

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
October 25, 2011

Directors Present: Larry Garatoni, Tracy Graham, Steve Hartz , Vivian Sallie, Rob Staley
Absent: Suzanne Wiwi, James Summers
Also attending: Yolanda Turner-Smith, Charles Loeser, Kelly Nichols

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Career Academy of South Bend was held at the school, 3801 Crescent Circle, South Bend, Indiana, at 7:00 am on October 25, 2011, pursuant to notice posted at the entrance to the building.

- A. Call To Order: Larry Garatoni presided and called the meeting to order.
- B. Records & Review of Prior Meeting: Larry asked for approval of the minutes and the memorandum of the last meeting, on September 20. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes and memorandum were approved.
- C. Review Of Action Plan:
 1. Items A-B, "Complete Accounting Analysis" and "Hire Business Manager": Larry explained the accounting analysis has not been completed because the business manager/CFO who started at the beginning of the month quit after only a few days, saying the environment wasn't structured enough for him. So the search for a business manager/CRO has been resumed, there have been candidates identified. Rob said there's an association in Indiana for school business managers (IASBO – Indiana Association of School Business Officials), which could be a source of candidates. Larry said he'd look into that, and in the meantime, he plans to work with Yolanda and Kim Richardson, an accountant who works for Larry's company, to make some progress on the pro forma and breakeven analysis.
 2. Item C, "Complete Staff Survey": Larry explained he's preparing a survey of the staff, with the results to be sent to his office so that staff members won't be afraid their boss might know who's making a negative comment. The results will be tabulated and presented to the board as well as to the staff. This is described in the Staff Handbook, so the staff members will be expecting this. Management will then set up an action plan to deal with problems identified by the survey. Rob said there's a good online tool for this, "Survey Monkey." Larry said he'd looked at that & didn't think it was suitable, but an online option might be useful in the future. Larry said this type of survey should help demonstrate to staff members that the school takes their concerns seriously. Rob commented that Survey Monkey is also set up to allow parents to have input, The Crossing has had great success with it. Larry said that's worth looking into, he

wasn't aware it had that capability. Rob said "Survey Monkey" is also useful for getting student input. Yolanda will follow up.

3. Item D, "Setup Visit To A Crossings School For The Board" – completion date moved to 1/1/2012, desirable but not urgent.

4. Item E, "Investigate teacher evaluation process used by State and by The Crossing" - completion date moved to 1/1/2012, Yolanda is working on an evaluation process starting with the TAP™ (Teacher Advancement Program) approved by the Indiana Department of Education (and many other states), also taking into consideration the system Rob's organization has developed.

5. Item F, "Schedule meetings of students & business people" and Item G, "Set up mentoring program" – Yolanda reported she's following up and is in the process of implementing a mentoring program, which will be announced on the school website. There will be an online form for students/parents to ask for a mentor, and there will be an "expanded background check" (the same as required under Indiana law for teachers) for all mentor volunteers. Vivian commented that SBCA students attended a recent meeting of the 100 Black Men of South Bend organization (a good source for mentors, Vivian's husband is vice-president) and were very impressive.

6. Item H, "Improve Utilization of 90 minute blocks" plus Item I, "Insure proficiency of team leaders' use of project based learning" plus Item J, "Investigate use of videotaping team leaders in order to improve teaching techniques" plus Item K, "Have Academics Committee become functional" – these items are follow-ups from Rob's comments at the September 20 meeting. Yolanda reported that videotaping of team leaders as a tool for teacher development is underway, the majority of team leaders have been taped, there's been peer review, it's a beneficial process. Rob asked Yolanda what she would like the Board's Academics Committee (of which Rob is chair) to do. Yolanda said the committee might help as the school makes adjustments to its curriculum to be responsive to Indiana's implementation of new Common Core standards, being introduced this year for grades 3-12¹ - Suzanne and Rob, since they need to deal with that in their own schools, may have useful perspectives. Yolanda's team will attend IDOE training on the new standards in November, it would be useful to share thoughts after that. Yolanda said there's a lot of flexibility in the state's requirements, for example the common core standards (what students need to know) can be taught with a project based learning method. Rob said The Crossing's schools are still working on incorporating the new requirements, getting together makes sense, when Yolanda thinks it's appropriate.

