

Seven Hills Charter Public School Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday December 2, 2008
6:00pm – 8:00pm

Welcome

Meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM. In attendance: Donna Lemoyne, Jim Diggins, Rebecca Blodgett, Carlton Watson, Lee Cordaro, Cindy Krackovic, Gerald Yung, and Krista Piazza. Beth Gillis recorded meeting minutes.

Minutes

Minutes of the November 3, 2008, SHCPS Board of Trustees Meeting presented for approval.
Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes with the amendment of Gerald Yung's attendance:

Motion: Jim Diggins

Second: Lee Cordaro

All members voted in favor of the motion.

Public Comments

The BOT has allotted 15 minutes to those individuals from the community or staff who has notified the Board in advance that they would like to speak on a topic that may or may not be on the agenda.

1 Presentations:

- a. Character Education Program: Deb Langlois to present.
Ms. Langlois was unavailable; however, Ms. Piazza had some information to share regarding the Character Education Program. Ms. Lisa Dirsa, the Guidance Counselor, uses a literature base model that presents classic stories offering lessons that connect to our core values and demonstrate how those values look in practice. Students learn how their actions affect the things around them. In addition, Seven Hills has rolled out the Open Circle Program in grades K through 5. Funding for this program has been provided by a grant. Teachers attend a training session and then an Open Circle coordinator comes to the school to help facilitate those lessons in the classroom and offers feedback. Seven Hills has conducted similar workshops with the Rainbow Teachers so lessons are consistent with the strategies and cues learned in classrooms. Ms. Piazza referred to the Open Circle handout included in the board packet to highlight the types of lessons taught by the program. She pointed out that Seven Hills is "giving students the skills and practice they need before events happen so they are better prepared."

In Junior Academy, the book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* has been used in the past for their Character Education Program; however, the instruction is not being offered due to the time allotted to the College Team activity. The *Habits* are being taught in the guidance section, but will not stay this way. Seven Hills' needs teacher buy-in to get back to the curriculum. The program starts by addressing the inner self and moves outward to address issues in the world around us. This year, a new SHELL group was introduced. Students Against Violence Education (SAVE) meets every morning to design lessons and then introduce them in the classrooms. Many of the lessons designed by Guidance are passed into the classrooms from the students.

b. Integration of Arts and Tech

Although the Technology Integration Specialist, Mr. Belanger, was not available to attend the Board meeting, Ms. Piazza was able to highlight uses of technology at Seven Hills. A technology-based tutorial has been established to provide direct instruction in the classrooms. This way, students can break into smaller specialized groups. While a teacher works with one group, others are engaged in programs that have been specifically designed for them. Smart Boards are used in the classrooms to make the instruction more interactive. There are built-in lessons but teachers are able to create their own based on their specific needs. Seven Hills’ SHELL group, the Tech Aces, have learned troubleshooting hardware and software to provide additional services in the building. Junior Academy has established TVNews and broadcast Seven Hills on YouTube each month. Mr. Belanger also set up technology courses on YouTube to provide short lessons on computer basics. Ms. Blodgett pointed out that these are excellent example of dissemination of best practices.

c. Improvement Planning

Although the Improvement Plan will be discussed in greater detail during the January and February Board meetings; Ms. Piazza wanted the Board to be aware that there will be 3 areas of focus: Guidance, Departmentalization of Grades and Succession Planning.

The Guidance Department currently has Ms. Dirsa and two interns to provide support. Several models were reviewed and Ms. Dirsa is most excited about the model that suggests breaking up the grades with two full time counselors – 1 for K through 4, and 1 for 5 through 8. Changing the counselor mid-academy makes the most sense since there are so many changes and adjustments during the transition into Junior Academy.

Ms. Piazza presented the departmentalization model suggested by the National Math Panel. The model is described as “family friendly” and would provide flexibility to teachers interested in working half days. It would take a great deal of planning, but the model has received a good deal of approval from the Leads and Coaches. It was suggested by the Board that the model be piloted to determine its potential. The model would look like this:

	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3 (Strongest Teacher)
4 th grade	M/S ½ day 4-1	E/SS 4-2	E/SS ½ day 4-3
	M/S ½ day 4-2	E/SS 4-1	E/SS ½ day 5-3
5 th grade	M/S ½ day 5-1	E/SS 5-2	M/S ½ day 5-3
	M/S ½ day 5-2	E/SS 5-2	M/S ½ day 4-3

Succession Plans for the Teaching Assistants will be a primary discussion in meetings to come. Ms. Piazza stated that many of last year’s TA’s became this year’s teachers. She suggests that Seven Hills’ consider implementing a “Grow Your Own” program and support our TA’s by offering scholarships opportunities to those pursuing teaching degrees. Seven Hills could offer financial support in exchange for a contract locking in a certain number of years of employment.

Subcommittees are working on other Improvement Plans that will be presented in the coming meetings.

1)2) **Board Report:**

- a. Board Work Plan: School Improvement update plan will take place at the January and February meetings. The Board Work Plan will be revised when Subcommittees present their reports.

- b. Update on recruitment – Mr. Watson has some contacts and continues to work on recruitment.

~~2)3)~~ **Old Business:**

- a. Audit, final bound version provided
Kevin Petrosino from Tofias was schedule to present but was unable to attend this Board meeting. His presentation was rescheduled to the January meeting.

~~3)4)~~ **Executive Session:** Executive Session was not called due to the absence of Mr. Petrosino from Tofias.

5) New Business:

- a) MCPSA Delegate Assembly - Summary of the information obtained at the delegate assembly was provided by Cynthia Krackovic, and included in the Board packet. The two main issues addressed at the assembly were unionization and the current state financial crisis. The bottom line is that Seven Hills needs to be prepared for potential financial crisis. A three phase budget cut strategy was outlined in the information presented.
- b) Staff Meeting regarding state financial crisis – A memo outlining the current state financial crisis and the measures that SHCPS will be prepare to take was handed out to the staff and a copy was included in the Board packet. Ms. Piazza reported that there was not much feedback from the staff after the meeting. Staff is generally aware of the economic climate and was not surprised that the school may also face financial difficulty in the coming months.

Mr. Watson called for a vote by the Board to accept the 3 phase proposal
Motion to accept recommendation: Rebecca Blodgett

Second: Jim Diggins

All members voted in favor of the motion.

- c) Annual Staff Holiday Party invitation was extended to the Board Members. It will be held at Vinny T's on Friday December 5, 2008 from 3:30pm to 6:00 pm.

6) Financial Report

- a) Personnel Update presented, there were no questions
b) Enrollment Report as of 11/26/08: 674 enrolled waitlist 243, ADM 679
c) Cash Balances: October 2008, presented, there were no questions
d) October 2008 Balance Sheet and P/L, presented, there were no questions.

7) Other Business

Mr. Watson wishes to thank Rebecca Blodgett for her service on the Board. Rebecca Blodgett put forth her formal resignation, and this will be her last meeting.

Motion to adjourn: Lee Cordora

Second: Rebecca Blodgett

Meeting adjourned at: 7:05 PM

Next meeting: Tues., January 6, 2009

Minutes respectfully submitted by:
Elizabeth Gillis

Administrative Assistant