

Blue Oak Charter School

**Laurel Hill-Ward's Place
29 No Way, Chico, Ca 95928**

**CHARTER COUNCIL RETREAT
SPECIAL MEETING APPROVED MINUTES**

Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 9am to 1 pm

***Vision:** To be a model for successful education of the whole child.*

***Mission:** To nurture and deepen each child's academic and creative capacities using methods inspired by Waldorf education in a public school setting.*

***Virtues:** Hold Reverence - Have Courage - Build Friendships - Seek Wisdom - Show Compassion*

Notice: Any person with a disability may request the agenda be made available in an appropriate alternative format. A request for a disability-related modification or accommodation may be made by a person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in the public meeting at, 450 W. East Ave., Chico, CA or by calling (530) 879-7483 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (at least 48 hours before the meeting). All efforts will be made for reasonable accommodations.

Blue Oak Charter Council (BOCC) may tape, film, stream, or broadcast any open BOCC Meeting. The BOCC Chair may announce that a recording or broadcasting is being made at the direction of BOCC members and that the recording or broadcast may capture images and sounds of those attending the meeting. Any BOCC recording may be erased or destroyed 30 days after the meeting. All times noted on the agenda are approximate and listed solely for convenience. The Board may hear items earlier or later than is noted and move the agenda items' order.

The Blue Oak Charter Council reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.

AGENDA

OPEN SESSION - 9:00 am

1. OPENING

- 1.1.** Call Meeting to Order 9:24am
- 1.2.** Roll Call of Council Members to establish a quorum

Name	Present	Absent
Vicki Wonacott	X	
Kristen Woods		X
Laurel Hill-Ward	X	
Leanna Glander		X
Ryan Sanders	X	
Donna Kreskey	X	

Trisha Atehortua	X	
------------------	---	--

Maggie Buckley Here!

1.3. Invocation - School Verse Read

“This is our school, May peace dwell here, May the rooms be full of contentment. May love abide here, Love of one another, Love of our school, and Love of life itself. Let us remember that as many hands build a house, So many hearts build a school.”

1.4. Agenda Modifications None.

2. GOVERNANCE

2.1. Greetings

Vicki Wonacott

The BOCC board retreat is held annually. The primary purpose of this meeting is to provide Brown Act and any other necessary training to new and returning board members. This meeting is also a time for the Administration to share any important school updates and news. The retreat is also designed to give board members an opportunity to ask questions about process, and governance.

2.2. Board Etiquette

Vicki Wonacott

Vicki & Susan are interested in what board members would like to get out of today? These are some of the ideas;

- More Brown Act information.
- Goal setting.
- Is there a mission statement for this meeting?
- Why have you called us here?

Susan starts with the following historical information to illustrate why we hold BOCC Retreats each year.

When we first looked at starting a FCMAT Audit we determined through that examination of the school processes that the absence of appropriate fiscal practices over time lead to financial fraud in the school. Topics on the outcome of the in depth audit uncovered significant credit card fraud which led to other fraud and finally a federal investigation. The FBI determined that the previous administrator was lying but they could not get warrants to look at what he spent his money on as he took out multiple personal credit cards in the school's name. He purchased thousands of dollars of personal items and used school funding to pay for these items. This is the number one reason we review in Finance Committee Meetings and Charter Council Meetings the credit card statements every month. Discussion on what FCMAT is and how this California agency supports and trains TK-14 schools on fiscal responsibility. One of the reasons we are here is that they highly recommend that the board meets to review information and responsibilities of running a school. It is also geared to relationship building. Discussing your vision as a board for this school is critical for the future of the school. School boards are the most powerful decision makers in education. Roles of the board members are discussed. There have been several times where roles can be confusing. What are our roles? The Brown Act is present to ensure transparency is being followed.

Where is the line of communication drawn with discussions? Who and how much can be shared? Discussed meeting on 5-8 and how it was heated. Available to all board members is the CSDC (Charter School Development Center) which offers Brown Act training and multiple other trainings. Governance and management lines are hard lines. Where is that line?

We need the board to discuss the programs and percentages cut that are being cut now how the cuts are going to be executed. Susan asks for more direct communication one on one meetings with board members. Laurel cautions on “serial” meetings per the Brown Act. Definition of roles is really important. Ryan suggests that Vicki and Susan work in tandem to direct how conversations go. We are confounding two things: Brown Act and Governance vs. Management. Donna says that she struggles between what her role is with experience in management with doing the governance piece without getting into the weeds with management. Ryan says it would be good to have a document to refer to. Trisha suggests looking at the result we want first. Vicki brings us back to what we want to do in a meeting discussing budget and cuts. We shouldn't be discussing individual positions. Example is given, “How do we do school safety?” Susan talks about the goal to keep kids safe. This is the discussion. The discussion is not what time the school goes on lock down each day and how the students are directed throughout the day. Laurel shares a document on board responsibilities. Is this on the agenda for discussion Ryan asks. Donna - Understanding your role is the foundation of etiquette. Request for formal role definition. Understanding the volume of work and the time it takes to get things done is discussed. Susan for example; worked on LCAP for 8 days. Ryan asked about the public participation and what this should look like.

