

**MEETING OF THE DENVER LANGUAGE SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 18th, 2019**  
**Location: DLS Gilpin Campus**  
**Time: 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM**  
**Conference Call (303) 557-5869 Pin 1234**

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

**In Attendance:**

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

Absent Board Member Shawna Mounsey

Non-Board Members Kathy Benzel, Doug Seligman, Robert Newman, Cassie Kaslon

**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:07 pm

**Public Comment** None

**PTO Update** - No update

**Approve Minutes** Josh moves to approve the minutes from 11/19/19. Bryan seconds. No discussion. All in favor. Motion carries.

Farewell to Board Member, Shawna Mounsey. This would have been Shawna's last meeting, but she was unable to attend. We thank Shawna and are grateful for her service on the board.

**Governance Committee - Josh and Lisa**

Survey sent to the board to determine board makeup and skill set gaps. Board members identify their own skill sets under "current members" and then identify the skills they would like to see on the board under "prospective members".

Setting up a system to recruit in February, make offers by May, onboard in June, and officially join the board in July. Governance is proposing that we set the expectation that board members departing from the board plan to do so at the end of the school's fiscal year, with their last meeting in June. Exceptions will be made on an as needed basis. Discussed goal to further diversify the board and the need for a new secretary.

### **Facilities Update**

Presentation by Cassie Kaslon, of Valerian LLC (Landscape Architecture Firm that authored report re Gilpin Field):

#### **Overview of what they looked at:**

##### **Option 1:**

Given the constraints, the size of the Gilpin field doesn't really match the ages/needs of the student body

The assumption is that DPS will require at least one, if not both of the backstops to remain. If one were to be removed it would be the one that borders California Street

There is no configuration with the available space that will accommodate a full size baseball field

A 10' chain link fence would be installed on the community garden border to protect properties that border the school

A regulation sized soccer/football field is a possibility

The unused garden closest to the playgrounds will be removed

15K annual estimated turf maintenance

Grading, with the right contractor and equipment, should only take a few weeks

##### **Option 2:**

Artificial turf requires a concrete border all the way around.

Turf needs to be washed frequently by hose or by an irrigation system, approximately 1-2 times/month, depending on usage.

1K annual maintenance.

#### **Comparing the Two Options:**

Maintenance of natural turf can be challenging, time consuming, and requires having a grounds crew that knows/understands field/grass maintenance.

There is significant upfront cost of artificial turf vs. natural turf

What is DPS able/willing to do in terms of maintenance

There are all kinds of grass besides Kentucky Bluegrass. It tends to be a lower maintenance grass in the way of water usage/need. If doesn't get enough water will just go dormant rather than die off.

#### **When is the best time to start the project and how long:**

Both options are easily achievable over the summer.

Look into the possibility of getting DPS to let us lock off the grounds.

A plant material warranty might be as long as 1 year

DPS will be contracting party. Could probably negotiate a decent deal.

Either way, a whole new irrigation system will be necessary

### **Board recap after Cassie's presentation:**

Parker has flipped his position and is now leading towards natural turf. Better to have the more immediate remedy. Could get lost in the process of getting artificial turf and could end up taking years. Robert concurred stating that the price point could really be hard for parents/DLS community to accept. Parents/students are expecting a fix by next year. Bryan stated that personal experience playing on artificial turf is less comfortable/ more injurious than grass. Corelle uncomfortable laying artificial turf over natural environment.

What does our pitch to DPS look like?

If we put money upfront, what is the district's commitment to maintenance.

Negotiate so that we can do some of our own maintenance

Board has general consensus that the Facilities Committee should pursue natural sod option rather than artificial turf

### **Additional Facilities Updates:**

Second visit from Denver Fire Dept:

Came down with numerous violations and very strict expectations for compliance. No box fans, no room fans, no coffee pots in the office. Not sure if the inspector is planning to come back. If found to be non-compliant with any of the expected changes, will they assess a financial penalty? Who will be responsible for that? Kathy and Robert are addressing this issue with DPS and Portfolio Management. Dave recommended that Kathy and Robert get these conversations in writing. Is it possible that the fire department would shut the school down if they find us to still be in violation? Corelle recommends that we clearly document that all of the box fans, window fans, etc were plugged in and in use when the first inspection took place and we passed the inspection.

