

Meeting Minutes of the Board of Directors  
Denver Language School

February 26, 2014

5:30 pm

Location: DLS Cafeteria

Voting board members in attendance:

Ryan Hunter  
Kristy Fantz  
Beverly Haddon  
Dan Baack  
Camilla Modesitt  
HuiLiang Liu  
Kenneth Ho  
Jacob Welp

*Dan made the motion to call the meeting to order at 5:06 pm in a public session. Bev seconded. All members present favored.*

*Dan made the motion to go into Executive Session at 5:10 pm for the purposes of conducting discussions regarding the school's positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiation. C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(f). Camilla seconded. All members present favored. Camilla recorded the Executive Session.*

*Kenneth made the motion to move out of Executive Session at 6:03 pm. Bev seconded. All members present favored.*

Ryan began the meeting once again in public session at 6:14pm.

At 6:15 pm the meeting was once again open to the public.

**Board Business:**

*Dan made the motion to approve the January board meeting minutes. Camilla seconded. All present favored. The January board meeting minutes were approved.*

**February Financials: (presented by Lori Deacon)**

- January is the 7th month of the fiscal year. We have received 75% back of PPR from the state from the amount they took away. This was related to the tax revenue deficit for the state.
  - The kindergarten revenue is once again down. Lori thinks it is just payment fluctuations.
    - Fun club- still cash flow positive.
    - 115K more in reserves than originally planned.
    - 25K shy of budgeted figure for the annual campaign.
    - READ revenue- 33K
    - Title 2 and title 3 came in higher than planned.

- 58% through expenses. Salaries and benefits running low at that mark.
- Legal fees...work that is being done to obtain teacher visas.

**Guest Speaker: Jane Shirley from Get Smart Schools** (Jane gave an overview of the Get Smart School internship program for principals)

- Internship program: 2 face to face meetings a month with coach
  - 2 year fellowship
  - 1 national site visit; 1 retreat in the fall
  - Adjunct facility is school leaders.
  - Fellowships are funded through PITON, Walton, and Denver Foundation.
 They are funded 26K per fellow.

**Leadership Review: (presented by Nancy MacDonnell and Jian Lin)**

- Core leadership is ultimately about what is best for the kids.
  - Believes in collaboration.
  - Intent to return forms- all teachers intend to return except for 2 TA's.
  - School of choice forms due March 1st.

**School Calendar: (presented by Jian Lin)**

- Would like to hold assessments on 8/5- 8/6 for all new students.
- Assessment on 8/7 for returning students.
- Modeled after DPS calendar.
- Parent education night- every month.
- Back to school night
- DLS board town hall- every trimester.

**Principal Recruitment: (presented by Ryan Hunter and Dan Baack)**

- 50 candidates applied.
  - The committee will receive 25 candidates by mid March.
  - Each candidate will have 3-5 interviews including a community interview.

**Facilities: (presented by Kenneth Ho)**

- Waldorf School might be selling their property.
- Moving to Evans and Pearl.
- 10th and Fillmore; building on National Historic Register; 319,000 sq ft; 18 classrooms.
  - Great opportunity for our ECE-2 campus, but not sure about the financing.
  - On the market for 4.2 million.
  - Parking could be problematic

**CARLA trip report: (presented by Kristy Fantz and Jian Lin)**

Yinghua Academy

- 114 kindergarten students, 12 8<sup>th</sup> grade students
  - 4 Mandarin kindergarten classrooms
  - Approx. 500 students
  - 100% proficient in English by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 90% advanced
  - 83% proficient in Math (school wide)
  - Ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the State of Minnesota

### Yinghua-Language Use Policy

- Very strict language use policy.
  - No English is allowed in the classrooms.
  - If parents volunteer in classrooms, they are not allowed to speak English to the students as they feel it compromises the teacher's instruction in Mandarin.
  - Further, parents cannot speak English to the teachers in front of the students. Parents e-mail the teachers and/or make an appointment if they need to talk to them.

### Yinghua- Curriculum

- Core Knowledge is their curriculum scope and sequence.
  - All Mandarin materials are created by staff.
  - They do not purchase textbooks for the Mandarin instruction with the exception of language arts.
  - They focus more on classic Chinese literature in the younger years in Mandarin.
  - They take the best of core knowledge scope and sequence, modify to fit into their program.
  - English program begins in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade they schedule 2 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes at the same time

### Yinghua Middle School Highlights

- 8th grade class: 12 students
  - Slowly growing middle school numbers
  - Planning for 60 students a grade when 4 classroom bubble reaches middle school
  - Building a bond project based on those numbers
  - If they have more they have to be creative in their space planning
  - Strategically start at 5<sup>th</sup> grade (engage the students into middle school)

### Yinghua English Support

- English/Language support to parents:
  - Calendar with daily theme which correspond to thematic units.
  - I.E. Recommend talking to your child about constellations, read books about the skeletal system, etc. (focused on increasing English vocabulary, *not phonics*)
  - Online English reading tool (Lexia)
  - Start the school day 8:30
  - 8:00-8:30 Homework Lab for struggling students, or opt in students for Mandarin homework help.