2.3. **Brown Act**

Susan Domenighini

CSDC handout - Susan discusses the only difference between the school board and what a city requires for the Brown Act. Notice and Agenda. Is this a meeting? Chico Unified agendas example. Their discussions do not include new laws etc. that is why they have training. Serial meetings - a daisy chain of information sharing. Board members mentoring - It's ok for two board members to talk *but* when you include a third person then there is a risk of violating Brown Act. We have three together then if it is all “parents”. The board is designed to have a balance between the board members, community members and parents. Strongly caution against groups being unevenly distributed such as all the same members from one group.

Example:

The board Executive Director evaluation team should not be composed of all parent members.

Having conversations after a meeting is over can run the risk of a continuation of the board discussions. If you have walked out the door there should be only two of you in a discussion of the meeting details. Susan discusses the board discussions during “break” when camera is off. Ryan discussed that we are having discussions today off camera. The video is not a requirement, it is a courtesy. Are teachers part of the Brown Act? Why are they there? Is it appropriate to ask the teachers to comment on an agenda item? For example: Will they be representing anyone but themselves when being randomly asked off the cuff?

Donna asks if there is an established mechanism to get the opinion of the faculty chairs about board agenda issues? Yes. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to their chair representation for any concerns and or issues they want to discuss. Is there a student voice? The leadership through the advisory council is largely involved in the student leadership and voice. Engaging the full family is part of this equation.

What is and what is not a meeting is discussed. Susan refers to the Brown Act handout. Events are not meetings. Posting of the Agenda's, where, how, when, is discussed. Accessibility for sight impaired? Making websites compliant is discussed. We will look into the need and how to address this issue. Three types of meetings. Special meetings are 24 hours. Regular meetings are 72 hours.

What can and cannot be discussed. Only items on the Agenda. There are few exceptions to responding to non-agenda items. Public comments - this time is at the beginning and or during the item. Can talk about the agenda item in the meeting during the meeting. There can be clarifying questions between board and audience members but an extended back and forth is not encouraged. Once everyone has their 3 minutes then the audience is done. The second discussion is only the board. There should be no interruptions during this discussion or any other random comments from audience members. Laurel comments on how the audience should be informed about why chat is off. Laurel, when the agenda goes up online we should share information about the audience etiquette. Speaker cards are an example that is shared. This is when you sign up to talk. Speakers do not have to identify themselves and they have a right to speak anonymously. I In closed session do we need to document vote? Yes.

Donna suggests native tribe representations for the blessing of the land.

Vicki asks for a celebration to document the close of escrow of our land purchase.

Vicki has a vision of it being big. Second week of school is discussed as a time to hold this event.

2.4. Finance

Annie

Gilbert

Annie presents. What is the board's role in finance? What does Annie need from the board members and what they need from Annie is discussed. We will have a percentage of the budget to actual in each meeting from here on out as requested. This will give us a clearer picture of when we go over budget. Is there anything we need to be looking at key indicators? Trisha asks.

Annie cash on hand is important for the financing that the school will be pursuing. Funding balance is an important percentage of expenses. Areas that we are over budget are important. Budget to actual should be closely monitored. Laurel has a question for Annie; based on your experience and expertise do you ever make recommendations for cost savings and budgeting reference other school practices. Annie - 85% of a school's budget is personnel and other mandatory costs.

One of the ways she helps schools is to look at insurance costs. Looking out ten years there are strategies for review. There are some really interesting things happening that help employers save money and employees have better insurance coverage.

In addition to always looking at positions. Review with the broker the insurance options. Rates in CA have skyrocketed. Reviewing the rise in these costs. For

Blue Oak, financing the new school will need to be carefully reviewed. We need to make sure we can pay for the property we purchase. We need to stay on budget. Budget is directly tied to enrollment. A focus on marketing efforts with the community input and making sure expenses are in line are two key items. Suggestion from Annie is that we review with our broker. Do we have a broker that we trust? Are we making sure they do their due diligence? Susan - the income and expenses questions come up often. Questions about field trips costs - how difficult is it to pull the information that we spend on field trips? This is what we spend on the nutrition program for example.

