

**FOREST CHARTER SCHOOL
MONTHLY CHARTER COUNCIL MEETING**

Date: Tuesday, Sept . 16, 2008
Time: 5:30 pm
Location: Creekside Co-Op

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Larry Homan, Chair-Community Member
Nancy Markson, Co-Chair/ES Rep.
Linda Hill, ES Rep.
Sandy Saccomanno, Parent Rep.
Janice Comstock, Parent Rep.
Sue Barnickol, Parent Rep.
Pam Barram, Parent Rep.
Kathy Rodrigue, Parent Rep.
Annabelle Ziegenhagen, Student Rep.
Theresa Smittle, Secretary

MINUTES

Present: Larry Homan, Sandy Saccomanno, BJ Hatcher, Nancy Markson, Debbie Ayala-Carter, Janice Eggers, Linda Hill, Sandy McDivitt, Janice Comstock, Pam Barram, Kathy Rodrigue

Absent: Annabelle Ziegenhagen Sue Barnickol

Guest: Terena Mendonca

1. Call to Order 6:03 pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. **DISCUSSION/ACTION:** Approval of Aug 20, 2008 Charter Council Minutes (**Attachment A**)

Motion to approve: Sandy Saccomanno/Linda Hill 2nd

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

4. Opportunity for members of the audience and Charter Council to address the Council on non-agendized items. Agendized items may be either addressed at this time or when the items come up for discussion. The Council cannot discuss or take action on non-agendized items tonight, but items may be agendized at a later Council meeting for discussion and/or action. Public comments are limited to five (5) minutes.

Debbie Carter shared article from Sacramento Bee in which personalized learning was noted as a solution to decrease the state's high school drop out rate.

5. **DISCUSSION/ACTION:** Adoption of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Linda Hill/ 2nd Sandy Saccomanno

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

INFORMATION: CHARTER COUNCIL ELECTION STATUS:

Election of a Sub-Chairman for Larry Homan. Nancy Markson volunteered to be Sub-Chair.

Motion to approve: Sandy Saccomanno/ 2nd Janice Comstock

Ayes: 6 Nays: None Abstain: One

Approval of two new Charter Council Parent Representatives in the Nevada City area: Pam Barram, who is the parent of three Forest Charter School students: Josh, Zachary and Kassidy. Pam is a homeschooling parent who also taps into block classes and can represent Independent Study/Homeschool area. Kathy Rodrigue has a son, Dylan, who is in The Global Studies Academy. This is their second year at Forest Charter School. Kathy reports it has been a great opportunity for Dylan. Kathy teaches a 4th/5th grade class at Ananda School.

Motion to Approve: Linda Hill/ 2nd Sandy Saccomanno

Ayes: All Nays: None Abstain: None

6. **INFORMATION: “CELEBRATE WHAT’S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD” DVD AND 2008/2009**

SCHOOL THEME– Sandy McDivitt

This year’s theme is “Celebrate What’s Right with the World”. One area of focus for our school is to motivate life- long learning in our students. Several teachers have showed this DVD by National Geographic Photographer DeWitt Jones to their students and had very positive feedback.

Video showed

Sandy McDivitt: “Never forget that education starts with the heart.” – What we have at Forest Charter is 52 people on staff that do this every single day.”

7. **INFORMATION- TAHOE/TRUCKEE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATE** (Terena Mendonca)

Terena provided the Charter Council members with a detailed overview of the TTUSD situation, which highlighted the following:

History

- The Nevada County Charter Cooperative has been overseeing the six charter schools since July 2007.
- Six months into the partnership between NCSOS and the charter schools, the discovery was made that both Forest Charter School and Twin Ridges Home Study were serving students who reside in a Basic Aid district – Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD).
- In Basic Aid districts, property taxes more than provide the necessary funding with no revenue limit cap.
- California Department of Education (CDE) identifies students served in a Basic Aid district and deducts their apportionment from the charter school.

What this means to FCS

- The FCS *cash flow* for the 2007/2008 school year reflected a deficit of \$1.2 million dollars.
- The county office has 'carried' Forest Charter and Twin Ridges Home Study in terms of the missing cash.
- FCS is currently being charged approximately \$3000 - \$4000 per month in interest beginning July 1, 2008.
- In addition to the \$1.2 million, TTUSD owes for the 2008/2009 school year.
- Terena has recommended that FCS obtain a loan prior to the end of 2008 if TTUSD has not met their financial obligation.

What's been done

- NCSOS has been tireless about finding a solution which has involved a lot of brainstorming and problem solving.
- Holly Hermansen and Sandy McDivitt have met with Steve Jennings (superintendent of TTUSD) to try and find solutions and urge TTUSD to meet this financial obligation.
- CDE is sending a letter signed by Gavin Paine addressed to TTUSD which states, in brief, that "TTUSD is out of compliance with State Law as they have failed to pay this financial

obligation in accordance with California Ed Code.” The letter will state the obligation for 07/08 and 08/09. This is the first time CDE has written a letter in support of this Ed Code.

