideal Administration, Faculty and Specialty structure, and various class size models.

A revised, balanced budget is needed to proceed with the Proposition 1D Unfunded Preliminary Apportionment Grant for Site efforts. Charlie Francis reviewed the revised 2010-2011 OCS Budget. Significant changes to the budget since it was last approved in June 2010 include various staffing changes, raising general purpose funding to reflect levels passed by the State in November 2010, removing the \$25,000 grant, \$10,000 increase of LAUSD rent, and \$10,000 decrease in SB740 funding.

**MOTION:** Charlie Francis moved to approve the January revised OCS 2010-2011 Budget. Lori Andrade seconded the motion. Su Addison, Lori Andrade, Elizabeth



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Brownlow, Charlie Francis, Jason Haas, Joan Jaekel, Dean Kubani, Fran Montano and Romy Nourafchan voted in favor. Motion passed.

Stephanie Edwards reviewed the draft proposal for Administration, Faculty and Specialty structure to align with the Full Model budget. The Full Model budget would require approximately \$433,000, assuming November 2010 state funding and Pledge Drive levels at full enrollment, two campuses, all Specialty classes and \$30,000 for hybrid teacher training. Board members suggested adding a Development Director, a Woodworking teacher, two part-time librarians and a Parent Coordinator to our ideal structure.

The Board discussed class size and number of classes as a way to increase revenue to sustain our ideal structure and curricular program. If we added two students per class in grades 4 through 8, overall school funding would increase by \$125,000. Other suggestions included adding another Kindergarten class to feed into three classes of 20 students each for grades 1 through 3, which would then feed into two classes of 30 students each for grades 4 through 8. This way OCS would “grow” their own students familiar with Waldorf educational methods since Kindergarten rather than adding new students in the upper grades. The Board also discussed increased expenses associated with class size and additional classes such as teachers’ aides, Administrative support, instructional materials and field trip events. Another proposal was to reduce the number of middle school grades to one class each. Kristy Mack-Fett and Fran Montano noted that faculty input was critical to continue researching this proposal yet acknowledged it is a negotiations issue. Joan Jaekel recognized how productive the class size conversation was when faculty participated, and asked Megan Kearns and Alyssa Unger-Silverman to share this information with the faculty, encouraging faculty members to attend Board meetings on a rotating basis.

The Board mandated an Administrative task force called the Class Size Study for a Sustainable School. This task force would explore the addition of students and classes for the school to create an increased revenue source that is sustainable to realize our OCS Mission and Vision. Members of the Class Size Study for a Sustainable School are Stephanie Edwards, Charlie Francis, Jason Haas and Wendy Teeter.

**ACTION ITEM:** The OCS Administration will research and vet class size options and report back to the Board with an update at the March 2011 Board meeting and a recommendation at the April 2011 Board meeting.



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**ACTION ITEM:** Fran Montano will agendize for the February 2011 Board meeting the selection of Board members to complete the Strategic Plan.

Donor Development member Cheryl DiFata led the Board through a funding priorities exercise to identify and categorize “asks” based on academic excellence, a Waldorf arts-integrated curriculum, and ecological and social responsibility.

**ACTION ITEM:** The Development Task Force will draft funding priorities based on the OCS Board of Trustees’ “asks” defined at the 2011 Board Retreat and provide the Board with an update, recommendation for timeline and process and next steps.

### **Board Training**

OCS Advisory Board member, Sam Kirk, gave a presentation on effective communication with parents, including how to ensure parents feel heard, having someone review draft communications to gauge appropriateness of content and recipient reaction, and playing devil’s advocate ahead of time to proactively vet opposing constituents. He offered that sometimes, resolution might take multiple meetings.

Jason Haas left the meeting at 3:47pm.

Governance Chair Wendy Teeter led the Board through a review of the Brown Act, Board member responsibilities and fiscal policies and procedures.

Based on the information provided, Fran Montano reminded Board members to submit documentation for distribution with the agenda in order to vote on it.

**ACTION ITEM:** Stephanie Edwards will submit various Board members’ questions to legal counsel regarding the Brown Act and update the Board.

**ACTION ITEM:** Lori Andrade will add a bullet point in the Board of Trustees’ agenda disclosing Closed Session eligibility, including 54956 (Personnel), 54956.8 (Real Estate Negotiations), 54956.9 (Pending/Anticipated/Potential Litigation) and 54957 (Labor Negotiations).

### **Setting of Next Agenda**

The next regular Board meeting will begin at 7:00pm on February 3, 2011.

Romy Nourafchan left the meeting at 5:31pm.



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**MOTION: Fran Montano moved to adjourn the meeting.** Lori Andrade seconded the motion. Su Addison, Lori Andrade, Elizabeth Brownlow, Charlie Francis, Joan Jaekel, Dean Kubani and Fran Montano voted in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted by  
Lori Andrade, Secretary  
OCS Board of Trustees