¹ See IDOE explanation at <http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards/index.shtml>.

7. Item L, "Complete Strategic Planning For School" – Larry explained he will be starting a planning process, working with Yolanda and her team. Participation in the planning process by the board, other than approving the final result, is optional – it's a level of detail that board members may not have time for, but any member interested in participating is welcome. Larry explained the procedure he has in mind is to start by defining the goals that the school should aim to achieve in the next two years (consistent with what the board has previously approved and the school's charter), then come up with a gap analysis to identify what needs to be done to get there, which needs to be done by Yolanda and her team. After that's done, the result will be reviewed by the board. Tracy commented it might be useful to get student input on the plan. Larry said he hadn't thought of that, but it's a good point; in fact, it would be useful to get input from parents. Yolanda commented there's a student council and a Parent Teacher Organization, perhaps we should involve the leaders of those organizations.

D. New Business: Mission Question (Change To Agenda): Tracy asked Yolanda a question that ties into strategic planning but wasn't on the agenda: does the school have, or shouldn't it have a unique program distinguishing it from other schools? Yolanda said the most unique feature of the school will be the vocational program, as it's implemented for the higher grades, but the school will also be unique at the middle-school level in offering project-based learning, as the Project Lead The Way curriculum is implemented. The school's science labs will also be premier.

Tracy said while it's important to have a good general education program, he believes it's critical that the school have some form of unique appeal. Rob said that using the PLTW program will be unique, this will be the "Learning By Doing" school. Kelly said that while a unique appeal has a lot of merit, it's important not to be too narrow. Rob said "the package" has a lot of elements, starting with students and parents being empowered; hands-on learning; great science labs; unique vocational programs; there's a lot of uniqueness.

Tracy asked what kids the school is intending to appeal to? Kelly said that in her experience as a parent, a big problem for kids is being bored with school and turned off; it will mean a lot to be challenged and to do work that they see is relevant: that's a primary reason why the vocational program (for which Kelly will be largely responsible, when The Apprentice Academy moves into the SBCA building this winter) appeals to a lot of kids. Kelly said she believes the school is seen now as suited for kids who for various reasons didn't like traditional schools, but as the school gets better known and its programs mature, that will change, and the school will be increasingly seen as desirable even for kids who have done well at traditional schools.

Tracy said he doubts that. As he sees it, once a reputation develops, that tends to snowball and become more fixed as the school's image; the key moment is at the beginning, while the public is still making up its mind. Rob said that as the public sees it, any school that is "career" oriented or offers "vocational" programs is understood as

serving troubled students. Tracy said that's why he would like the school to have a focus such as programming, so that everyone understands that this is not just a school for kids who aren't doing well in other schools.

Steve said the feedback he's received is that what's attracted students (and motivated parents) is the appeal of learning by doing plus frustration with the existing schools, which is what's to be expected: for any new program, the people who switch to it are likely to be those who aren't satisfied with the alternatives.

Larry said he understands Tracy's point about having a special strength to attract even kids who are doing well in existing schools, and he sees Tracy's point that a focus on programming would make sense, it's something that the community needs.

Yolanda said what she's stressing is that the school's focus will provide students with a path to follow when they graduate. That may be a four-year college, the school will prepare kids well for that; but there are alternatives, and SBCA will be more focused on providing choices than a typical school. SBCA will be the "get ready for life" school.

Tracy said while that's what a good school should do, he believes there a risk that if we get a reputation as a school that's a "second chance" for kids who haven't done well in other schools, that will affect who we can attract; so an early reputation can have a big impact on what can be achieved. The time that there's flexibility is at the beginning: we need to define what we want to be and start taking steps right now.

