



Equity and Excellence for All Students

Old Town Academy K-8 Charter School Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting

MEETING LOCATION

2120 San Diego Avenue, San Diego, CA 92110

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

6:00 p.m. PDT

Call to order

A regular meeting of the Old Town Academy K-8 Charter School Board of Directors, held at 2120 San Diego Avenue, San Diego, CA 92110 on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, was called to order by Ken Morris at 6:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Elio Celentino.

Attendance-Board Members

Board Member	Present	Absent
Kenneth Morris, President	X	
James Gartland, Vice President***	X	
Ryan Callan, Treasurer	X	
Cathie Berlin, Secretary**	X	
Jon Centofranchi, Principal	X	
Gabriel Solis, Teacher Seat	X	
Sarah Ozeroff, Member	X	
Chris Celentino, Member	X	
Christopher Cole, Member	X	
Mark Burgess, Member**	X	

Elio Celentino, Student Member (non-voting)*	X	
Emma Denton, Student Member (non-voting)*		X

*Eighth grade students will be sharing one position, which is a non-voting position

**late arrival for roll call, but present for actionable items

***late arrival at 7:22 PM

7 of 10 Voting Board members were present at roll call, constituting a quorum. At time of voting, 10 of 10 Voting Board members were present.

Members of the public in attendance (as noted from sign-in sheet):

- Bob Hamm
- Nathalie Hirsch
- Monika Hanft
- Brett Weaver

Public comment

There were no public comments

Board member comments

Chris Cole commented on the school start times and that the studies have shown some differences between the younger grades and older grades with the suggestion that performance may be due to behavioral aspects. He had several articles that he was going to have scanned and would distribute to the board for reading.

Chris Celentino suggested reviewing the parent/student handbook and having an advisory committee formed for its review. Chris commented that OTA is a free public school, but was designed to operate like a private school in many aspects. He also commented that he felt that not everything in the school was to be made available to students without effort. If a good faith effort was not going to be put in, staff should not be spending a huge amount of their time to the 5% of parents/students not putting in the desired effort.

Ken Morris followed Chris Celentino’s suggestion and formed an advisory committee consisting of Cathie Berlin, Jon Centofranchi, Chris Celentino and Ken Morris. Laura Studebaker volunteered via Facebook Live and was later added to the advisory committee. Ken mentioned that the handbook was in much better shape than it was 2 years prior when huge revisions were made. Additions to school

philosophy and changes to the absence/tardy policy were to be made in addition to a few other areas. Ken acknowledged the Gala committee and the Foundation for all of the hard work that's been put into this year's gala, and encouraged every family to support the event by either buying tickets to the Gala, participating in the online auction, volunteering at the event or helping with the set up/clean-up process.

Cathie Berlin shared a positive thing which happened recently out of the second grade. One of the parents, Kate Swanson, led seminar regarding environmental issues, and had the students write letters to the White House. Each parent could receive a scanned copy of their kid's letter, and one of the parents, Courtney Miklusak, was so proud of her daughter's letter that she forwarded it to her family. Her aunt runs a non-profit called WorldLife, Inc. and will donate \$5,000 to the Foundation, to be used for a native planting project on the school campus or a nearby public place.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the prior meeting of March 15, 2017 were not available to the Board or for any members of the public to review and comment on. Motion to approve the minutes of the prior regular meeting of the board dated Wednesday, February 15, 2017, was deferred until the May 17th Board meeting.

Reports/Presentations for Discussion items only (with possible action to be taken)

Treasurer/Fiscal Report: Ryan Callan.

Ryan Callan reported that March isn't closed out yet, so as soon as it is, he will get it out to the board for review. He went through the check register for the prior month. Ken Morris moved the action item up in the agenda in order to have it follow Ryan's presentation.

Action Item: Approve 3/11/17 to 4/14/17 Check Register listing (distributed in advance of Wednesday, April 19, 2017)

Motion was made to approve the check register as presented

Motion made by: Chris Celentino

Motion seconded by: Chris Cole

Vote: 9 of 10 voting board members were present and voted to approve the motion, the motion carries.

Principal's Report: Jon Centofranchi.

