

Volunteers Common Link  
2/10/2010  
Drinkward Center Conference Room

Attendance:

Megan Bingham, Jan Massaro, Debbie Rischitelli, Susan Phillips, Teri Beatty, Eileen Pilkenton, Courteneay duBrowa, Carey Killian, Kim Jensen, Nancy Keates, John Nakamura, Kristin Bradley, Diane Polsker, Will Ilcisin, Lynn Mawe, Susie Gundle, Alicia Morissette, Michele Ackerman, Kathy Layendecker, Tom Wheelock, Scott Hardister, Kim Bissell, Chris Riser, Jordan Elliott, Taizoon Doctor, David Lowell, Sarah Grewe, Janet Duffie, Pat Trunzo, Phillip Craig, Kathy Layendecker

Opening: Phillip Craig

**Kathy Layendecker**

Director of Marketing and Communications

The director of marketing and communications has been chosen, Marty Jones. Most of his career has been in film and advertising. Some of the exciting things he has done is create a film production company in Virginia for the governor and an advertising campaign for Tyler Perry's *House of Payne*. Marty has three children that will be attending OES and they will all be here next week.

Lower School Head Search

We are in the process of putting together a search committee to find our next Lower School head. The NAIS conference is coming up in late February and we will be meeting potential candidates at the conference and doing preliminary interviews. We met with Lower School parents last week and asked what they would like to see in a Lower School head. There were many helpful comments. One interesting question was if we knew a public school administrator could they apply. We would definitely consider local eligible candidates.

Events

\*"Get Schooled" was last Friday night, thank you to the organizers it was a huge success. There were almost 90 people who attended. It was a great opportunity to pull our parents together.

\*Tonight is our Finance Forum. The new Finance director will be presenting how we put our budgets together.

\*The Fundraiser for Haiti is coming up on February 16<sup>th</sup>; Phillip will be covering this and giving details. 100% of the money will go to Haiti. Deadline for the meal is this Friday (2/12/10) and it will be a traditional "pancakes" for dinner Mardi Gras theme. This is another great opportunity to bring all of our community together as well as the Lunar New Year celebration on 2/21/10.

\*Science Fair will be open to the public this year for the first time. There are amazing projects to see.

## Calendar Changes

I have gotten a lot of feedback from the change we made to the school calendar. The communication and process around the change was not as good as it could have been. We have been looking for over a year at making changes. We didn't have an intention of moving the days until we had an opportunity to talk with the community but with Rosh Hashanah being when it is we felt we needed to move it. We did consider extending the school year but decided it was premature.

Kathy was surprised that we hadn't been planning our calendar out farther in advance. We are going to meet this summer and plan the next 3-5 years so parents will know start and end dates at least 1-year in advance. We are committed to communicate better about the changes in the future.

Tom Wheelock: Response

We are looking at the time and energy of teachers and staff throughout the year. We need time during the year to talk about curriculum and plan professional development as well. We also need to look at the kids and when a long weekend is really necessary to re-energize so they have good energy while they are here.

Kathy: We are not shortening the school year. The days have actually increased at OES over the last 5 years (4 in LS, 6 in MS, and 10 in US). There are approximately 180 teaching days, which is higher than most Independent schools. We want to optimize the educational program and need time to meet with faculty to make progress.

Sarah Grewe: There are a lot of traditions that the families may have around Labor Day weekend. It isn't fair that we were not given a chance to talk about this.

Courteneay duBrowa: I haven't heard from any 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents all year and yesterday I heard from 7 families that were not happy with this decision.

Eileen Pilkenton: As I had discussed with you, Kathy, it is important to keep the grade reps informed about changes like this, so we can be prepared to handle the questions and concerns. As a grade rep, I didn't have any information about this prior to the letter going out. We got the letter about the tuition increase, contracts and the change in calendar all within a very short time span. We need to have the important issues communicated better.

Phillip Craig: We have said publicly as a community that we want to honor our religious commitments. Rosh Hashanah is important and we want to honor it.

Carey Killian: Is there a way to honor Rosh Hashanah without making the change?

Kathy Layendecker: There are kids in the US who would not be able to go on their fall trips.

Tom Wheelock: Anne Marie also has said how important the beginning days of school are.

Jordan Elliott: The bell tower ceremony is a tradition that we didn't want to stagger.

Kathy Layendecker: We talked about adding the days at the end but it pushed us to June 24<sup>th</sup> which we felt was too late. The biggest challenge for the change in calendar was for working parents. There aren't camps in the fall for kids if we pushed out the start date.

Eileen Pilkenton: As I mentioned, I think you need to communicate more clearly to parents how you came up with your decision. This goes back to lack of transparency.

