

Larchmont Charter Schools
MINUTES
Regularly Scheduled Board of Directors Meeting
815 N. El Centro Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038
March 1, 2011

OPEN SESSION

- The meeting was called to order at 6:36 P.M. by Danny Corwin, Chair.
- Names with “X” indicates present:

Board of Directors:			
Dragon, Kriste	X	Loeb, Gabi (Treas)	X
Straub, Gene	X	Wright, Richard	X
Boylston, Heather	X	Young, Amber	
Cade, Carl	X	Lara, Alicia	X
Corwin, Danny (Chair)	X	Jaeger, Nicole	X
Francis, Marya (Sec)	X		

Larchmont Schools & ExED Staff:			
Brian C. Johnson (Executive Director)	X	Kristin Droege (LCW Principal)	X
Dolores Patton (LCS – Head of Elementary School)	X	Rick Esquivel (LCS – Head of Middle School)	X
Myra Salinas (Assist Principal)	X	Rebecca Bailey (Deve. Associate)	X
Joe Meza (ExED)	X		

- **Quorum:** Yes

1. Approval of the February 1, 2011 Minutes

- Gene Straub motioned to approve the minutes contingent that the minutes are revised to reflect the 2.1.11 meeting date; Kriste seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously, contingent upon the date change.

2. Governance-

- Gene noted that the Bylaws reflect an incorrect corporation name and should be altered to read: Larchmont Charter School, Inc. Brian noted that that will be done at the next time the Board votes to approve a change to the bylaws.
- Danny Corwin noted that nominee to the Board Susan Lee is a founding member of the Larchmont Schools Board of Directors.
- Danny noted that the Board strives to keep a founding member of the schools on the Board and that nominee to the Board Rebecca Hutchinson would fill this role in Heather Boylston’s wake as she is a founding member of Larchmont Charter School and continues to be an active volunteer.
- Carl Cade motioned to approve Nicole Jaeger to the Board for a two year term; Richard seconded. Nicole was unanimously approved for a two year Board term.
- Carl Cade motioned to approve Danny Corwin for a one year term as Board Chair and a consecutive one year term as a Board member; Richard seconded. Danny was unanimously approved for a one year term as Board Chair and a consecutive one year term as a Board member.

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- Carl motioned to approve Marya Francis for a one year term as Secretary; Alicia Lara seconded. Marya was unanimously approved for a one year term as Board Secretary.
- Gene motioned to approve Gabi Loeb for a one year term as Treasurer; Kriste seconded. Gabi was unanimously approved for a one year term as Board Treasurer.

3. School Updates

- **LCW**
 - Kristin noted that LCW teachers recently focused on the structure and design of signature projects, which students work on throughout the year.
 - Kristin noted that LCW parents recently organized a fundraising seminar
- **LCS Middle School**
 - Rick noted that his focus has been to consistently link the school's programs back to the mission of Larchmont Schools and find ways the middle school can become closer to fulfilling this mission in all aspects of daily school life.
 - Rick noted that the middle school is working to serve its students through advisory groups and that one result of these groups is Spirit Week, designed to strengthen the community of the school.
- **LCS Elementary School**
 - Dolores stated that staff development has recently been focused on strengthening teacher's English language strategies so that they can better assist students for whom English is a second language.
 - Dolores noted that kindergarten students have recently been learning international studies via studying the similarities and differences within the Cinderella story as it is told on different continents and in varying cultures.
 - Dolores stated that LCS 4th graders recently presented Mission monologues to their classmates, which were first-person accounts about the development of the California Missions and that the monologues turned out to include a high level of cultural analysis.
 - Dolores noted that the 5th graders are creating and designing plans for a playground using fractions to determine the length and size of each piece of needed equipment.
 - Dolores stated that there will be a Board reception for the visiting WASC Committee on April 3rd from 5-7pm.
 - Gene asked if students have brought up current world events in the classroom, and how teachers interpret the news to their students.
 - Rick noted that the middle school students watch CNN Student News each morning and that teachers provide a historical background around the current events so that students can understand global issues in a more comprehensive way while relating it to past events.
 - Dolores noted that some 5th grade classrooms have held informal discussions about current events and that this ties in to their civics lessons.

4. Finance

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- Brian noted that Larchmont Schools did receive the request to waive state deferrals and that this significantly improves the LCS cash flow forecast through July 2011.
- Joe Meza presented the January 2011 Financials to the Board.
- Brian noted that the depreciation schedule for LCS is being reviewed.
- Gene motioned to approve the January 2011 financials; Carl seconded. The financials were approved unanimously.
- Gene motioned to approve the Second Interim Report; Carl seconded. The Second Interim Report was approved unanimously.
- Carl motioned to approve VTD as the Larchmont Charter School auditors, Heather seconded. VTD as auditors were approved unanimously.