Rob said unless we very clearly market ourselves "against" what the words "career" and "vocational" imply, those words alone will determine our reputation. Yolanda said that while there's some merit to that, anyone who looks into the school will see that it has a lot of value for high-achieving students as well as those who haven't done well in other schools, and as time goes on, that will become clearer to the public.

Tracy said he believes IT should be the school's focus, and that the school could have a unique strength in programming; but whether it's IT or not, the school should choose something in which it can be unique and attract successful students.

Larry said this is what the strategic planning process should decide. Tracy said he had an example of a strategic plan that he would send to Larry, done by Davenport University, for which Tracy is board chairman. Rob said he'd also like to see it. Larry said after reviewing it, he will contact everyone about scheduling a planning meeting. Yolanda said the school has video-conferencing capability, so members can participate even if they're out of town.

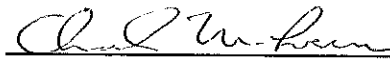
E. Treasurer's Report: Larry presented the report of expenses paid to-date, which upon motion duly made and seconded, was approved.

Rob asked if a charter school is required to obtain board approval of expenses before they're paid. Yolanda said in her experience with other charters, auditors have said that's required; if it's not done, that's an audit finding. Charles said that as indicated in the September 20 minutes, he reviewed Indiana statutes on school finance and found that the statute requiring approval prior to payment is not among the statutes which the charter school law identifies as applicable to charters. Charles said he'd sent a message to Ball State asking for confirmation of that conclusion, but BSU hasn't responded. Yolanda said the other charters she's been involved with have had the board approve expense after they're paid rather than before, and that's not prohibited, but it results in a comment on the audit report. Yolanda said she would send a copy of an audit from another school. Charles said he'd follow up with BSU and try to get an answer. Vivian said in her experience, there should be a form to be signed by all board members at each meeting, approving the list of expenses. Yolanda suggested the board should be given two lists: one with expenses already paid, another of expenses to be paid; the school shouldn't be restricted to paying bills only after approval, since that may create problems with vendors, but there are many recurring expenses, and it shouldn't be difficult to produce a list of coming expenses covering the great majority of what's to be spent. Steve suggested there should be some definition of expenses, perhaps a dollar amount, that will not be paid without prior board approval. Rob said in his organization, there's a limit of \$5,000, i.e., he can make payments of less than \$5,000 without prior board approval, anything more requires prior approval. Steve said the Finance Committee should write a policy on this & present it to the board for approval. Charles said since we need to get back to BSU with financial controls approved by an independent accountant, and Larry's identified the accountant we should use for that purpose, we should get the accountant's input in deciding on what our policy should be. Larry said if possible, we should do that with input from the new CFO, when we have one.

F. School Leader Report: Yolanda presented a written report (attached) and briefly reviewed it. Enrollment is currently at 155, 16 students have left, others have transferred in; transfers are typical at the beginning of the year.

Rob commented that as to students with disciplinary problems, The Crossing would be willing to accept students who otherwise would be expelled. That might be easier after The Crossing has a branch in the SBCA building.

G. Scheduling. It was decided that the next meeting will be December 12.


Charles M. Loeser, Assistant Secretary

School Leader Report For October 2011

Enrollment Summary

Total: 155

Total Withdrawals: 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 06 07 08 09 10 11 12

19. Transfer To Other IN ED. 1 8 7

25. Transferred Out Of State 1

Re-Enrollment: 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 06 07 08 09 10 11 12

1

Registration: 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 06 07 08 09 10 11 12

1 4 2

By Grade:

7th Grade 42

8th Grade 50

9th Grade 63

Race:

Multi-Racial 2/more races 14

Black 54

White 67

Hispanic 20

Gender:

Male 90

Female 65

Special Education: 30 Students, 20%

Zipcode:

