

Board of Directors – FSAS | MINUTES

Meeting date, time 3/17/2018 8:30 AM | Meeting location FSAS, Gray, ME

Meeting called by Alison Moser, Chair
Type of meeting Regular Meeting
Facilitator Alison Moser, Chair
Secretary Alyson Spencer-Reed

Attendees:

Alison Moser, Chair
Adam Gilman, Vice Chair
Alyson Spencer-Reed, Secretary
Melanie Prinz, Treasurer
Penny Collins, Board
Bill Doughty, Board

Also Present:

Jacinda Cotton-Castro, Executive Director
Joanna Frankel, Coordinator of Teaching and Learning
Vincent Micale, candidate for BOD membership

Excused: none

Meeting called to order at 8:30 am.

AGENDA TOPICS

Introduction of Guests | All

Vincent Micale – was on Center’s Board when the School was launched so has some familiarity with the school.

Presentation of Assessment Results | J. Frankel, Coordinator of Teaching & Learning

Data from 3 assessments, displayed via projection and discussed:

- Iowa Test of Basic Skills – a pencil-and-paper test of reading, writing, and math; the writing portion contains no writing, but is more about conventions of writing, mechanics. We now have 3 years’ worth of data to review.
- Work Sampling System
- Fountas & Pinnell for K-2 and Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs) for 3-5.

Iowa Test

Shows some decrease in number of students measuring in the “below average” stanine over time (from 3rd to 5th grade), but meaning is difficult to extract because of high turnover from 3rd to 5th grade.

The School is purchasing a school-wide, K-5 math curriculum for use starting next school year.

As of next school year, we will begin using NWEA in place of the Iowa Test, a switch that has been recommended (and will be funded) by the Charter Commission. The NWEA test is more conducive to measuring growth – in fact was designed for this. It also offers immediate results.

Questions/comments:

- Switching tests, we lose the historical data of the last 3 years.

Work Sampling System, mid-year report

November results showed wide variation in how teachers were using the system, so we have been working to improve inter-rater reliability. The teaching team met, made predictions about the data, took a global look at all the numbers (not class by class), and discussed what they noticed, how it differed from predictions, and what problems became evident through the process.

COTL has been working on aligning the WSS more closely with the Common Core Standards.

Holistic proficiency scoring also still varies widely from teacher to teacher and is determined subjectively; will continue to attempt to develop a mathematical calculation or rubric for determining this measure. First grade numbers in particular stand out as being different from other grades' numbers; this is in part because the 1st grade teacher was new and in part because the assistant teacher, who did much of the calculations, missed some of the workshops about the system. Differences in appearances of numbers from class to class also result from the challenges of applying the holistic proficiency rating.

Reading assessments (Fountas & Pinnell, DRA)

Question about 64% of 5th graders measuring below reading level. This test measures reading fluency and comprehension. Comprehension is measured through writing, which is sometimes not an effective measure of reading comprehension skills, especially when proficiency in reading comprehension and writing are very different. 5th grade teacher will be asked to re-administer some of the DRAs for students in this situation.

Comment: Would be interesting to see scores broken out for students with and without IEPs. Another member raised a caution against looking only at non-IEP scores.

COTL will gather information from the special ed teachers, because in some cases, students with IEPs are able to demonstrate a skill in a small group (with Sp Ed teacher) that they can't demonstrate within the larger class environment (with classroom teacher).

Review of Minutes

Motion to accept February 3rd, 2018 minutes by B. Doughty

2nd by M. Prinz

Discussion: none

Motion passed 6-0.

Executive Directors' Report | J. Cotton-Castro

Reviewed written report.

Questions

- Would like to talk about the grant for replication (will come up later on agenda)

- Front entryway: to improve visibility and safety, we are going to cut out part of the wall that impedes the view from desk to door. Plan is to use the \$3500 that remain in the current FY budget. Want to get this done before the end of the school year. Also looking at additional cameras in the hallway for increased safety. Q: Are we splitting the cost of the improvements with the Center? A: They don't have money in their budget for this right now. But they will certainly benefit. Need to talk to them about splitting – perhaps we could pay and they could reimburse.
- Could parents get involved in lobbying the legislature for offering school safety grant money to charter schools? JCC thinks yes; she will ask the Commission.
- Noticed that school turnover has declined over time. It is early to say, as many parents wait until much closer to the start-of-school date to notify the school that they will not be returning.
- What are COTL & SPED budgets? They have their own budgets for supplies, materials, etc. JCC went over their budgets with them for recommendations for next year's budget.
- Considering moving K out of current room to make space for atelier space – but then where would K go? All just in the brainstorming phase. Thinking of building a new space where the special ed space is now, move K to one of the rooms with a bathroom, one of the upper grades to new space, sp ed to library.

