



# DISCOVERY

## CHARTER SCHOOL

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

### II. Call to order and Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm in the gym at Discovery Charter School

Lisa Gonzalez, Ryan Schoffemeer, Miranda Wilkening, Jessica Lynch, Kelly Hunt Vander Vliet, and Mylese Tucker were present.

Lori Knox-Lindsay, Suzanne Radzik and Tiana Clark were absent

Debra Weller and Greg Guernsey were present from Discovery Administration.

### II. Student and Staff Recognition

Debra Weller introduced the Students of the month.

Kindergarten - Vinay Jain

First Grade - Siri Pradeep

Fifth Grade - Xavier Taylor

Sixth Grade - Riggs Llano

Seventh Grade – Lucy Bohacek

Eight Grade – Sep Kolosci

Staff of the Month – Mrs. Fox

The meeting was moved to the Barn where Lori Knox-Lindsay and Allan Gabriele from The Gabriele Group joined the meeting at 6:15.

### **III. Mission and Vision**

Jessica Lynch read the mission and vision.

### **IV. President Update/Announcements**

Lisa Gonzalez stated that the board is always looking out for what is best for the students. Sometimes Board members get flack about some of the decisions that are made, but we do this job because we are looking out for what is best for the school and the students.

### **V. Financial Report**

Kiki Kourkovic joined the meeting via phone at 6:30 to discuss the financial report.

We received the last of the installments from the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary Schools Relief) Grant. The balance sheet shows that our cash position is up. The bottom line for January shows that we came in below budget. Fluctuating year to year textbook fees contributes to the budget variances.

Alan Gabriele addressed the Board's questions concerning the CD rates and the Huntington Bank maturity rates.

- CD's
  - The Chase Bank CD has an interest rate of 3% on \$240,000.
  - The Centier Bank CD has an interest rate of 4.5 % on \$500,000.
  - Budget pressure is reduced by having the CD's.
- Huntington Bank is the trustee for our Bond which has a \$6.5 million balance.
  - The bond is structured to have a 10 year interest only payment.
  - Starting in January of 2026, we will have to pay principal and interest, escalating the payment from \$50,000 per month to \$62,000 per month. We want to be ready for that.

Operations through the first 7 months of the fiscal year leave us with a \$161,000 positive surplus. We are in a good cash position. The audit was delayed because outside auditors did a deep dive into ERTC. (Employee Retention Tax Credit)

Lisa Gonzalez asked about refinancing the bond or looking at other education bonds. Allen Gabriel said the Finance Working Group is looking into options.

## **VI. Consent agenda**

Lisa moved to approve the consent agenda minus the staff report. Ryan Schoffelmeer seconded the motion. Unanimously approved

## **VII. Public Comment**

Sarah Snider

1402 Indian Boundary Rd

Chesterton, IN 46304

630-270-9426

Sarah Snider is a Discovery parent and expressed that there were certain reasons why her family chose Discovery. With some changes that may or may not happen with the vote this evening, she is worried that choosing Discovery was the wrong decision. She wants to volunteer and help, but wants to make sure she is making the best decision for her children and would like the Board to make sure all decisions are made with the students in mind.

Martha Gallup

252 Arbor Drive

Chesterton, IN 46304

508-207-3260

Martha Gallup commented on the proposed changes to school days next year going forward. She asked that everything be taken into consideration. Martha is not happy with the shortened lunch break and shortened recess. She doesn't like seeing loss of outside time. Every grade has trouble getting through the lunch line and has trouble having enough time to sit down and eat and she does not want to see even less time available. There is a recommendation by government agencies that children have 20 minutes to eat, from the time they sit down to the time they finish.

## **VIII. Items for Discussion**

- I. Building maintenance - Greg Guernsey discussed applying for a new Indiana grant for 25 million (divided by ADM) for which all charter schools can apply. The money can be used for CPF (Capital Projects Fund) or can be used to pay off debt. Different options are being discussed with Allen Gabrielle and Mr. Lee. There is a lot of work that needs to be done on

the school. Mr. Guernsey has asked the staff for project ideas that include a generator, new windows, plumbing, and pavement fixes. Discovery would be eligible for around \$363,000.

II. Advisory Committee

- Previous Board Members

Lisa Gonzales spoke with Linda Simon and Laurie Metz and they are interested and willing to be on the Advisory Committee. They will be part of the discussions, but will not vote in matters requiring a vote.

Ryan Schoffelmeer expressed his concern that there must be one voice coming out of the advisory committee.

- PAC

The PAC Board position will become an advisory position starting July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024. The position will no longer be a voting position.

Miranda Wilkening stated that everyone on PAC is in agreement with the change.

III. Staff Social Media Policy

First reading of the policy to be put in place as a protection mechanism for the school. We will vote on the policy next month.

IV. Cleaning Contract

Mr. Guernsey wants to give a 30 day notice to end the contract with Bee Line Cleaning Services. He has been unhappy with the company's performance. To make a smooth transition, he posted the position opening and has 3 night custodians lined up to start as soon as Bee Line is terminated.

Lisa Gonzalez moved to give the notice to Bee Line and Miranda Wilkening seconded. Passed Unanimously.

V. Board Personnel Assistant Position

Jen Haubold is the new board personnel assistant. Thank you for all the technical assistance!

## IX. Matters for Approval

I. 2024-2025 School Calendar

Lisa Gonzalez moved to approve the 2<sup>nd</sup> option for the 2024-2025 School Calendar and Ryan seconded. Unanimously passed.