Annie says this is a struggle for each school. The day to day work is important for coding in the budget. It is impossible to look back at 1000's of invoices to make corrections at year's end. The constant checking is necessary for budget control. Constantly checking budget and coding so items are allocated correctly. Expenses coded and allocated correctly are so critical. There are many ways to track expenses. Accounts payable says that they have a weekly report that can be checked and assure that the items are coded correctly. It is very important. Trisha, the hard thing for her is differentiating between expenses and income for the nutrition program. If we had this information, then we could have a better view of the big picture. Annie says a new dimension for nutrition expenses and income could also be a regular report for you. The days of cash on hand - may not be accurate is also discussed. As you spend money from one time funds then we recognize the revenue. It has to be used appropriately and allocated to the correct place in the budget i.e. coding. Trisha - budget is 80% staff and benefits? Is this typical? Yes!

2.5. Goal Setting

Susan Domenighini

Discussed the goals from today. Susan - asks about goals and tonight we will hear the details of the LCAP. But as a group what is your personal vision for the school over the next three years?

- Brokers review- give us multiple options for medical coverage. Question regarding new site and liability coverage for a celebration and coverage for the day.
- Increased enrollment. Involve students in recruitment - kid to kid communications "the reason I love my school etc." Donna likes the video idea of showing kids talking about Blue Oak likes. Kid voices or avatar (over time progression) Recruitment from the surrounding neighborhoods. Out reaching out to the homeless community, foster kids? Welcome wagon for new families? Ask Kellie M. if an email to new parents is realistic. It can be hard to connect in such a close community when you are an outsider/new.
- Preventative interventions for behavior. Making sure faculty have appropriate training and support.
- Academic rigor? Consistency around educational experience. Importance and strength of building relationships
- Engaging families, increasing volunteerism.
- Clear understanding of financials.

- Improve our communication to the community by simplifying information for parents so they read and understand what's happening. Shifting communication from parent square to person to person. PR communication worked into a goal. Sound bites to hook people and encourage the community to reach out personally. Communication is a two way street. People need to go to the front desk. Ask questions. Relationship building. Is communication more effective in person vs. electronic.

Susan addresses behavior as opposed to academic rigor or lack thereof. Smart kids do nothing or they rush through to be done. When they sit and wait for others to finish, they get in trouble. High behavior and low test scores was a problem when Susan arrived at Blue Oak, but because of multiple traumas in society and our community this goal to address behavior and low test scores has not been executed.

Underlying behavior is lack of learning. When minor things become big, that is not an individual student issue, it is a culture issue.

Laurel - talks about a low income community vs. "the academy school" that is high achieving. Can these two schools be synthesized?

Donna - Asks about a student with dyslexia. How has this disorder worked within the community? Fortunately this student's teacher is exceptional. They get some accommodations for things such as iready support. They may get extra time or support. The Teacher is really good at being excellent. Donna asks Susan, how reading is taught? In kindergarten we have pre reading -work on verses and signs, sounds all oral and using language a lot. How much is attention to rhymes like example of pig latin. Auditory discrimination present? Donna asks. No this isn't being done but Donna would like to see more of this. Rhymes in kindergarten we address this minimally. Donna - So if you want your reading scores to improve, you back up into kindergarten. You address this in kindergarten. Susan shares the process through 3rd grade, 1st grade more stories, drawing the letters and it becomes visual. 2nd & 3rd start reading groups focused on fluency comprehension. Significantly at grade level by 3rd grade. Iready says we are at grade level but we have QRI and BPST for reading level and comprehension assessments as well. These assessments are telling you that through 2nd grade they are somewhat on level. But then by 3rd grade they are not. There is a gap. We are doing a good job teaching them to read. Unfortunately, this is not fully transferring over. Even at 8th grade we are seeing our test scores low. We are trying to examine this closely.

Susan hears that the focus should be on Specialties support in the classroom for behavior and transitions.

Donna talks about PBIS and what that looks like.

Love and logic sounds like a good fit

Vicki -the first three weeks of school was relationship building in the classroom.

Goals will be on next month's agenda to discuss.

3. NEXT MEETING - Tuesday June 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM

4. ADJOURNMENT 1:03pm

Minutes Taken By: Maggie Buckley

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Name	Present	Absent
Vicki Wonacott		
Kristen Woods		
Laurel Hill-Ward		
Leanna Glander		
Ryan Sanders		
Donna Kreskey		
Trisha Atehortua		

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vicki Wonacott				
Kristen Woods				
Laurel Hill-Ward				
Leanna Glander				
Ryan Sanders				
Donna Kreskey				
Trisha Atehortua				