Susan Phillips: There have been some challenges with scheduling. It's hard to do the schedule ad hoc it should be done long range. In the United States higher institutions are receiving more highly qualified applicants from other countries. This puts a lot of pressure on applicants from the United States because of the added applicants. College prep in other countries is 250 days per year and we need to look at how competitive we need to be.

Will Ilcisin: Have we considered going to a "year round" calendar?

Kathy: Yes we have and research shows there are benefits for the kids. We have someone coming to talk about our calendar and schedule later this spring.

Alicia Morissette: Was there any thought in moving the trips to the next week and keeping the dates the same?

Jordan Elliott: Yes but we want to keep the trips the first thing we do so it doesn't throw off the rest of the school year. The trips and their placement in the school year are a very intentional and important part of our US program.

Will Ilcisin: Can you have your trips the week before then have the rest of the school start as normal?

Jordan: We want to stay consistent with the rest of the school.

### **Tom Wheelock**

We are aiming for an evening this spring where we lay out the path of the academic programs as we move forward. At the beginning of this year Kathy asked the faculty "What are our strengths? What skills will the kids need? How do you identify how the students are doing in the program?" We want to measure the quality control, how do we know its working? We then went into the visioning process. What is OES going to be in the next 10 years that distinguishes it from other schools? We are progressive and we push the envelope. We have a nationally known religion and philosophy department; there aren't many schools that do this as dynamically.

The vision will articulate this and it is my job to put it in a context we can use. This is a school that defines itself by its divisions. Middle School kids have their own building and program; they are not a little Upper School. OES set up the Middle School very effectively. The piece that was missing was the curricular divisions. We are filling out the department chairs right now. We will have all of the chairs in place by the end of this month. They will be talking to the faculty about student outcomes.

We want to look at our curriculum across divisions. It's not really how our curriculum works currently. I think we should look at PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>. Curricular wise, we need to make a bridge, but more importantly we need to have it flow naturally in a better sequence.

Scott Hardister is looking closely at the health and wellness, English and history curriculums. What is it that the kids will need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in these areas and how can we structure the program. We are looking at foreign language and asking if we should introduce Mandarin in the Lower School. Should there be an immersion program? Should we have a school within a school? Should we bring kids from China here for 3 months? Should we have teacher exchanges in the summer to work with our teachers about curriculum? We are looking at a lot of different possibilities.

In Upper School we are looking at science projects going through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Is it right for everybody? Toward the end of Upper School can the kids blend their research project or course of study to take what they learn in the classroom and carry it out into service in the community?

Starting last year we started looking at the Middle and Upper School calendars. What is healthiest for the kids and academic program and how do we budget our time most effectively? This April we are bringing in someone to help us look at our daily, weekly and year long schedules. When should kids be in school throughout the year? We will get feedback from the consultant then we will get feedback from parents.

Department Chairs for:

English

History

Science

Math

Religion & Philosophy

Music

Visual & Performing Arts

Physical Education

World Languages

We will be working on an Educational Philosophy that will arch over the entire school.

Diane Polscer: Regarding grade deflation, only 6 kids got a 4.0 in the last several years. Are we doing a disservice to our kids by deflating their grades?

Tom Wheelock: We will be looking at the grading system this year. When we look at the kids and where they are going to college the institutions know how rigorous our program is.

Diane: Are you sure they know that? I don't think the bigger schools know.

Tom: I guarantee that they know. The first contact may not but the admissions people do.

Many colleges recalculate grades. We may say a particular student has a 3.8 and they will calculate it to 4.3 because they know the rigors of our program.

Jordan Elliott: We host about 100 regional representatives from schools across the country each year to make sure they know our program. We are proactive in establishing a connection.

### **Jordan Elliott**

Hope Stevens, a teacher that was injured a few weeks ago at school, is recovering well. She is getting better and our community response was amazing including meals, visitors and support.

Midwinter Madness is underway with powder-puff football, boy's "powder-tuff" volleyball, Open Mic Night as well as other events. This afternoon we begin conferences for sophomores and juniors. Recent comments were written and sent out successfully on line. Get Schooled event happened last week and was a big success. Thank you to those of you who put this together. Arts Week is coming as well as the One-Act plays, you can buy tickets on line. Students wrote, cast, directed and staged these plays and the tickets are going fast. Science Fair is March 5<sup>th</sup> and there will be more opportunities for parents to see the research work.

### **Scott Hardister**

We have noticed that this is one of the best semesters in a long time. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are great leaders and the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades are following. We had a social and watched the Hope for Haiti concert with over 120 students. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade conferences were last week and we are looking at the cadence of the communication around these. 6<sup>th</sup> graders received their grades and comments. Preparation for the Science Fair for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades is in full swing. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade musical is coming up in March.

