

The Exploration Academy

Site Council Meeting

February 16, 2015

MINUTES

- CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM
- Attending were;
 - Chad Welty
 - Sheila Stenseth
 - Pheng Lee
 - Paul Driftmier
 - Andrea Vogel
 - Alexa Butzbaugh
 - Taylor Jackson, Student Representative.
- Absent;
 - Cathy Driftmier
- Guests Attending were;
 - Dawn Van Hook
 - Steve Hever
 - Lynn Fahey

- ANNOUNCEMENTS AND BRIEF AGENDA ITEMS

- Introductions all around to welcome guests
- The Minutes of the January, 2015 Meeting were unanimously approved.
 - Kudos to Chad for substituting for the Secretary in his absence and setting a high standard of prompt delivery of transcribed minutes to the Council.
- The next meeting of the Site Council was scheduled for March 16th at 6:30 PM

- THE EXPLORATION ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- Enrollment Update

- Pheng Lee reports that EA has 80 students presently enrolled and one possible candidate on a waiting list. It was reaffirmed that the waiting list will be cleared after Spring Break.
- PL expressed concern that there are only two applications received so far for the 2015/16 school year. Our experience from last year suggests that we will have more applications as the deadline approaches.
 - Jane (last name?) will send out a reminder via SchoolReach.
 - The deadline for turning in applications is this Friday, February 20th at 4:00 PM
 - PL will be off site during the day Friday but will return by 4:00 to conduct the lottery. Sheila and Chad will make themselves available if necessary to fill in.
- UPDATE ON MEETING WITH PAM AND DEAN
 - Timing is important since the State Budget was released the previous Tuesday and Dean will undertake his budgeting process soon. That process will flow down to PL and Pam as discussions of FTE Allocation and Supplies Budgeting, etc. take place.
 - Because our DPI grants expire next year it is critical that we work with Dean and Pam to keep our options open regarding our future charter choices.
 - One change in DPI rules is impacting this decision. It has to do with how EA kids are allotted to the traditional classes they've requested. This year and previous, EA students had an equal chance as VAHS students at getting into classes they wanted. Next year, EA and VAHS will have separate PowerSchool installations and this must be taken into account when the class allotments are made.
 - PL reports that both Pam and Dean were open to what he had to say.
 - Dean needs to consult with Atty. John Anderson re "legal issues," especially regarding changes that may allow the waiver decisions effecting EA to be vested in the District instead of reserved to the State.
 - Other topics included;
 - The Budget - Alexa reported little progress in that discussion although it included subjects of EA's three-year growth plan.
 - The Open Enrollment question - Alexa reports that we've opted not to pursue Open Enrollment at this time for reasons previously discussed.

- Dean was open to the idea of renewing OE discussions pretty much any time we have enough interest.
- Pam was very pleased by the EA assessment numbers.
- Sheila cited an email she received, and has forwarded to the Council, that outlined DPI rules which seem to require that public charter schools must fund Youth Options, including internships, etc. this has a strong bearing on Budget negotiations with Pam and Dean.
- PL reports that there's a Google doc that lists EA's needs as answer to Pam's perennial question, "What are EA's needs?"
- We need to figure out what grants to VASD will be made available to or shared between VASD and EA. There is some confusion as to what we are entitled to, grant-wise and upon what we can spend grant monies.
- The DPI website has a list of allowable grant spending.
 - Here's a link to a DPI, Charter School Grant FAQ.
 - <http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/charter-schools>
- Alexa suggested we look for areas where we have leverage to negotiate with Pam, especially in re the licensing and maintenance fees for software that EA purchases and VAHS uses.
- Pheng plans to have discussed various budgetary issues by the next Site Council meeting on March 16th.
- Sheila reports that Taylor Jackson has been sponsored by the Verona American Legion to attend Badger Girls State Government and Leadership Conference at UW Oshkosh in July.
 - <http://www.badgergirlsstate.org/>
 - We need to find a \$250 sponsor for a boy to attend.
 - Kiwanis? Lions Club? Local banks?
- ADDITIONAL REPORTS
 - CURRICULUM / INSTRUCTION (Chad Reporting)
 - A plan is underway to attach appropriate vocabulary to Learning Targets.

- Meetings will start next week to address structural changes for the 2015-16 school year.
- Taylor Jackson reported on her field trip to the Youth Summit on Personalized Learning
 - The summit was attended by a diverse group of charter school students and traditional HS students, but most were hybrids of the two models, personalized and old-school.
 - Taylor had an opportunity to speak to lots of others about the Project Based Learning and the EA model.
 - Some reactions were very enthusiastic others more unsure.
 - Some attendees were intimidated by the freedom and technology at EA.
 - Taylor and Riley Butzbaugh want to produce a short video promoting the real EA on VCAT to improve our image and help dispel myths about EA, maybe even make VCAT tolerable.
- Guest, Steve Hever asked about using email to the entire list of VAHS. SchoolReach is the tool for that job.
- Guest Lynn Fahey related her experience, believing EA was the "Hippy School" and not realizing that was a myth until she was finally dragged into it by her own child. Andrea explained EA's close association to the VIP Program in many people's minds.
- The group discussed ways that we can leverage Taylor's and other students' 21st century savvy with social media to help normalize mainstream students' perceptions.
 - Taylor pointed out, and demonstrated on her device, that some students are already using social media to circulate daily messages about EA.
- MARKETING COMMITTEE (Andrea reporting)
 - Andrea will be working to nurture a relationship with the Verona Press.
 - She revisited suggestions that we involve students in our marketing endeavors.
 - She will also work on collaborating with Shabaz, to pick their minds.
 - She encouraged the Council to manage our community using something like a Movie Night to foster relationships.

- Guest Dawn Van Hook suggested we pursue outreach to Fitchburg as well.
- Alexa believes we can also strengthen our relationship with Pam.
- FUNDRAISING AND GRANT WRITING (Paul Reporting)
 - Paul reports that he has conducted the first meeting of his committee which consists of
 - Andrea Vogel
 - Mona Cassis
 - Amy Almond
 - Laurie Everitt
 - Tom Eudaly
 - Lori Demeuse
 - There's a fundraising goal and a campaign of sorts - "2K By The End of May" with many great ideas and specific assignments for committee members to achieve in pursuit of the goal. Some ideas are;
 - Food sales at Project Showcases
 - A leadership role in the Farmers' Market
 - Retail store opportunities, e.g. Target Red Card Connect, Boston Store Coupon Books, etc. we would prefer to break free of these traditional models, however.
 - Box Tops
 - LAN Party / Minecraft Tournament
 - More.
 - Sheila contributed to the meeting, though she's not on the committee.
 - She's putting together a "coding seminar" wherein individual teachers can raise up to \$4,000 by getting students into coding. She'll fill us in with details after her seminar.
- CLOSING REMARKS

- All three guests expressed an interest in greater roles in EA and on the Site Council.
 - Dawn Van Hook has volunteered to join the Council and to serve as Treasurer.
 - Lynn Fahey would like to participate on the Fundraising/Grant Writing Committee
 - Steve Hever wants to get involved in the role of a mentor.
 - The Site Council will add a topic to the agenda for the March meeting for discussing these additions, voting and formally adding new council members.
- THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:30