- Two days after the CDE letter, a letter from our attorney will be sent which will include a deadline for payment of October 15th, 2008.
- There will be a press release in which the positive contributions of this charter school to the community will be outlined.
- It may be a good idea for parents to attend the TTUSD Board meetings.

Farewell and Appreciation to Terena Mendonca, Nevada County Assist. Supt' of Business

Thank you to Terena Mendonca for her tireless efforts on our behalf. Terena has taken a position as Deputy Superintendent of Schools in El Dorado County. Her new boss, Superintendent Vicki Barber is solution oriented and steps beyond her own county to help others. Sandy acknowledged Terena's intelligence, heart and balance. On behalf of Forest Charter School, Sandy McDivitt made a presentation of a plant as a token of our appreciation.

8. INFORMATION/ACTION: APPROVAL OF WASC MIDTERM REVIEW AND REPORT

The Mid-Term Review with WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) is due for Forest Charter School. On October 8, 2008 representatives of WASC will spend one half day with the Parent Committee, Student Team, Leadership Group and Faculty Council. The WASC team will be taken to block classes (K-8 at St. Canice), Global Studies Academy (high school) and also to The Academic Adventure Co-Op. The team will be here from 7:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There will be a concise report with speaking points outlining Forest Charter School's progress in two short years. The report outlines demographics, the ESLR'S and assessments and also talks about stable growth - from 203 students in 2002 to 601 students currently. Forest Charter School is so grateful to Steve Canavero for laying the groundwork.

Sandy McDivitt summarized key points of the WASC Report and provided a copy of the report to all Charter Council members.

Motion to approve: Janice Comstock/ 2nd Linda Hill

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Abstain: None

9. INFORMATION: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT 2008 (BJ HATCHER)

BJ Hatcher reported the following:

- API increased from last year from 701 to 714.
- Weakness in math scores overall especially in low socio-economic subgroup.
- Forest scoring exceptionally well with regard to CAHSEE exam pass rates and in fact, exceeds the state, county and district.
- Federal and State requirement/demand of percentages of students scoring proficient and

above are going up.

•**Interventions planned:** The administrative team will speak to E.S.'s about individual students who score below basic and far below basic. This spring the test administrators will slow down STAR testing by testing over four days rather than three.

10. **DISCUSSION – SCHOOL PATHWAYS UPDATE (Peter Sagebiel)**

Peter Sagebiel provided a brief update on School Pathways, the student information system that we implemented school wide at the beginning of the school year. Feedback from the ES's has been mostly positive, with mentors stepping up to help ES's in training. Nancy Markson and Janice Eggers both agreed that this was an easy program to use with many useful tools for teachers.

11. **DISCUSSION-CREEKSIDE LEARNING CENTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN FOREST CHARTER SCHOOL AND HORIZON CHARTER SCHOOL (Sandy McDivitt)**

The Boundary issue at The Creekside Co-Op was solved by collaborating with Horizon Charter School and enrolling the 21 El Dorado students in Horizon. Horizon then contracted with Forest to provide the educational plan through The Creekside Cooperative.

12. **ACTION – APPROVAL OF HEALTH BENEFIT EXCEPTION (Debbie Carter) –**

Anne Chippendale is our shared employee with Horizon Charter School. Horizon offered vision and dental, but no medical benefits. Forest would like to offer full benefits so that Anne is not caught between the two schools. This would be an exception to our current policy which states that you must be a .8 employee to receive benefits.

Motion to approve: Linda Hill/ 2nd Nancy Markson

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None

13. **BUDGET UPDATE - TABLED**

Motion to table: Sandy Saccomanno/ 2nd Janice Comstock

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None

14. **ACTION:APPROVAL OF FIELD TRIPS:**

- Field Trips: Global Studies Field Trip – Ropes Course at Synergia 9/26/08
- River Rafting Trip – Academic Adventure Co-Op - 9/19/08
- Time Trekking/Empire Mine/Mr. Diablo/Grouse Ridge: dates TBD

Motion to Approve: Linda Hill/ 2nd Nancy Markson

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None

15. **DISCUSSION/ACTION:** Consent Agenda

- A. New Contracts
- B. Warrants
- C: Memo of Understanding

Consent Agenda approved

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None

16. **INFORMATIONAL:** Director's Update

- o Covered previously

17. **INFORMATION: SWEATSHIRTS:** (Debbie Carter)

Sweatshirts will be purchased as a Charter Council fundraiser to support student scholarships. We will be ordering grey sweatshirts with green lettering.

18. **INFORMATION: DIRECTORS ANNOUNCEMENT -**

Executive Director, Sandy McDivitt, announced that this will be her last year at Forest Charter School. She will be retiring on June 19, 2008 and will be working at a school in India. She will be missed!

19. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:**

- o Budget
- o Executive Director Peter Sagebiel
- o Order form for sweatshirt

20. **REMINDER OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

October 14, 2008

November 18, 2008

No reg. December meeting

January 20, 2008

21. Adjourn 8:35

Motion: Linda Hill/ 2ND Janice Comstock

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Abstain: None