

PROVIDENCE CREEK ACADEMY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Providence Creek Academy Library

Present: Amy Santos, Gary Stulir, Lisa Moore, Guy Cooper, Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch, Melissa Rhoades

Staff Present: Charles Taylor, Audrey Erschen, John Epstein

- 1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence – 7:04 P.M.**
- 2. Changes to the Agenda**
- 3. Presentation of Awards**
- 4. Opportunity to address the Board of Directors**
- 5. Approval of the December 20, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes:** Gary Stulir made the motion, Lisa Moore seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.

6. Board Committee Reports

a. CBOC: The committee met Jan 19th. PCA is at 72.11% revenue. Expenditures benchmark for January is 50%. Actual expenditures are 52.88%.

b. Oversight Committee: Next meeting will be February 1, 2017 at 8:00am

7. Reports

a. Head of School:

We have a new President and would like to take the time to inform you that the entire 6th grade watched the ceremonies in the auditorium. The students were engaged, they were clapping and cheering and having fun as they were watching a history in the making. They also had an assignment to do while they were watching. This was very impressive. Many thanks to Mrs. Chaney, Mrs. Bowers and Ms. Laird and of course the students.

Our USDA Application was submitted on December 31, 2016. We are in the process of answering any questions and completing any additional forms as required. We are also in contact with Senator Carper's

office to inform them of our application and our plan of action. They have been very supportive over the years and they are supportive with this project as well.

In your Board Packet, there is a proposed policy concerning the request for a PCard. The policy has been sent to the State Finance Department for their review and we have included their recommendations in the proposed policy. I am requesting that you review the policy for action during the February Board Meeting.

We had our Special Education Audit this week and we did well as of this writing. There will be 2 proposed Board Policies concerning Special Education present during the January Meeting. Mrs. Erschen will provide more detail during the Board Meeting.

We need to increase our Breakfast pricing for adults. As of now we are lower than the price set by the Department of Education. The recommended price for an Adult Breakfast is \$2.30.

b. Principal's Report:

Enrollment:

Open Enrollment continues for the 2017-2018 school year. We currently have 257 applications. The online application process ended on Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 4:00pm to be included in our lottery. We are continuing to accept applications to fill remaining availability and build our waitlist. Our lottery will be held prior to Thursday, January 26, 2017 in order to notify Parents of invitation status by that date. It will once again be conducted electronically by the Data Service Center.

Special Education: On Wednesday, January 18, 2016, representatives from the Delaware Department of Education conducted PCA's triennial Special Education Compliance Audit. Student documentation and financial information were reviewed. Congratulations to Mrs. Knorr-Hayden, Ms. Roscoe, Ms. Shiber and the rest of the Special Education Team on a job well done. We will receive our report at a February meeting to review findings. The audit team complimented us on the organization of our records and indicated only minor findings.

CRDC: I have started the data collection process for the annual Civil Rights Data Collection Survey. The CRDC survey is a federal data survey mandatory for all public school districts/local education agencies in the United States. The 2015-16 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) system will launch on February 06, 2017 and close on April 24, 2017.

c. Curriculum Report:

As many of you may be aware, it has been several years since the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum has been updated as a whole in our K-8 grade continuum. ELA in grades K-2 create the learning to read foundation that propels students to read to learn in our grades 3-8 and beyond. Jennifer Morris was tasked to meet with each grade level team to discuss current options should we choose to make a major curriculum update to our ELA program. Teachers were asked to review the Scholastic Guided Reading

Program and Great Minds Wit and Wisdom program. The near unanimous choice was the Scholastic program. A brief description of the program follows.

The Benefits of Differentiated Reading Instruction

Differentiated instruction is more vital than ever in today's classrooms. Whole-class, small-group, individual instruction, and independent learning opportunities need to be incorporated to ensure that teachers consistently acknowledge and meet the individual learning needs of each student. The vast differences among students in any give classroom need to be acknowledged, taking into account each student's strengths while accommodating their limitations. *(Guild, 2001; Mulroy & Eddinger, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001c, 2002)*

In terms of reading instruction, the purpose of differentiation is to maximize each student's achievement by providing books at every child's "just right" reading level. This ensures that each student continues to increase their reading skills by reading books that are not so easy that they become bored, nor so difficult that they become frustrated. Instead, each child is matched with books that are easy enough to be read fluently with support from the teacher, yet challenging enough to offer opportunities for growth. This results in more books being read successfully, which, in turn, results in higher reading achievement.