5. Student Achievement Update

A. LCS Middle School

- Rick noted that there is room for improvement in the January Mid Year (B2) benchmarks and that the middle school has a clearly defined pathway to help its students reach set achievement benchmarks.
- Rick noted that like the 6th grade ELA B2 assessment, the 6th grade math B2 assessment was also designed to be extremely rigorous and that results show that students need more time to practice the 6th grade math material in order to master it.
- Rick noted that 64% of 7th grade students scored at or above grade level in English language arts (ELA).
- Rick noted that 55% of 7th grade students scored at or above grade level in math, which shows our students are on track to hitting our end of year goal in this area.
- Rick presented a sample demo card, which the middle school teachers have been utilizing to allow for different learning pathways in order to reach the same comprehension level with each student.
- Rick noted that school wide student achievement updates will be relayed to parents at the next monthly brunch, and that this will be complimented with individual student achievement discussions with parents.
- Brian noted that Rick and the middle school team has a concrete, detailed understanding of what the student body needs in order to meet achievement benchmarks on an individual student and grade level scale.

B. LCW

- Kristin stated that the end of year ELA goal is for 90% of students to reach at or above grade level and that each grade is on track to achieving this.
- Kristin noted that LCW is focusing on students who are below grade level in ELA.
- Brian noted that Kristin meets with each teacher once every other month to discuss student achievement on a child by child basis.
- Kristin stated that LCW is focusing on providing more support to its Korean speaking population so that they are better included in the community.

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- Brian noted that African American students are on par with Caucasian students' performance in ELA and that Latino/Hispanic students outperformed Caucasian students in ELA in both September and January testing.
- Kristin noted that while many LCW students are well beyond grade level expectations in ELA, the goal is not for students to be far beyond their grade level, but to utilize this achievement to explore grade level material more closely and deeply.
- Nicole Jaeger asked if we review achievement gaps with an eye toward our Asian American community. Brian responded that since Asian American students have not traditionally underperformed their Caucasian counterparts (at the Larchmont Schools or more broadly), the Board has not set goals in this area, but could do so in future years.
- Kristin noted that 3rd graders have the most varied mathematical backgrounds because none of them have attended LCW since kindergarten; LCW is addressing this class to meet the needs of the individual students and to reach end of year benchmarks.

6. Diversity and Enrollment Update

A. LCS Lottery Update

- Brian presented a final update on the LCS lottery pool, noting that 1,243 students entered the lottery, 608 of whom would enter as kindergarteners.
- Brian noted that there was an increase in applicants who identified as Latino and in applicants who qualify for free and reduced price lunch (FRPL).
- Brian noted that the LCS lottery update illustrates that there is a huge need in the local community for kindergarten openings and that currently, LCS has limited kindergarten openings.

B. LCW Lottery Update

- Kristin noted that the major increase in students who identify as Asian, and particularly as Korean signals the building presence that LCW has in the local community as a high-performing, socio-economically and racially diverse school.
- Kristin noted that LCW is still working on developing the best strategies for recruiting African American students.

C. Approve the offer of enrollment for an additional 5th grade student

- Brian stated that there was only one sibling of a currently enrolled students who did not get offered enrollment in this year's lottery. This child was #1 on the waitlist for 5th grade at LCS. He proposed that the Board approve extending an offer of enrollment to the first child on the waitlist in 5th grade at LCS.
- Richard motioned, Heather seconded. The Board unanimously approved the offer for an additional 5th grade student to attend LCS.

7. Community Update

A. LCS

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- Brian noted that while the goal of the LCS parent survey was to achieve 80% family participation, only 77% of families have participated as of yesterday
- Brian noted that 96% of the participating families agreed that LCS is a good school and that 75% believe that they have a say in the decisions made by the school.

B. LCW

- Kristin noted that the survey questions can be altered slightly to draw more specific responses from the parent community, giving the school leaders and Board more insight about community relations.
- Kristin noted that 100% of families agreed that LCW is a good school and that 73% of families agreed that they have a voice in key decisions at LCW.