Jon Centofranchi discussed the food drive which occurred at the end of March and was organized by Girl Scout Troop 4152. Eight 7th graders attended the school leadership conference at Our Lady of Peace, these students had to write essays to Mr. C as to why they should attend. It was a very worthwhile endeavor for all who attended. At the last coffee with the principal, he discussed and shared the LCAP with the parents who attended (and with Mark Burgess who also attended). We will be adding MAPP goals to the state smarter balance goals, which was a parent suggestion. The LCAP should be ready to present to the board at the next board meeting. Mr. C would like to post the draft LCAP and solicit parent input. Middle school teachers met to discuss the master schedule for next year. They are considering a four block option of having each class meet twice as long, but every other day. This would provide some advantages to doing classwork, projects, some homework, during one block of the school day. He recently posted and interviewed for a full time music teacher position, all of the top candidates have experience in a variety of instruments, so we're looking to add more than just piano. Strings, brass, woodwind, percussion, and voice are examples. The school is looking into the students having more choice as they get older as to which instruments they would like to focus on. There were a lot of really great ideas discussed about expanding the music program, and it's very exciting. Third quarter ended last Friday. All teachers turned in their grades. Mr. C goes over every student's report card to make sure everything is accurate. If he sees anything that looks incorrect, he will follow up with the applicable teacher. There was a technical glitch in second grade, where no matter what the teacher input for the art grade, it came out as an "F". No second grader got an F in art. The second grade students went on a field trip to the Natural History Museum in Balboa Park. He presented thank you letters to the board from the second grade students. Lastly, Mr. C. met with a representative from Echo Water Systems regarding the school's water. We are looking at replacing and updating the filtration system in all of our drinking fountains as well as the system in the kindergarten classroom. They are quite old, and the flow isn't great. They are putting together an estimate.

Teacher Liaison Report: Gabriel Solis.

Mr. Solis reported that there are a lot of projects going on at OTA right now, for example the 5th grade is working on a Western Expansion project; the 7th grade is working on a budget project; and Ms. Schlose has students working on a dissection project. There is also the poetry contest coming up, which students and teachers are preparing for. There are some service-oriented projects going on, for example the 2nd grade is working on some 3D toys for the auction, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit Rady Children's Hospital. Mr. Solis' global awareness class students are working on making blankets for orphans in Mexico. A lot of students really want to go and help distribute them, there's

been a lot of support. Chris Celentino mentioned that the board member from that foundation, who Mr. Solis has been working with has bought VIP tickets to our gala. Mr. Solis said that she is a huge supporter of our school, and says it's the best she's worked with. Grandparents' Day is next week, and the students and teachers are busy preparing. There are some big field trips coming up as well. Chris Cole thanked Mr. Solis for the time he spends tutoring the students after school. Chris Celentino commended our school for its dissection program, and mentioned that not only are most public schools doing away with dissection, even many of the private schools have moved away from it due to the expense. This is something that really makes our school stand-out, and hopefully parents and families can get behind it and support it with their donations.

Office Manager's Report: Nathalie Hirsch.

Nathalie Hirsch gave a quick update. The lottery will be held on Friday (April 21) after school in the computer lab, run through School Mint. We have a total of 259 applicants. We currently have over \$70,000 in potential income lost due to absenteeism. Our new computer systems have arrived. We have an interim audit tomorrow with our third party auditor, Alexis from Christy White Associates.

Student Representative Report: Elio Celentino.

Elio Celentino reported on OTA's first ever talent show, and commented how the entire thing, from conception to production was student led and student run. They had better than anticipated attendance at the evening show, and the entire school showed up for the 9 a.m. show. It raised about \$250, and was an overall success. The 8th graders took good notes for the benefit of future 8th grade classes, so that this might become a new tradition at the school. In the yearbook elective, Elio's mom and Mrs. Gabrielli have been working with the students to hand it over, since they have done the yearbooks for the past several years. Chris Cole and Cathie Berlin both commended Elio and other 8th graders for all of their hard work for the talent show. Both board members mentioned that they saw Elio at work behind the scenes.

OTA Strategic Planning Advisory Panel Report: Ken Morris.

