

MEETING OF THE DENVER LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 9th, 2020
Zoom Meeting
Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

**Mission Statement – Achieve academic excellence and intercultural
competence through language immersion education**

In Attendance:

Board Members Lisa Peloso, Carter Davidson, Corelle
Spettigue, Josh Lin, Bryan Snow,
Dave Larkin, Faye Caronan, Susan Hennessy, Parker
Schenken

Absent Board Members None

Non-Board Members Kathy Benzel, Robert Newman, Annie
Trujillo, Babette Hudson-Tsao, Miriam Berg, Monique
Davis, Ann Konieczny, Camilla Modesitt, Robert Newman,
Stephen Rotter, Jessica Leonard, Lindsey Hicks, Katherine
Blackburn

Meeting Called to Order: 6:09 pm

Public Comment

Katherine Blackburn - As a parent of two DLS Spanish students, with a third starting Kindergarten in August, Katherine shared her concerns about teacher retention, particularly citing mid-year turnover. She suggested conducting quarterly independent teacher satisfaction surveys. She is aware that some other parents have voiced concerns and stated that they are very dedicated parents and have built relationships with teachers.

Lindsey Hicks - Shared her concerns around the retention of quality teachers in light of anticipated budget cuts. She hopes that DLS will try to prioritize packages that appeal to great teachers.

PTO Update -Babette Hudson-Tsao

The PTO executive board met in the end of May. They invited a few guests including Bryan and a few others to discuss merging the staff gift fund with the school budget as a line item in the school budget. Discussed the revamping of PTO board, reducing the board to a few members but creating more committees. Volunteers could do one event and be done and not have to attend meetings throughout the year. Board seemed to like that idea. Revamping bylaws and will forward to board for review. Also working on a new MOU per PTO bylaws. Next step will be to put together elections for next year's board.

Approve Minutes

Josh motions to approve the minutes from 05/12/20.
Lisa seconds. No discussion. All in favor.
Motion carries.

Facilities Update - Kathy/Dave

Kathy - Met several times over the last week as a facilities committee. Transportation details still up in the air. The committee continues to ask the good questions of our transportation partners at DPS. Work continues at Gilpin campus, including the ongoing asbestos mitigation project. Good news is that the Gilpin elevator project is underway and is slated for completion in late September.

Dave - In regards to transportation, what we still don't know is the school's schedule for next year nor how many kids will be allowed on any given bus. We cannot sign a contract with DPS until more criteria/information in place. We might potentially offer busing to families most in need or maybe run a few buses between the two campuses. Carpooling will be a certain area of focus.

Budget - Corelle/Bryan

Corelle - Budget proposal based on assumption of a 7% PPR reduction. Bryan, Kathy, Corelle and Lori had a conference call yesterday. Still uncertain about PPR, hybrid vs. remote learning.

Highlighted areas on the budget tracker indicate revenues sources that are in question such as fun clubs, summer camps, gifts and contributions. \$275 as gifts and contributions marker last year. Likely to take a significant hit. Highlighted areas under the expense side include substitute teacher costs and other DPS purchase services. Purchase service for transportation is currently estimated at \$240K but uncertain of

what, if any variation on this number might be. Question about FFE expenses as the health dept saying that schools might be required to provide individual desks for each student instead of the shared table configurations in most DLS classrooms.

Bryan - as a best practice, we have traditionally created a very conservative budget. Assumption is that expenses will go up a little bit (more kids, cost of living), but there potential that budget will be lower from both expense and revenue standpoints. The budget excludes any potential monies from the federal government, e.g., the CARES Act. This budget is absolutely as conservative as we can be. We know we will get Fed funding, but how much, will it be restricted in any way. Based on this preliminary budget, we would be pulling \$500K out of our reserve funds, but our balance would remain well above statutory compliance.

Will do another revised budget in August/September to get a more clear picture. This current preliminary budget is necessary to meet our statutory requirements to DPS.

Dave - How will impact salaries? There has been some combining of roles of administrative staff, but this does not impact teachers salaries. Plan is to continue with strategic plan phase 2 - to go from step 10 to steps 11-20 on the salary scale for teachers. Preservation of salaires is a top priority for our budget.

Dave- question about 10% anticipated drop in gifts/donations. Bryan replied that this is one of the most difficult line items to forecast.

The big driver of this discussion tonight is not only to inform the board, but to be prepared for the DPS deadline for a preliminary budget.

Bryan motions to approve the Appropriation Resolution. Lisa seconds. All in favor. No discussion. Motion carries. Appropriation Resolution is approved.

Bryan motions to approve the Secondary Appropriation Resolution. Susan seconds. No discussion. All in favor. Motion carries. Secondary Appropriation Resolution is approved.

Bryan motions to approve the budget proposed budget for FY 2020-21 as discussed. Parker seconds. No discussion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Executive Director's Report and End of Year Evaluation

Miriam and Camilla - share end of year projects highlighting students, teachers, staff and parent volunteers

Student Action Projects (SAPs) - 1) Inquiry-based, 2) self directed/project based, 3) incorporate champions and mentors

-Promotes equity - Connects students with mentors who they otherwise might never have connected with. Allows students to excel in areas they are good at/rely on and exercise their personal strengths.

-Helps students take the driver's seat in their own education

-Prime educational opportunities that DLS offers. It really prepared our kids for the transition to remote learning.