46304 2

46514 2

46517 1

46544 2

46545 2

46554 1

46601 9

46613 12

46614 18

46615 5

46616 7

46617 2

46619	26
46628	57
46635	2
46637	7

Free and Reduced Lunch Breakdown:

114 Free/Reduced	74%
Free	93
Reduced	21

Staff

- Our first school wide Professional Development was held on 9/30/2011. Using hand held video cameras (Sony Bloggies), several team leaders were videotaped. We reviewed good classroom management, and provided constructive criticism for each team leader who volunteered.
- Ms. Smith (school Nurse) and Mrs. Whitaker (Social Worker) are organizing our parent volunteers. The next PTO meeting is Nov. 17th.
- Ms. Turner-Smith, Mr. Parsons, Mrs. Swoape, and Ms. Milby attended the Excellence in Teaching Conference at the University of Notre Dame. The conference provided extra support for promoting the 5 R's of School: Relevance, Rigor, Relationships, Responsibility, and Real Talk. We have incorporated the following tips:
 - Smile - As adults we can still smile and command respect.
 - Stand at the door and greet students.
 - Praise the effort that a team member puts forth, and not just the result. The bottom line is still important, but we can praise the strategy to learning (the effort to get the result). Remember praise must be specific, heartfelt, and has meaning.
 - Monitor your language: Limit the amount of sarcasm to the team members. If you don't have a relationship with someone, then sarcasm is perceived as just being mean.
 - Sum up the class, near the very end. You can take 2 minutes to determine what was the team member's favorite moment, least moment, etc.
 - Never embarrass anyone on purpose (peer or child).

Discipline

- We have one team member that is suspended pending expulsion. This student has been in one fight before, where she chased another student. We suspended the student then, and did not have another major incident, until yesterday. Yesterday, she threatened another student, parent, and Education Manager. Expulsion is warranted because:
 - The student would not own the bad language, nor the threatening of the parent or Education Manager. She denied, when several people corroborated the story.
 - The student has threatened another student off property. Apparently, she went to another team member and threatened her in her house.

Although this student is in the eighth grade, she poses a significant threat to others who do not share her views. We have directed mom to get support for her child. We will see what we can do to keep her learning, until a more suitable environment can be found.

- Because of progressive discipline, there has been an increase in out of school suspension (OSS). We have had 10 students serve OSS. Their days ranged from 1 to 5 days.

IDOE Reporting

Due Date

Status

Real Time

Submitted every week

Certified Employee	10/31	
Membership	9/16	Completed
Textbook Reimbursement	10/31	Working on the data to submit
Noncertified and Other Personnel	10/31	Will be complete this week.

School Infrastructure

- Currently, we are still working on our content filtering appliance. Until the device is secured, team leaders are monitoring team member use. Cost of the content filtering devison will range from 10-15k. This cost can be built into our e-rate application.
- To support our parents to pay for lunches online, we are working with our software company Mealtime to support online payments.
- The school website has been revamped.
- SchoolReach, our automated system reminder for phone calls, has been implemented. The system is used to notify parents of school events.

Building

- We are now serving hot lunches in the cafeteria. The meals are going very well.
- We are still working out keying issues with the locks. The housekeeping keys do not work, and a meeting will be scheduled to determine how we are going to proceed.
- Mr. Eversole (PE and Athletic Director) and I have made some decisions on the gym floors and other equipment. A trip was made to Wixom, MI to test different floors.
- The alarm system is now being armed every day. All board members will need to provide a 4 digit code so that they can enter the building during non-business hours.