### Highland Park Middle School

- Launched middle school in 1993
  - School within a school model
  - IB middle school program
  - Today Highland Park is a feeder school for 3 Spanish immersion programs. 2 schools are 2-way which is problematic because the 2-way program are more like an ELL program, so the language level of the student population is very much varied.

### Highland Park- Schedule

- Highland Park uses a block schedule.
  - There are 6 blocks/periods every day, and each block is about 50-60 minutes.

- 70% of total daily instructional time in the Spanish immersion program is used to study math, science, social studies, and language arts.
- Students are required to take social studies and language arts in Spanish.

#### Highland Park-Academics

- Highland Park offers regular and advanced social studies and science classes.
  - All students are grouped into different math classes based on their abilities.
  - Highland Park offers the Reading workshop program in English.
  - Highland Park offers the Writing workshop program in Spanish.
  - Due to student numbers, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are in combined classes.
  - Highland Park teachers developed the interdisciplinary unit design.

#### Highland Park- Curriculum

- Highland Park uses the interdisciplinary design (unit plan) as the core curriculum.
  - Teaching materials in Spanish are the biggest challenge because it is difficult to find the appropriate materials in Spanish versions.
  - They hired experts to translate selected chapters in the social studies textbooks.
  - Staffing (teacher resource) is the second biggest challenge.
  - Highland Park teachers developed the interdisciplinary unit design.

#### Highland Park-Teachers

- Due to student numbers, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers only teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - Due to student numbers, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are looping.
  - Prep-time is vital to program scheduling.
  - Teachers created web pages to upload their unit plans, worksheets, project directions, etc.

#### Observations between the 2 models: K-8 vs. separate middle

- Highland Park seemed to be less cohesive and less established even though it had been around 20 years vs. Yinghua Academy
  - Students at Highland Park were conversing in English- although teacher remained in Spanish
  - The Highland Park program had been tampered with over the years
  - The Highland Park struggled with an elitist status marking the program

#### CARLA Recommendations

- Middle School immersion students tend to have poor grammar and limited vocabulary, so a purposeful focus on vocabulary is important
  - Middle school students will drop in SOPA/ELLIPA scores if content areas are 2 or less. Must be intentional on increasing language proficiency...needs to be 3 or more content areas
  - Materials and resources should be in TL, not English. Students should be required to stay in target language in the TL classrooms
  - Third language is an excellent strategy to promote interest in 2<sup>nd</sup> language, improve grammar and vocabulary in 2<sup>nd</sup> language, and keep students interested in language
  - Builds excitement, students learn how language works, word order matters
  - Immersion teachers need to focus on both social language and academic language development. Social language block needs to be intentional.
  - Immersion programs should create a Language Use Policy.
  - Immersion programs should focus on early literacy development.
  - Spanish immersion programs should emphasize teaching the syllabus rather than phonemes.

- Chinese immersion programs should focus on character recognition.
- Chinese immersion programs need to consider a language assessment, which is aligned with the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment – English).
- Immersion programs should focus on the differences and similarities between the target language and English, especially for struggling learners.
- Content subject teachers need to work together to be intentional about vocabulary in target language
- Items such a speech contest, plays, music, and literature in TL increase proficiency
- Guests speakers in the target language should be encouraged
- School sponsored language AP exam is not recommended. Not a good marriage with immersion. Better to look into college language entrance exams
- Look into Kathy Escamilla research on approach to learning to read in Spanish. Should be syllable approach, not phonics

### CARLA Recommended Structure

- Thematic units: .5 social studies, LA support, .5 science (CH/SPN) + music
- CH/SPN LA (readers and writers workshop)
- Math (CH/SPN)
- Thematic units: .5 social studies, LA support, .5 science (ENG) + music
- ENG LA
- Third language (30 minutes/day) x 4 years = Interimid ORAL; Interlow WRITING (minimum is 3 times a week 45 minutes each time)
- Specials with electives: Art, PE

### PTA Update:

- Funding from direct giving continued to be pulled from parents who either pulled kids out of school or lacked confidence in direction of school
- PTA is trying to move forward with the resignation of both the president and president-elect with the rest of the members picking up the slack, but the treasurer also left on 2.26 after an incident in the 4th grade mandarin class and withdrew her kids so we are operating without a treasurer as well.
- PTA asked for more support from board with regard to what we can communicate to parents and teachers regarding issues going on at school as well as how to plan fundraisers when we haven't been able to spend the money from DWTS yet.

Adjourned 8:22 pm

Meeting minutes written by Kristy Fantz, board secretary