Fifth Grade - Entrepreneurship (Based on Shark Tank)

Sixth Grade - Focused on Design - the students developed items to clean pollution in the ocean

Seventh Grade - Focuses on awareness

Self Awareness

Interpersonal Awareness

Community Awareness - focused on homelessness

Eighth Grade - Capstone Projects - very impressed with what our students came up with Really integral part of what DLS offers and sets us apart from other schools. Really serves our students in a really helpful and impactful way.

End of Year Presentation

Achievements

1. Building Leadership Capacity - This was the second year of the ED/two campus/two principal model Continued to develop and strengthen this model. Developed teacher leaders and grade level team leads. Awarded the most teacher learning and leadership grants of any year. Awarded 20K to seven staff members.
2. COVID-19 Response - The four bucket model in response to COVID-19 was a great way to really focus on everything that had to be done during the transition to remote learning. The buckets included Technology, Remote Learning, HR and Wellness, and Communications.
3. School Culture - Dr. Aaron Griffen provided a very powerful kick-off to building and nurturing collaborative learning and workplace culture, and helped increase communication and inclusivity.
4. Operational Excellence - Tech purchasing and distribution by the operations team was instrumental in the successful shift to fully remote learning.

Additionally Google Voicelines (monitored daily) and Google Forms (monitored daily) were set up for both staff members and DLS families.

Financial Health:

Healthy Student Enrollment

Anticipating 910 students this coming fall. Closed out the year with 869 students
Year after year, DLS looks closely at the number of 5th grade students who choose to remain at DLS for middle school. This year, 88% of about 100 students are planning to remain at DLS. We are now maintaining high rates of student retention for middle school.

DLS is the number one school of choice in DPS. There is a waitlist of 200 for Spanish and just under 150 for Chinese.

Shout out to Eva, Yu-Hsin and Kelleigh as they had to create a new test for students trying to enter school after 2nd grade that was remote/equitable.

Fundraising

Some pretty high numbers of fundraising growth for 2019-20 - \$325,157

Startalk grant - for \$75K. Couldn't hold the summer camps this year but Startalk pushing out funding to next year.

Academic Growth and Achievement

Blue SPF for CDE

Blue SPF Overall for DLS for Closing the Achievement Gap

Green Overall - Elementary and Middle

CDE Governor's Distinguished Award (for growth)

John Irwin for Academic Excellence Award (for achievement)

Successful Fully Online Capstone nad SAPs

Launch of the DLS Alumni Association and Alumni Advisory Committee

Launch of CELIE

8th Grade AP exams - 55 students took the exam

-32 Chinese

-22 Spanish

Instructional staff dedicated to Best Practices in immersion -

We know that equal doesn't mean the same. We know we need different things for our different programs. Teachers telling us they need more support. Trainer (Pearl) helped to train teachers with Level Chinese, helping them learn a little more about the tools inside the program. Helped teachers to incorporate more into their classrooms. The priorities for Chinese teaching materials are books and materials that relate to kids, school culture and the world around us. Book room project underway.

DEI for Staff - lost some momentum with COVID crisis, but now working collaboratively with teachers/staff. Three groups/three priority areas that teachers/staff identified:

- Culturally responsive teaching

- PBIS through a DEI lens

- DLS Staff Affinity Group(s) - really discuss whatever is on their minds. Led by teachers in collaboration with administration/school leadership.

Staff retention - high retention from our spring to fall

- Total staff at DLS - 100

- Staff returning - 96

- Total # of teachers at DLS - 51

- Total # of teachers returning - 49

- Overall staff leaving - 4

There have been a few mid-year disruptions with teacher departures. Negatively impacts everyone. Committed as leaders to find new ways to keep quality teachers in classrooms without disruptions.

Opportunities and Challenges -

1. Improving Staff Satisfaction and Supports

- Needs as individuals and as groups with respect to:

 - Culture, language, induction for newcomers, differentiated PD, teacher leaders, committee representation, teaching workload, providing coaching and support in concert with accountability and action.

Strongest path forward is to get teacher leaders onto committees

Need to look at workload, accountability and clarity

2. Organization design for hybrid learning - monumental task to come up with plan

- Equity lens for both students and staff

- Will really focus on staff and make sure that they have all that their needs met.

Can help students if teachers don't have what they need

Priorities moving forward - 6-12 months

- Equity the overall priority

- DEI committee on board and of staff

- Cultivating/building leadership capacity within our staff and teachers. Build capacity in leaders of color.

- Equity as a pillar

 - Hybrid learning through a DEI lens

Celie as a foundation for DLS and beyond

Kathy is looking forward to working with teachers, staff, and the DLS community to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable community in the midst of divisive, and sometimes violent times.

Carter - question about coaching and informal feedback for teachers. Kathy mentioned that formal in-classroom evaluations and teacher coaching/feedback officially on hold per DPS due to remote learning, but the SB Educator evaluation bill will come back in the fall. Appreciate this time to do some revamping of our process. Teacher evaluation is part of the Charter Renewal process and DLS is renewing this year. Stakeholders are still trying to figure this out.

Dave - Question about social workers/TAs/Paras in hybrid model for next fall. Kathy stated that yes, will keep all TA's and Para's for 1:1 work with students. Looking for TA/teacher input beyond that point to see where they think more support is needed. High need for mental health supports and will be increasing as we normally would in a new academic year.

Josh makes a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to § 24-6-402(4)(f)(I). Parker seconds. All in favor.

The board enters executive session at 7:59pm.

Dave makes a motion to end the executive session. Parker seconds. All in favor.

Motion carries. Executive session ended at 9:33pm.

Josh moves to adjourn the meeting. Carter seconds. All in favor. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 9:34pm