Guided reading is small-group instruction designed to provide differentiated instruction to help students develop reading proficiency. The teacher uses a tightly structured framework that allows for the incorporation of several research-based approaches into a coordinated whole. For the student, the guided reading lesson means reading, talking, and writing about a variety of nonfiction and fiction texts. For the teacher, guided reading means taking the opportunity for careful text selection and intentional, intensive teaching of systems of strategic activity for proficient reading. *(Fountas & Pinnell, 1996)*

In guided reading, teachers provide specific demonstrations and teaching of comprehension strategies such as inferring, synthesizing, analyzing, and critiquing. This kind of teaching is supported by the National Reading Panel *(NICHD, 2000)* which suggested that teaching a combination of reading comprehension techniques is highly effective in helping students recall information, generate questions, and summarize texts.

According to Fountas and Pinnell, a federally funded 2008 study on the effectiveness of the guided reading program when implemented by teachers well-trained in this method reported, "The average rate of student learning increased by 16 percent over the course of the first implementation year, 28 percent in the second year, and 32 percent in the third year."

In addition to the evidence-based curriculum, Scholastic offers comprehensive training to align with their materials. Scholastic's professional learning services are grounded in the latest research and are led by one or more expert Literacy Consultants who place a priority on increasing understanding of the "why" behind theory and practice. This team of consultants combine years of teaching experience with knowledge of the most up-to-date research to provide inspirational and meaningful training experiences.

I wish to thank all the teachers and specialists involved with our successful review of ELA programs. While the teachers understand that by reviewing the programs we are not committing to a course of action, their valuable input has been provided to guide the selection from a wide array of possibilities.

Amanda Silcox has begun a pilot program of instructional coaching with a small group of our new teachers. She uses classroom observations, post-observation debriefs, planning periods, and after school meetings to assist the teachers in advancing their teaching craft. Although early in the process, signs indicate this will be a successful undertaking.

Reflex Math, our trial (grant funded) of a math fluency website, has shown solid student growth. An excerpt from an email from our Reflex Math contact states, "Hats off to Kelsey, Tracey, Guy and Nathan!!! I just looked at your group data in Reflex and am impressed with your students' growth." We hope to see continued success for all students involved.

Finally, all teachers have begun a uniformed process of instruction self-reflection (see attached). Using the rubric, teachers evaluate a given lesson during the week, and consider ways to improve student engagement, academic ownership, and/or demonstrations of learning. The tool places the focus on student actions and ways in which teachers can promote academic achievement.

d. Finance Report: PCA has received most of its money to date. 72.11% of funds have been received. We are 2% over the budget.

8. New Business

a. Action Items

- 1. FY 2016 -2017 December 31, 2016 Preliminary Budget :** Melissa Rhoades made the motion. Gary Stulir seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.
- 2. DOE Monthly Budget December 31, 2016:** Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch made the motion. Gary Stulir seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.
- 3. Hiring of Staff:** Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch made the motion. Gary Stulir seconded. All in favor? Motion approved. Guy Cooper abstained.
- 4. Payroll Procedure Revision:** Melissa Rhoades made the motion. Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.
- 6. Federal Monies Policy:** Melissa Rhoades made the motion. Lisa Moore seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.
- 7. Field Trip Policy Revision:** Lisa Moore made the motion. Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.

8. Adult Breakfast Price Adjustment: (Raising to \$2.30, beginning February 1, 2017)
Melissa Rhoades made the motion. Guy Cooper seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.

9. Student Matter: Gary Stulir made the motion. Lisa Moore seconded. All in favor?
Motion approved.

10. FMLA: Melissa Rhoades made the motion. Elizabeth Columbo-Kutch seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.

9. Next Board Meeting/Adjournment: (February 28th/7:52) Guy Cooper made the motion. Melissa Rhoades seconded. All in favor? Motion approved.