Ken Morris updated the board on status of the strategic plan. Jon Centofranchi and Meredith Lurie have put together a rough, rough draft which the advisory committee will review, revise, and then present to the board. The goal is for the board to have looked at it and revised it before the end of the school year. The goal is also to have this be a living document that guides the school as it progresses.

Real Estate Advisory Panel Update: Chris Celentino (James Gartland was not yet present)

Chris Celentino updated the board as to the current state of the real estate options available to the school. We seem to be at a crossroads. SDUSD offered a space which would only accommodate about 80% of the current OTA students, on a shared site with another school. CCSA has tried to negotiate on our behalf, and SDUSD is not open to negotiation. We have heard from our consultant, Scott Barnett, that SDUSD may be moving quickly to do an RFP for the Fremont site down the street. The RFP would be for the development of the undeveloped part of the property per a long term ground lease. In other words, SDUSD would like to monetize the space, regardless if it ends up being a hotel or a school. The political pressure to use this land for a nearby highly-functioning charter school seems to pale in comparison to SDUSD's \$130 million budget shortfall. Mr. Barnett will work to get us the inside track to any potential opportunities regarding the site. Ken Morris updated the board to the fact that Scott Barnett mentioned that SDUSD is looking at splitting the site and our chance of getting the site may depend on our willingness to share it with a commercial enterprise. Scott also told Ken that he owes the school a few hours of work per our previous contract, and will investigate the potential regarding any RFP for the site. Chris Celentino mentioned that the Old Town Chamber of Commerce would love for our school to get this site, particularly if we could bring back the "4th graders visit Old Town" tradition that existed in San Diego for so many years. Regarding the upcoming action item, Chris Celentino recommends that the board reject the SDUSD Proposition 39 Decision. Chris Cole asked a detailed question as to the specifications that the school is looking for and the price the school can pay. Chris Celentino provided a formula for calculating the number: 70% of what OTA is currently paying for rent, on a per-student basis, multiplied by the number of students we could put at the site. This calculation would avoid a budget shortfall and take 50% of the pressure off of the parent foundation. This way, the parent foundation isn't funding the 'gap', they are funding the 'growth'. The current rate is \$35,012.64 per month based on 255 students. Mark Burgess asked as to the school's appetite to go after private funding, commercial funding. Chris Celentino responded that we are open to these types of options. The decision item was made to move the action regarding the SDUSD Proposition 39 decision item up in the agenda.

Motion was made to reject the current proposition 39 proposal, and to invite SDUSD to a dialogue to discuss our needs for the coming year.

Motion made by: Chris Celentino

Motion seconded by: Cathie Berlin

Vote: 9 of 10 voting board members were present and voted to approve the motion, the motion carries.

Safety Advisory Panel Update:

No new information to report.

OTA Board Election Advisory Panel Update:

Sarah Ozeroff was reelected to a new three year term. The board congratulated Sarah.

OTA Parent Foundation Update: Monika Hanft

Monika Hanft reported to the board that the online auction was launched yesterday. We're doing a few things differently this year, for example the online auction will close after the gala. She encouraged families to purchase tickets if they haven't already done so. We're going to have mobile bidding for the art items from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. on the night of the gala. We have a really great raffle this year, we have a year of white wine, a year of red wine. We also have amazing things on our online auction this year. She encouraged families to bid on items, and spoke of all of the items that the gala has funded in the past. This year, we'd really like to build some type of playground structure for the students.

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

No comments.

Closed Session – With possible action to be taken

The board entered closed session at 7:22 p.m. regarding:

- Conference with Legal Counsel; Pending litigation--OTA v. FPLG (legal counsel related to former Donahue matter)
- Conference with Legal Counsel re Donahue Settlement Agreement
- Conference with Principal on former student issues
 - IEP provision dispute
 - Action Item: Ratification of Settlement in IEP provision dispute
- Conference with Principal on staffing and salary issues

Report on closed session items

The board came out of closed session at 8:55 p.m. and had the following information to report:

The board voted 10-0 to ratify the settlement noted on Agenda item 8C (IEP provision dispute).

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.
