

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD
CAROLINA SCHOOL for INQUIRY
RICHLAND COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
September 18, 2007

Place and Time of Meeting

The regular meeting of the Carolina School for Inquiry Board was held at Carolina School for Inquiry, 7405-A Fairfield Road, Columbia, South Carolina, on Tuesday, September 18th, 2007 at 6:30 pm pursuant to notice having been duly given to the media and to all members of the Board in accordance with the rules of the Board.

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:45p.m., followed by a reading of the mission statement.

The following members were present:

Jeannie P. Eidson, B. Quinton Epps, Mark A. Roberts, Darlene S. Bell, Jonathan L. Moreno, *Additional attendees:* Tammie Clark, Stephanie Blackmon, Rick Blackmon, Kenya Johnson-Connor, DeAnna Bookert, Wanda L. Davis, Ashley N. Davis, Chantel Brown, Kathy Thomas, Terri Washington, Chris Richards, Robina Hayes, Sam Mokeba..

August Budget

Bill Moser of Kelly-Moser Accounting presented a letter to the Chair asking for an evaluation of his services. The Chair indicated that the Board would oblige. Mr. Moser presented the October Budget to the Board. Jeannie Eidson asked about Workman's Comp funding, the matter was clarified by Mr. Moser. Jeannie also asked about adjustments to the per pupil funding amount. Mr. Moser said it is up to date and Victoria added that the information in SASI is up to date and correct.

Mark Roberts moved to approve the August Budget. Darlene Bell seconded the motion and it carried without discussion.

Mr. Moser then asked permission to address the Board and permission was granted. He read aloud a letter to the Board stating his intentions to sue one of the parents for defamation. Jeannie responded to Mr. Moser encouraging him to try to resolve this matter in another fashion.

Mark thanked Mr. Moser for making the Board aware of the situation but cautioned that this was a personal matter between Mr. Moser and the parent and not a matter for Board discussion at this time.

Approval of Minutes

Darlene made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 28th Board meeting. Quinton Epps seconded. There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

Public Comments:

Tammy Clark (parent) spoke on behalf of Stephanie Blackmon. She spoke very favorably of Stephanie and expressed her regret upon hearing of Stephanie's intent to resign.

Stephanie Blackmon (teacher) asked permission to have her husband, Rick Blackmon, read a prepared statement. Rick read the letter out loud.

Robina Hayes (parent) spoke on behalf of Stephanie.

At this point the Board encouraged Stephanie to think about this matter further and offered their own words of encouragement and support. There was some back and forth questions and answers between the Board and Stephanie trying to find ways to help her and encourage her to stay.

Kenya Johnson-Conner (parent) spoke on behalf of Stephanie.

Chris Richards (teacher) thanked the Board for strong leadership and asked the current Board members to consider running again for the next Board of Directors.

Queen Burroughs-Bonaparte had submitted a letter in support of Stephanie.

New Business:

Victoria Dixon-Mokeba discussed issues pertaining to preparing our students for Middle School. Some middle schools will provide information on clubs and look for different types of assessment data in evaluating the children for placement. We should establish a way of helping our rising 6th graders through this process.

Darlene made a motion to enter executive session at 10:00pm to discuss personnel salary issues. Quinton seconded and the motion carried.

Mark motioned to adjourn executive session at 10:05pm. Quinton seconded. Having no further discussion, the motion carried.

Mark made a motion to approve the salaries as discussed in executive session for Martha Edwards. Quinton seconded. The motion carried without discussion.

Mark made a motion to adjourn at 10:06pm. Quinton seconded and the motion carried.

Lead Teacher's Report

Carolina School for Inquiry

"Where Learning Begins With Wonder"

The mission of the Carolina School for Inquiry is to teach a diverse population of children in an atmosphere of kindness that encourages active inquiry, fosters individual growth and promotes respect for self, others and the world in which they live.

