

Exploris Middle School / Board of Directors

Meeting: 2013 Aug 20, 4:30PM-6PM at Exploris Middle School

Mission: Exploris is a learning community that engages students in a rigorous, relevant, relationship-based education. This is done through experiential, project-based learning that empowers students to build a connected, just and sustainable world.

Attendees:

Summer Clayton (Director of Exploris)
 Kathleen Evans
 Sean Gargan (Chair)
 Kendall Hageman
 Shannon Hardy (observing)
 Susan Johnston
 Barrett Koster (Secretary)
 Bob Whitehead
 Cheryl Rogers (PTO president)
 Anne Franklin
 Laura Laut

Absent:

Wes Moore (intern from Duke)
 Rachael Lambert (intern from Duke)
 Liz Baird

Proceedings ...

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| Call to order | 4:30 PM |
| Agenda | AF motion, BK 2nd, vote - approved |
| Public comment on proposed policy for background checks | <p>Becky Levine , parent. Doesn't mind that we do sex offender check, but revealing other things not related to child safety might prevent a person from applying. A full criminal check might be too invasive of privacy, especially just for carpool. It cuts against our culture.</p> <p>Lisa Meeks (Exploris parent for a few years, public school teacher). Background checks may waste an estimated \$600 dollars per year. The current climate is good: teachers know all the volunteers, who are parents. And checks do not assure safety. Also, driving pools for trips are usually fairly impromptu. If checking break the process and everyone has to drive their own kids, then efficiency goes to hell. Not being so paranoid is part of our school ethos.</p> <p>Shannon Hardy. This is a good discussion, policy for safety, but we don't have the right answer yet. False security is a concern. Checks will hinder our service learning -- they just add too much overhead. Keep looking.</p> <p>Karen Rectanus. We have a lot of non-parent community people that interact with students. Checks would impact them (be really hard).</p> <p>Sarah Rex. Approached Summer about implementing a policy for volunteer background checks. She is recommending what is</p> |

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| | <p>recommended by some state and federal agencies, a check for sexual predators and high grade violence. It could be private except for principle. Cost ..? \$12-\$20 per person, \$400 per grade. Also, this is a liability issue, that we can't get accused of NOT checking what we can check. She is not sure that mere carpool drivers need to be included.</p> |
| <p>consent agenda -- June financials -- 2013 Jul 16 minutes</p> | <p>BK motion to approve consent agenda with change to minutes from Kathleen, ____ 2nd, vote- approved.</p> |
| <p>Board discussion of background checks</p> | <p>Summer - There is no legislation that we have to do it. But there is a policy that the school have an employee background check policy that mirrors that of the local educational agency (Wake County) - We do state and fed criminal checks for employees. Wake does volunteer background checks at the school's expense. Some local charter schools do checks, with various payment arrangements. Others do not check their volunteers, such as Raleigh Charter High and East Wake Academy.</p> <p>Sarah created a packet and handed them out at carpool in which all parents received forms to 1. ask that their kids only work with checked people (7 parents replied on this one), 2. volunteer to be background checked themselves (7 people applied). 9 people emailed, phoned, or visited Summer to say they opposed a volunteer background check policy.- 2 parents emailed to say they supported a volunteer background check policy.- The majority of parents haven't responded.</p> <p>Laura L - is NOT for background checking. It's just another hoop to jump through, and it's hard for us to ask a favor of some community person and then make them pay for and do a background check.</p> <p>Summer - where do we draw the line at liability. What about the after-school clubs? What if the club is run just by a parent? Does it apply to industry visitors?</p> <p>Dave Wise (attorney) sends a memo that we may be MORE liable if we get info and then don't act on it. So policy needs to include what to do if the check uncovers something. Summer added, however, that the school's attorney did recommend an exhaustive criminal background check for all adults having unsupervised contact with Exploris students.</p> <p>Laura - How would this affect NRC? Do we background check their employees? Usually it's 2 students, but if one is sick, then it's 1 on 1. They are in a glass room and we check frequently.</p> <p>At this point Board members discussed what a school policy should include. For carpool for instance, a policy that includes checking the state and national sex offender registry might be prudent.- Full criminal checks (\$11.50) would only be needed for people who</p> |

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| | <p>interact 1 to 1 with students in isolation. (There are really two policies here, one for mere drivers and one for more involved helpers such as tutors.) Ann Franklin added that the policy may need to clarify who is a volunteer (even the Board?).</p> <p>Bob again brought up the issue of liability. Perhaps the policy needs to include language that sets an expectation with parents that volunteers are not given background checks. This could also be written into the field trip and club waivers so that parents can make informed decisions about, not only attending Exploris, but also allowing students to participate in off-campus activities and after-school clubs.</p> <p>- After much discussion, the board agreed to - find ways to support the school programs and activities in place, including teacher judgment regarding their use of parent volunteers and outside experts.</p> <p>Perhaps it will work to set expectations, that volunteers get instructions on what they are and are not supposed to do (to avoid potentially difficult situations). And the trip-waiver that parents sign could point out that we do NOT do extensive (any?) screening and that the community is responsible for its own scrutiny.</p> <p>Kendall (and Summer?) will try to sort all this out and bring us another draft next time.</p> |
| Budget 2014 - amendment | <p>Kathleen Evans presented a revised 2014 budget for board approval. 2013 had a surplus that was partially due to over budgeting in some line items. Revisions to the 2014 budget included the new ADM figures, inclusion of \$35,000 from the PTO, inclusion of the revenue/expenses for the Burroughs Welcome grant, increasing the salaries to match the Wake County salary scale and a few other minor expense adjustments. Rent was budgeted with a 4% increase over last year.</p> <p>Additionally, information was shared with the board about the State Teachers Retirement System. For Exploris to participate this would require legislation since we chose not to participate within the enrollment period (within 30 days of the charter date). The cost to the school would be 14.23% of salaries (approximate cost = \$100K+) which is not feasible. Exploris currently contributes 2% to individual faculty's 401Ks (\$18K). We considered increasing the 401K contribution, but will need to revisit this when preparing next year's budget.</p> <p>A motion was made to pass the revised budget with 100% of Wake salary levels, but no change to retirement. 2nd. vote - approved.</p> |
| Policy on leave | <p>Summer - We had a problem last year. This new proposal has wording from state employees handbook, should be nice and solid. It</p> |

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| | <p>covers 10 and 12 month employees.</p> <p>The concept of vacation is a little strange, since teachers cannot easily take it when they are on, and get tons of time for breaks. We cap accumulation to 24 days, so people can't accumulate a whole year and then retire on salary (and wreck the budget). It's not the same as state, but it is what it is.</p> <p>Sick leave is covered by short and long term disability so this is not an issue.</p> <p>SJ motion, BK 2nd, vote - passes.</p> |
| Approve Jodie Hatcher | <p>Hired for 7th grade math, after Mary moved up to 8th, after Frank left. Charter rules require Board approval, but we don't want to second guess Summer's decision, so here's the nod: KE motion, SJ 2nd, vote-approved. Such hires in the future will be on the Consent Agenda.</p> |
| Handbook and Committees | <p>Handbook discussion was pushed to next month.</p> <p>Kendall needs some relief soon on Governance Committee (and there ARE people on the committee who might be able to fill in).</p> <p>Liz has agreed to chair the Academic Excellence committee.</p> <p>Susan is ready to run with the Capital Campaign committee.</p> <p>Kathleen is gearing up for Pass The Hat. Official launch - Sep 10.</p> |
| Strategic Plan | <p>Not much has happened. There's a lead on a building.</p> |
| adjourn | <p>6:08pm</p> |