Verbal additions

- Marketing – moving out to May
- Adding significant goals before end of year – creating a team to work together on the school day calendar, e.g., when different classes are doing different subjects; technology plan is supposed to be in place, so assembling a team for this, as well; hiring underway for 1st grade position (filled earlier this year with a long-term sub; needs permanent hire).

Personnel Committee Report | P. Collins

Verbal report given: still working on job descriptions, salary grids, ED assessment. Upgrading our Survey Monkey subscription to open more possibilities for the ED assessment. Suggestion under consideration for teachers to evaluate COTL instead of ED this year, while Board & admin evaluate ED. Follow-up suggestion to have at least a smaller, more condensed survey for teachers of ED. Much agreement to this around the table.

Timeline for evaluation of ED: starting with administration of survey to teachers in late April.

Education Committee Report | A. Gilman

2018-19 school year calendar review & discussion, including Anytime/Anywhere Learning program. Highlight of changes:

- Parent-teacher conferences on two consecutive early release days (Th & Fr) in Oct and March
- October – changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Double-check first that there isn't a mandate to observe Federal Holidays as federally named (looks like Bangor & Portland have made the change). Some conversation around what we intend to celebrate on this day.
- 3/29 – possible all-Charter School PD day
- Holiday break to be called December Vacation Break
- Suggestion to use two Friday early release days for conferences rather than a Thursday-Friday, which might be a hardship for parents.
- 177 instructional days a year – want to make sure we retain these, as teachers' pay is based on this number of days.

Anytime/Anywhere Learning program

- Built 6 days into next year's calendar – 1st 6 snow days of the season.
- 3 snow days built into the calendar after A/A days expire; Ed Com proposing to run them as A/A days with expectation of work accomplished, though they wouldn't count as school days.
- Suggestion to alternate A/A days with free snow days.
- Teacher feedback that the A/A program reinforced the concept that learning does not only occur within the school walls.

Finance Committee Report | A. Moser

Reviewed written report.

Seeking approval for \$700 monthly increase in CAM payments for April & May, as projections show that with our current CAM payment, we would end the SY with a deficit.

*Motion to authorize an increase in CAM payments for April & May by \$700 by P. Collins
2nd by A. Gilman*

Discussion: none

Motion passed 6-0.

Question about CAM: what has made CAM charges higher than expected? Heating oil, janitorial. Finance Committee will look deeper into this.

Seeking approval for \$4500 increase to SPED testing budget

*Motion to authorize increase of \$4500 to SPED testing budget for 3 additional students this year by A. Spencer-Reed
2nd by B. Doughty*

Discussion: what is relationship between the \$3500 left for front desk changes and this \$4500? None; separate monies.

Motion passed 6-0.

Notification of transfer of \$17,500 from general fund to reserve account per budget allocation.

Minutes vs. notes: per the Commission, committees take notes; Board takes minutes. Adam will look into specifics to make sure this distinction is correct.

Governance Committee Items | A. Spencer-Reed, B. Doughty

Question about committee meeting notes: at a future meeting, need address what happens when a Director misses a meeting and then wishes to offer thoughts on one of the discussions from that meeting.

Continued discussion of changes to bylaws proposed by committee.

Email voting

General agreement on bylaws provision. Some edits to procedure – will make revisions and vote on approval of procedure at April meeting.

Term limits, adjustment of term expiration dates

- Not wise to allow only one 3-year term; two 3-year terms would be wiser. Our challenge is not people staying on too long, but rather retaining Directors long enough for institutional memory. Need longevity to address items such as student growth as measured in year-over-year assessments (e.g.).
- The provisional 1-year extension addresses the concern of longevity. As for institutional memory, we need systems that transfer knowledge through time so it isn't held by selected individuals.
- Beginning to develop transitional plans now – part of the evolution of our BOD.
- Didn't have a business mgr or COTL in the beginning – they now will carry institutional knowledge.
- Would like to strongly encourage Directors to continue on a committee after they have left.
- We aren't struggling with Directors staying too long. Make sure retiring Directors continue to serve at the committee level.
- There is benefit in spots opening more often on the Board so anyone from the community that is eager to serve has an opportunity.
- Some Boards suffer from one person holding all the institutional knowledge and serving as gatekeeper.
- Suggestion to remove section 3.9 re: vacancies, as we haven't been following it and it would be much simpler. Some clarifying discussion.
- This change would complicate recruiting schedules. Need to retain the June-June cycle.
- Very important to get back on the June-June schedule and stagger terms for 1/3 annual expiration. Need to keep the vacancies provision in order to do this.
- Three more in support for current proposal – get back on track with newest person coming in
- One opinion that it is not right to have something in the bylaws that we ignore. Would like 3.9 removed. Still keep the June-June cycle.