Old Business:

Food and Nutrition:

- A convection oven was retrieved from the R1 warehouse. RCRC prepared all electrical work and the oven is ready for use in the cafeteria.

School Sign:

- FoCSI president, Kenya Cannon is still in the process of receiving bids for the school sign. She indicated to me that she made contact with a former FoCSI board member to retrieve previous bids to no avail. Once the bids are submitted we will proceed with the outlined suggestions per board meeting minutes.

Additional Playground Equipment:

- A basketball goal has been ordered for the playground. The cost of this equipment was \$1799.99. Once the equipment comes in we will contract with RCRC to have it installed.

Rigorous Sign in Procedures/Locked Doors

- This process is going well but with resistance from some families. We just try and reiterate the importance of stopping in at the front office to secure a name tag so that we know who is in the building and where at all times.
- All doors stay locked. Most families have complimented that they feel more secure knowing that it takes a little more effort to enter the building.

Girl Scouts

- We had over 18 girls attend the *Girls Night Out* meeting. Melanie is working diligently with families to get this project up and moving

New Business

Food and Nutrition

- On September 14, 2007 the state fire marshal inspected the oven and the facility where we were found in full compliance. We are now waiting for Imogene Clark from RD 1 Food services to complete their final inspection before beginning with warm breakfast and lunches. Chantel Brown was very instrumental in getting this project completed.
- Wanda and Ashley are keeping detailed records of the food that comes in to the facility daily. All food not eaten or used is documented accordingly and the district secures the food.
- We received an e-mail dated 9-11-07 to withdraw all milk with the expiration of 9-14. Somehow the milk was not completely homogenized before packing. We found several cases of strawberry milk with this date and discarded upon the district's order. None of our students had access to this milk.

- Students who receive subsidized meals or who pay full price receive notices bi-weekly of outstanding balances or credit notification.

School wide Rights and Responsibilities- A Social Curriculum

- Collectively as a staff we found the need to establish school wide rights and responsibilities in various areas on the campus. This is another explicit attempt to establish school community where the students take active roles in setting the expectations that we as a staff strongly hold them accountable. Wanda and Ashley led the discussions in the cafeteria. Chris and Terri led the discussions in the gathering area. Jackie and I led discussions about transitioning in the halls from one class to the other. Each special area teacher talked about the importance of respecting the space and themselves in their particular learning areas. Melanie led discussion about how we care for each other on the playground. We are in the process of having these charts published and posted in the appropriate areas in the school.

Media Center

Volunteer

- Kathleen O'keefe has agreed to volunteer each Tuesday in the media center. She volunteered at CSI last year in the media center. She is currently working to receive her degree in Library Science at the University of South Carolina.
- Kristen Maxfield has volunteered to work in the library to organize books and make it look more aesthetic for children.

Purchases

- I have a scheduled meeting to meet with a representative from Follet next week to purchase more books for the library. \$10,000 has been allocated in the budget. \$3,000.00 of this money will be used to purchase software so that we can have a more accurate data base as students check out their books.

Book Fair

- Our first Scholastic Book fair will begin on December 3, 2007. Mrs. Briddie Robinson will be coordinating this event. Profits from this sale will go directly into the school fundraising account to purchase more books for the media.

School Pictures

- School pictures were held on Friday, September 14, 2007. Classic Photography out of Anderson, SC conducted our shoot. The school tends to make a 30% profit from total sales. All monies raised from this effortless fundraiser will go toward class field experiences.

Community Service

- As you know Melanie organized the Walk for Life campaign. The school goal was set to raise \$250.00. We exceeded this goal in raising \$430 and some change. Melanie did a fabulous job leading this effort. One week was quarter day, dollar day and loose change day...students were encouraged to bring money to school...and they did! We have 18 people walking from CSI on October 6. Melanie suggested that we wear our school shirts to promote our beloved CSI.