II. 2024-2025 School Times

Discussion about shortening the lunch and recess time and also eliminating early release on Wednesdays. Mr. Guernsey noted the main reasons for the changes is to allow time for

admin to meet with the staff, which is crucial to accomplish goals and move the school forward.

Lisa Gonzalez moved to approve the new school times and Ryan Schoffelmeer seconded. Unanimously approved

III. Technology Acceptable Policy

This policy was taken from the Handbook with no changes made.

Lisa Gonzalez moved to approve the policy and Kelly Vander Vliet seconded. Unanimously approved.

## **X. School report**

Greg Guernsey Reported:

Discovery received a \$117 check from Clark Construction celebrating their 117<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Employee Archie Gallup suggested Discovery receive the money, something he does every year. Many thanks to the Gallup family.

Kathy Hensley is coming in 2 days per week providing support for teachers and Mrs. Weller. She can test for students placed in special ed and is sitting in on a lot of IEP's. She is a great help for general ed staff and working with aids as well. She is also in the process of making a binder with resources on how to work with kids in the classroom to help the teachers.

Mrs. Weller reported on learning experiences, school activities and discipline noting that disciplinary actions have decreased.

## **XI. Working Group Update**

I. Development

Lotto is in two weeks on Wednesday. We will apply for a booth at the popcorn festival and also for Kids Day Out for Valpo parks. Looking to participate in Gnomes Day Out. Billboards still up and working on tours.

II. Finance

Meeting every month, pointing toward a capital budget. We are in a good cash position, but have a lot of capital expenditures coming up.

III. Policy

Meeting montly to update policies.

- IV. Diversity and Equity  
Met and are looking to have the Urban League come in and train the staff on DEI.
- V. Discover Our World 2024  
Preparations are coming along for DOW on March 1. Need volunteers!

## **XII. PAC Update**

- Ice skating Feb 4 Sold around 160 tickets, bringing in a revenue of \$500
- New Board Members
  - Emily Miulli, Vice President
  - Aimee Malinowski, Secretary
  - Jen Wilson
  - Awaiting results for Treasurer
- Looking for someone to take over SCRIP from Martha Gallup.
- Looking for new volunteer to oversee Care Closet donations.
- Give back night Portage Buffalo Wild Wings 5-pm in Portage.
- Voted to contribute \$3000 towards purchase of Freedom Trax if grant is approved.
- Celebrating the staff on Pi Day with pies from Marilyn's.
- Cash Accounts: PAC balance is \$35,726.98 and SCRIP balance is \$2849.14

## **XIII. Recognition**

- Thank you to Mrs. Haubold for taking time to get everything set up.
- Thank you to Jeremy Haubold for setting up tv's and all the electronics in the lobby.
- Thanks to the committee that help set up the National Jr. Honor Society.

## **XIV. Adjournment**

Lisa Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 7:54 pm.

# **Staff Social Media Policy**

## **Electronic Communication**

Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents/guardians for educational purposes using a variety of effective methods, including electronic communication. As with other forms of communication, staff members must maintain professional boundaries with students while using electronic communication regardless of whether the communication methods are provided by the school or the staff member uses his or her own personal electronic communication devices, accounts, webpages or other forms of electronic communication. DCS's policies, regulations, procedures and expectations regarding in-person communications at school and during the school day also apply to electronic communications for educational purposes, regardless of when those communications occur. Staff communications must be professional, and student communications must be appropriate. Staff members may only communicate with students electronically for educational purposes between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Staff members may use electronic communication with students only as frequently as necessary to accomplish the educational purpose as defined in this policy.

## **Voice Mail and Electronic Mail**

All electronic and telephone communication systems and all communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of DCS and as such are intended for teaching or other job-related purposes. Personal use should be kept to a minimum. Electronic or telephone communication systems may not be used to transmit messages that may be considered inappropriate under DCS's policies, including those prohibiting harassment. Employees are not permitted to use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless authorized to do so or unless they have received prior clearance from the Administration. DCS reserves the right to monitor any electronic, telephone, or other communications made using DCS systems or property.

## **Social Media Use**

An employee's personal or private use of social media may have unintended consequences. While the Board respects its employees' First Amendment rights, those rights do not include permission to post inflammatory comments that could compromise the Discovery's mission, undermine staff relationships, or cause a substantial disruption to the school environment. This warning includes staff members' online conduct that occurs off school property, including from the employee's private computer. Postings to social media should be done in a manner sensitive to the staff member's professional responsibilities. General school rules for behavior and communication apply.

Users who disregard this policy and its accompanying guidelines may have their use privileges suspended or revoked and disciplinary action taken against them. Users are personally responsible and liable, both civilly and criminally, for uses of technology resources not authorized by this Board Policy and its accompanying guidelines.

The Board designates the Executive Director and the Principal as the administrators responsible for initiating, implementing, and enforcing this policy and its accompanying guidelines as they apply to staff members' use of school technology and information resources.

In addition, Federal and State confidentiality laws forbid schools and their employees from using or disclosing student education records without parent consent. Education records include a wide variety of information, and posting personally identifiable information about students is not permitted. Staff members who violate State and Federal confidentiality laws or privacy laws related to the disclosure of confidential student or employee information may be disciplined.

Staff members who violate this policy will be disciplined, up to and including termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, DCS may report staff members to law enforcement and/or the local governmental Child Protective agency apparatus.