Doug spoke with Dave Clark - in charge of work at Gilpin this summer. Two separate mechanical contractors are to be assigned to the campus for two different projects. One is continued asbestos abatement which will include new ventilators/univents. Purpose is to cycle fresh air in. The second project is for the elevator. Colorado Best Grant (lottery and green funds) will cover univents and continued abatement. Main central doors will be removed to make way for an elevator.

### **Finance Committee**

November. Financials Update

Everything on pace. DLS is doing well from a revenue standpoint. There are some timing issues when you look at the revenue side. The working budget is continuously updated.

Fundraising revenue is at 108%. Already passed where we expected to be.

A little behind from an expense standpoint but some of that is front loaded, like supplies. Will catch up over time.

For the school's capacity to spend money, the number you want to look at is the ending fund balance. Budget is created to break even. We will have about 1.2 - 1.5 in unrestricted funds. Could easily spend up to 150K without a problem.

## **Executive Report - Kathy**

### **Strategic Goal #1 Academic Achievement**

2019 CDE (Colorado Department of Education) Recognition and Awards for DLS

DLS is the recipient of the John W Irwin for Academic Achievement

DLS is the recipient of the Governor's Distinguished Award for Outstanding

Growth

CDE's SPF - When looking at subgroups at DLS, we are closing the achievement gap. Denver Language School has a blue rating with the CDE.

10 Year Celebrations

### **Strategic Goal #2 Long Term Sustainability**

School Choice Priorities

Reveal 2020: Big Audacious Goals

Equity Journey

CELIE

Green (or Blue) in every area of SPF

Maintain excellence, continue to lead a model school and beyond

### **Strategic Goal #3 Culture and Equity**

Joint Leadership Summit Plans (reviewed last week as well)

Dave asked about teacher retention issue the school is facing this year. Kathy working with Rachel and staff on a plan to better prepare teacher assistants both to be more helpful/supportive in the classroom, but also groom them to become teachers. Even considering some kind of increase in salary to help retain teachers. Trying to create pathways at DLS so it is clear to staff what they can work towards along with time lines. Working with MSU Denver - working with teacher education programs- to create programs and recruit teaching staff. We use several different recruitment entities to recruit teaching candidates in other countries. Also relying on word of mouth.

## **Board Policy Review - Accounting and Reporting Policy**

### **Section 2- Check-signing Authority**

Check-signing authority will become a part of our annual strategic planning process. Will make updates when we handle all of our yearly paperwork.

Policy 2(A) - change to up to 15K and "board" approved

Account Policy 2(B) Lori added check signing authority up to 15K requires one signature.

Checks over 15K require two signatures and may include any combination of the Executive Director, the Board Chair or the Board Treasurer.

### **Section 3 Cash Receipts**

Policy 3(C) Lori proposed process language for disbursement of funds. Cash receipts.

Our business manager is Sarah Krauss and our Human Resources Officer/Finance Director is Rachel Posidente.

#### **Section 4 Cash Disbursements**

Policy 4(A) - strike "approval and the corresponding checks" and "or both if over 10,000.00"

Policy 4(E)i3 add "promote professional growth and School advancement"

Policy 4(I)ii Payment for spouses struck

**Board prepared to approve edits.**

**Lisa motions to adopt the amended Accounting and Reporting Policy. Bryan seconds. All in favor. Motion carries.**

Investment Policy - to address at next month's meeting. Boilerplate came from Lori.

DLS Development Policy - Corelle to create policy document to present to board at the next meeting.

Dave moves to end the meeting. Parker seconds. No discussion. All in favor. Motion carries.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:48pm**