Team Member Assessment

- School is completing NWEA testing. All grades participated, and we completed the optional science and algebra sections as well. We are currently working with the NWEA organization to pull our test reports out of the system. The testing window was 10/3-10/14. We have extended the window to accommodate some new students who joined SBCA.
- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) is a not-for-profit organization committed to helping school districts throughout the nation improve learning for all students. NWEA partners with more than 2,200 school districts representing more than three million students. As a result of NWEA tests, educators can make informed decisions to promote your child's academic growth.
- What is the MAP NWEA Assessment? MAP— NWEA's computerized adaptive tests are called Measure of Academic Progress, or MAP. When taking a MAP test, the difficulty of each question is based on how well a student answers all the previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. In an optimal test, a student answers approximately half the items correctly and half incorrectly. The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level.
- What is RIT? Tests developed by NWEA use a scale called RIT to measure student achievement and growth. RIT stands for Rasch UnIT, which is a measurement scale developed to simplify the interpretation of test scores. The RIT score relates directly to the curriculum scale in each subject area. It is an equal-interval scale, like feet and inches, so scores can be added together to calculate accurate class or school averages.
- What is the average score? RIT scores range from about 140 to 300. Students typically start at the 140 to 190 level in the third grade and progress to the 240 to 300 level by high school. RIT scores make it possible to follow a student's educational growth from year to year.
- What subjects does MAP assess? We test math, language arts, science, and algebra
- How long does it take to complete a test? Although the tests are not timed, it usually takes students about one hour to complete each test.
- Do all students in the same grade take the same test? No. NWEA assessments are designed to

target a student's academic performance in mathematics, reading, language usage, and science. These tests are tailored to an individual's current achievement level. This gives each student a fair opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do. The computer adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test.

- What are NWEA assessments used for? NWEA assessments are used to measure your student's progress or growth in school. You may have a chart in your home on which you mark your child's height at certain times, such as on his or her birthday. This is a growth chart. It shows how much he or she has grown from one year to the next. NWEA assessments do the same sort of thing, except they measure your student's growth in mathematics, reading, language usage, and science skills. The scale used to measure your child's progress is called the RIT scale (Rasch unit). The RIT scale is an equal-interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart your student's academic growth from year to year.
- How do teachers use the test scores? NWEA tests are important to teachers because they keep track of progress and growth in basic skills. They let teachers know where a student's strengths are and if help is needed in any specific areas. Teachers use this information to help them guide instruction in the classroom.

Grants and Partnerships

- We submitted 5 applications for the Target Field Trip Grants program. Winners will receive their field trips or community service projects paid by the Target Corporation. We applied for field trips to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, The Art Museum in Chicago, the Salmon Project, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, OH
- Our Partnership with the YMCA has started. The Y sends life coaches to each of our cohorts to provide specialized experiences for students focusing on goal-setting, life and college planning, youth leadership, volunteerism, and social development.
- We have partnered with 100 Black Men to ensure that 6 of our 9th grade male students attend their Freedman Academy.
- We have kicked off our mentoring program. We have 5 parents and community members mentoring our students. The number is increasing. We are ensuring that the expanded background check is being performed for every volunteer.
- Our science teachers are working with me on the IDOE Innovation grant. We are planning to apply for the maximum amount to support more PD on project based learning, and to identify and train team leaders in Project Lead the Way. Our goal is to bring PLTW to all the grades we serve, which will enhance our uniqueness as a school.
- We have a family that has decided to make a donation every month to the school to meet the needs of our team members. Their first project is to help support the students with some extra clothing.

Media

- The South Bend Tribune came to the school on Oct 13 to interview students and take another tour of the building. The article ran on the front of the Tribune on the following Sunday, and is currently reprinted on the website.
- October 19th the School Leader attended the Blackthorn Owner's Association meeting here at SBCA. A preliminary design for signage has been approved by the association. Several of the owners enjoyed a tour of the building after the meeting.

BSU Reporting/Interactions

- There were meetings on September 14th and October 15th to discuss the accountability framework, and preparation of documentation for renewal. Every year we are to provide a report to BSU for our accountability for the prior year. I have started assembling those documents, and will place them in a binder. This will be our framework for next year.