Fall Gardening with Dr. Samuels

- Dr. Samuels has invited families and friends of CSI to donate and help plant flowers on CSI grounds on Saturday, September 22, 2007 from 9-12:00 pm.
- Dr. Samuels also secured another grant from RCRC in the amount of \$300.00 to help with buying plants for the garden.

Administrative SASSI

- Chantel has been attending mandatory SASSI meetings in through the district. The state is changing the process in which students are logged in to core subject areas. She has two more meetings scheduled next week and is keeping me abreast on all SASSI policy and procedures.

Principals' Meeting

- I attended a principals meeting through RD 1 with all administrators in the district. The focus included:
 - Procedures for employee dismissal using the ADEPT process
 - Interpreting PACT data and setting school goals to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) This information is embargoed until October 1. I will share CSI's results after this date.
 - Updates from SASSI per the above information. CSI was 100% in compliance. Kudos to Chantel.
 - Directives from the Superintendent.
 - These are mandatory meetings that are held monthly

Personnel

- Stephanie Blackmon resigned as Primary teacher for the 2007-08 academic school year. Her effective end date is September 28, 2007. She has agreed to stay on board for the remainder of September if needed. She will address the board in open session at the board meeting.
- We have interviewed one candidate for this position.

Special Education

Student Intervention Team (SIT)

- Tanya Wilson (Speech Pathologist) and Lindsey White (LD Resource) attended a mandatory special education meeting on September 6, 2007 at Midlands Math and Business Academy. The district confirmed that CSI is in compliance with all special education procedures. We were encouraged to send a list of all new students to the office of Marilyn Davis to check if students had Individual Assistance Plans (IEP) at previous schools. This has been done and we are waiting to hear back from the district.
- Verdie has agreed to be CSI's SIT chair. ☺

Services

- We have added two more students as receiving special education services. Both will receive speech and one will receive both speech and resource time.

Curriculum Connections

Dominie

- Teachers are in the process of completing the fall assessments of Dominie. Once the assessments are complete I will compile the data. The staff and I will use the data to drive instruction and will discuss our findings when we meet for curricular conversation. Trina and Clavis have assisted individual teachers on areas of interest. Many teachers had concerns about the spelling inventory. I will keep you abreast in my next report on the various strategies used to support the students' spelling needs.

Textbook Inventory

- I completed the textbook inventory per the state department of Education's request. I found many books not accounted for. CSI will be billed 460.00 for lost textbooks. I spoke with several folks at the dispensary and they based our inventory on information submitted last year.

Read Aloud/Picture Books

- Teachers received an allocation to secure read aloud texts from R.L Bryan. Most of their selections are content driven...which means that they use literature/picture books as a springboard to introduce concepts (science, social studies, mathematics, etc.) and ideas in a way that is more authentic and meaningful for children. This method also supports various learning styles: auditory, visual, tactile, left and right brained learners.

Classroom Observations

Community Building

- Teachers have been spending a lot of time the past couple of weeks building classroom community. Classroom community involves management, curricular structures, expectations, social interactions and academic learning. All have equal importance. I have been in all classrooms but have spent significant amounts of time in the Primary classes. Terri and Stephanie have really been engrossed into the Dominie assessment. It takes longer to assess the younger students.
- Chris and Melanie are partner teaching the science and social studies. Chris plans and leads the science and Melanie plans and teaches the social studies. Chris and Melanie are working smarter...not harder. While the one is teaching the other is supporting the learning that is taking place acting more as a facilitator. They students presented group projects of the 50 states to the school community.
- Verdie and Jackie plan together a lot into the hours of the morning. They both are working hard on focus study of the American Indian. They are finding authentic ways to tie other areas of the curriculum around this central theme and are being successful.

- All teachers are taking authentic kid-watching notes in all content areas which will ultimately reflect what the students know and can do on the narrative report card.
- We have purchased one video camera. We will use the tapes to critique and support student learning. This is a strong component of our curricular conversations for reflection and evaluation.