We are looking for opportunities to get grade levels together. Service Learning is coming up next week. At our long Tuesday advisory we will be doing activities over the next few weeks. In honor of arts week on the 19<sup>th</sup> we have Service Learning in the morning then from 1:00-2:00 the kids will be doing different mini art classes with mixed groups of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

John Nakamura, Debbie Rischitelli and Melanie Clark planned a family fun night a few weeks ago and it went really well, thank you for planning. 150+ people attended including lots of dads.

### **Phillip Craig**

Some information about the Hope Stevens accident: The school worked very well to take care of Hope. The immediate response was impressive on all levels. We re-routed the LS and MS students to keep the area available for medical and emergency response. Teachers and faculty at the time of the accident all did an impressive job taking care of Hope and following appropriate emergency response.

The Concert for Haiti: The All-School Service Learning committee looked into how we could best serve the situation in Haiti. OES's response to situations such as Haiti is "second wave" (waiting until after the first response is over and providing appropriate and necessary supplies and support). We are looking at many ways to provide this "second wave" of support such as the possibility of partnering with a school in Haiti this fall and looking to the future to assess how we can help as a community. In the meantime, this opportunity arose to hold this concert event on Tuesday. There will be dinner in the dining room. Come and have dinner even if you don't come to the concert (especially for those with younger children). Former OESian, Patrick Lamb and his band will be playing as well as many OES music groups. Todd Ulmer, an OES parent and doctor, and Kathy McCoy, former OES parent, have just returned from Haiti with Northwest Medical Teams and will be sharing some of their experiences during the last couple of weeks in Haiti. The last Medical Teams NW reps have just left the tsunami area in the Philippines, they keep up long term until the areas are able to sustain on their own.

Bill Lamb's band will be playing at The Raccoon Lodge after the concert for Haiti. You can pay by charging your account or bring cash. You can also pay directly to Medical Teams International to take us out of the link. We are looking at a potential Winterim trip to Haiti next year.

### **Teri Beatty: Auction**

We are ramping up with only two months to go. We are in our procurement push to get everything in by the end of the month. We are still looking for a warm destination, if you hear of something please let me know.

We are auctioning job shadows this year. There will be six opportunities. They will be presented in the Easel section of the auction and will list age restrictions if any, and details.

Day at Nike - see a shoe that hasn't gone out yet  
Day with Brian Farriso – Director of the Portland Art Museum  
Day with a horse trainer  
Day with a veterinarian  
Day with KOIN 6 news  
Day with a local Chef

Seating: There will be two types of tickets sold, general admission and patron tickets. The Patron tickets will provide better seating at dinner and include a valet parking, preview party and entrance to the after party.

\$125 General Admission Ticket  
\$35 After Party ticket (if there's room)  
\$250 Patron Ticket which includes: valet parking, preview party and after party

On 4/1/10 April Fools Day we will be having a tie-dye party under the covered area up near the cafeteria from 3-5pm. Bring what you want to tie die, we will provide the dye and rubber bands.

Michele Ackerman is in charge of the auction volunteers, if anyone would like to help please contact Michele or Amber Krisky.

There will be a Special Appeal but it's a secret. We will most likely announce it at some point before the auction.

Kristin Bradley: Can we have something to send out to our grades to explain the details of the auction? Yes, Teri will be composing something to send out to all the parents soon.

### **Diane Polscer and Kim Bissell - FOESL**

GOBS (Great OES Book Sale) is coming up this spring. Book drop will be before and after Spring Break.

### **Alicia Morissette - Lower School PAL**

Our March meeting will be about healthy nutrition on March 5<sup>th</sup>  
5<sup>th</sup> graders are collecting shoes for Soles for Souls to send to Haiti, all sizes and kinds, gently used or new, all sizes. Drop off boxes are located throughout Lower School.

### **Jan Massaro**

On behalf of Susan Phillips and CDL, the next Books and Breakfast will be 4/23. Book: *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama.

Lunar New Year Celebration on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 3-5pm, there will be a potluck, puppet show (very large puppets from an internationally known theater), lion dance, arts and games, demonstrations and more. Please bring the whole family.

The Gallery will be having a sale next week with a portion of the proceeds going to Haiti

Kathy, it would be great if Marty Jones, the new Marketing Director, would come to the next VCL meeting to meet everyone.

Nancy Keates: There are several parents that have come to me with input that they would like to see Kathy Layendecker become the permanent head of school. Who should I pass this information on to?

Jan: Please direct those people/comments to Steve Grant or me and I will forward them to the board.

Please let me know if there is anything you'd like to talk about or see at the next or future meetings.