8. Facilities Update

- Brian noted that counter-proposals were due today, March 1, 2011.
- Brian noted that LCW counter-offered for a multi-year offer at Selma Elementary
- Brian noted that LCS counter-offered with a decline of the offer of Micheltorena and the addition of use of outdoors space at the RFK Community of Schools.
- Brian noted that CAO hired a facilities consultant and that the facilities planning process will beginning with the creation of focus groups to better understand the facilities needs of the school and parent community.

9. Public School Choice

- Brian noted that there are five key benefits to the PSC opportunity:
 - Larchmont Schools offers a unique educational experience that would become available to elementary school students in the Playa Vista and surrounding areas.
 - Larchmont Schools aims to have a transformative effect over the Los Angeles educational community by proving that there can be high performing diverse public schools in multiple contexts.
 - The larger the Larchmont Schools network is, the more politically powerful it can be when it needs to advocate
 - Larchmont Schools could develop more central and leadership support without raising costs.
 - While Larchmont Schools already attracts highly qualified talent, the partnership with LAUSD at Playa Vista could potentially increase the amount and quality of talent at both school clusters.
- Brian noted that LAUSD created Public School Choice in order to ensure that the best group of people to run newly established schools would run the schools.
- Brian noted that the AdHoc Committee found that:
 - The Playa Vista community is diverse.
 - The two elementary schools Playa Vista would relieve are also very diverse; one school with a majority of students who identify as African American and the other school with a majority of students who identify as Latino.

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- Playa Vista Elementary School can be a financially viable and that compared to the costs of LCS and LCW, Playa Vista may cost Larchmont Schools less to operate.
- Public record indicates that per pupil fundraising in surrounding public schools could support our model
- Brian noted that if the Board submits a letter of intent and Larchmont Schools is chosen to partner with LAUSD in PSC 3.0, the required budget for March through December 2011 would be \$114,500 and the required budget from January through June 30, 2012 would be \$210,000
- Brian noted that no PSC funds would come from the CAO, LCS or LCW budgets because this would be a separate school cluster, and that the required funding would come from Playa Vista Capital or other outside funding partners.
- Gene noted that while PSC 3.0 is a phenomenal opportunity, Playa Vista Elementary is not being constructed by parents out of the need for an excellent public education, as Larchmont Schools was founded, and that this difference may result in a different type or level of parental involvement within the community than Larchmont Schools currently experiences.
- Brian noted that Playa Vista Elementary school would have a separate charter and would be a separate cluster that would grow in to a K-12 cluster pattern.
- Kriste noted that the PSC opportunity is far more politically charged than other opportunities LCS has participated in previously and that Playa Vista Elementary would require a middle school and a high school much more quickly than Larchmont Schools did.
- Brian noted that the PSC decision making process is complex, citing that the process involves presentations to the public, a public vote, a review of the competitors by the LAUSD Superintendent and a final decision from the Board of Education.
- Brian noted that if the Board decides to pursue PSC 3.0, he would like to request the creation of a Board sub-committee for two reasons: to assist in the expansion process in order to remain focused on Larchmont Schools and to help the Playa Vista community identify with the Board as the leaders of Larchmont Schools.
- Brian presented the Public School Choice resolutions.
- Kristin noted that the Board should consider the effect of such a political bid on our community building efforts at LCS and LCW as we strengthen and expand.
- Alicia motioned to approve the resolution to submit a letter of intent; Marya seconded. The motion was approved.
 - Alicia- aye
 - Gene- aye
 - Richard- abstain
 - Nicole- abstain
 - Danny- aye
 - Marya- aye
 - Heather- abstain
 - Kriste- aye

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- Marya motion to approve the second PSC resolution with an amendment that continued participation in this process was contingent on the ability to secure the right talent and leadership. Gene seconded. The motion was approved.
 - Alicia- aye
 - Gene- aye
 - Richard- abstain
 - Nicole- aye
 - Danny- aye
 - Marya- aye
 - Heather- abstain
 - Kriste- aye

10. Public Comment

- An LCS parent noted that PSC requires careful consideration and that the same spirit that drives the Board to expand our own cluster also drives the Board to consider PSC and that it is important to be mindful of the potential risks involved.
- An LCS teacher expressed concern over measuring academic achievement data via ethnicity in addition to other metrics and wondered if this practice falls in line with the Larchmont Schools mission.

11. Executive Director Comments- there were none.

12. Board Chair Comments-

- Danny noted that the Board must complete Form 700 for public posting by March 23rd.
- Danny noted that he would like to create stronger engagement within the Board, beginning with governance and the on-boarding of new Board members through a structured orientation that includes education on good standing practices.

13. New Business

- Kriste asked that the Board ensure public comment is being held according to the Brown Act.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 P.M.