Will make final edits as discussed, circulate edits before special meeting coming up, vote to endorse the bylaws changes to be submitted to the Commission.

In February, we reviewed written descriptions of our four standing committees, but did not vote to approve.

Motion to approve written descriptions of the four standing committees as reviewed in February by P. Collins 2nd by M. Prinz

Discussion: none

Motion passed 6-0.

Presentation of three required health policies—Bloodborne Pathogens, School Health Records, and Communicable Diseases—for review, discussion, and possible approval – postponed to April.

Announcement of Grant Opportunity | J. Cotton-Castro

Federal Charter School Replication Funding Grant

This grant opportunity just announced. Jacinda has talked to a grant-writer Wendy Betts – seems a terrific fit for our organization. Has submitted comparable proposals in past. Submissions due April 12th, notified by October. Average award \$200k/year for 5 years. We are small so ours might be smaller.

Nature of grant: extra points scored for rural school, for high IEP%. 18 months of planning time; can account for this in our budget. Grant-writer would consult on the writing, then draft would be presented to Board before submitting.

Questions

- New grant? Recurring? Not sure; doesn't know if it will come up every year.
- If it came to fruition – who would administer compliance? We would contract with Wendy Betts for this.
- What is the main purpose of the grant? Replication and/or expansion. Create a second Fiddlehead. Possibly add more grades at another site.
- Is there funding during the 18-month planning period? Doesn't know.
- Plans for expansion vs. replication – are we considering both? Potentially; either-or.

Comments

- The time is ripe to replicate – just need to find a location. Financially healthy, stable staff, good assessment results. We are successful now.
- Internal approval of whatever comes out of the planning process is important. Would we be tied to a certain outcome by what we write into the proposal? If we decided to stop the process, what happens? Then we have to give the funds back. We did agree as a Board that we would take time for internal growth.
- Not in favor of doing this now – too soon, too rushed. Need to “deepen & strengthen,” get better at what we currently do before expanding or replicating, as we agreed in the fall when writing our renewal application.
- Agreement with above. Also, the time Jacinda would be spending on the proposal itself would be better allocated in other ways right now. We haven't surveyed our graduates yet to see how they are doing. Could be on board with expansion, depending on what it would look like, but too soon for replication. Could expansion look like homeschool support? Adding K, 1, 2 but not upper grades?
- Split down the middle: deepening & strengthening is very important; at the same time, it may be important to take the opportunity while it is here. In favor of expansion.
- In favor. Process will help clarify distinctions between expansion and replication. Expansion possibilities could be very stimulating for our growth.

Motion to authorize Executive Director to write proposal for the Expansion & Replication Grant for the purpose of expanding FSAS, conditional upon Board review & final approval at special meeting before submitting by A. Gilman 2nd by B. Doughty

Discussion: none

Motion passed 5-1.

Upcoming Dates | J. Cotton-Castro

- New date for special meeting to discuss Executive Committee and budget postponed due to snowstorm – 3/22
- Stakeholders' Gathering – May 24
- Margarita's Fundraiser for Fiddlehead School – May 10
- Upcoming Board meetings: Tuesday 4/24 6pm, Saturday 5/19 8:30 am, Saturday 6/9 8:30 am
- Commission visit changed to 6/12

Public Comment

None.

Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss Board candidate, per ME Title 1, Chapter 13, Subchapter 1, §405, 6. A. (1), by B. Doughty

2nd by A. Gilman

Discussion: Must have a motion to go in and a motion to go out of executive session.

Motion passed 6-0.

Motion to leave Executive Session by B. Doughty

2nd by P. Collins

Motion passed 6-0.

Motion to approve Vincent Micale's appointment to the FSAS BOD by P. Collins

2nd M. Prinz

Motion passed 6-0.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 12:14 pm by A. Spencer-Reed

2nd by M. Prinz

Discussion: none

Motion passed 6-0.

APPROVED