

The Renaissance Charter School

Collaborative School Governance Minutes

November 28, 2007

Meeting convened: 5:10 pm

CSG Members in Attendance (names taken from sign-in book): 1. Stacey Gauthier, 2. Sandra Fritz, 3. Patricia Poljanic, 4. Carol Schwenk, 5. Sean Conlon, 6. Richard Doherty, 7. Liz Perez, 8. Jacob Levich, 9. Eileen Sanders, 10. Mark Satinoff, 11. Elyse Lau, 12. Noreen Wortman, 13. Kirsten Westphal, 14. Natalie Espinal, 15. Melanie Romano, 16. Gabriel Decker-Lee, 17. Suman Sharma, 18. Lillian Chen, 19. Nicholas Tishuk.

1. School Management Team – Stacey & Nick

There appears to be some confusion over the election process in the HS for CSG Representatives. Dick and Nick will follow up and get clarification.

There is a great deal of controversy surrounding the school “report cards” released to the press by the Department of Education. This issue is complex and made even more so by the constantly changing positions of the DOE. Initially charter schools were told that they would not receive progress reports. Charter schools are and always have been subject to strict accountability controls such as the Quality Review and Certified Financial Report. Then the DOE changed their mind and said that although charter schools would not receive a letter grade, a matrix of data for each school would be made public. Now the DOE has reversed its original position and a letter grade will be issued for each charter school. TRCS, grades K-8, has been assigned a grade of D, which makes us a failing school. It is the school’s position that this grade is based on faulty data and flawed methodology, making it statistically meaningless. If the DOE pursues its intention to publish our grade, we will request that the courts issue a restraining order. In case the grade is published, we will be prepared with a public response. The final decision on our legal strategy will be made at next week’s meeting of the TRCS Board of Trustees.

Rensizzle finished with presentations at Queens College. Due to time constraints not every group was able to report, so part 2 will be held tomorrow in the gym and auditorium. All told, 23 clusters, representing 350 students in grades 6-12, met for 6 ½ days. This is a 75% increase over last year, when 200 students in grades 9-12 took part in Rensizzle. A student survey was distributed today. See wikispaces (<http://trcs.wikispaces.com/rensizzle+07>) for videos, PowerPoint presentations, how-to’s, and photos.

2. Comprehensive Education Plan – Stacey

This is a constantly evolving process that requires discussion at all levels – PTA clusters, teacher clusters, CSG, etc. We are still in the midst of brainstorming and looking to synthesize recurring themes. We need to be specific as the CEP affects the school budget, hiring, programming, etc. The teacher clusters met and came up with the following recommendations:

Cluster 1 – 1. Incorporate more multi-sensory curriculum, 2. Deeper integration of arts and geography into the curriculum, 3. Allow for differentiated instruction, and 4. Consider outside residencies.

MS – 1. Maintain literacy and math classes on Saturday, 2. An earlier start time for Saturday school, 3. More one-to-one tutoring, 4. Target parents whose study skills are lacking, 5. Engage HS students to talk with 8th grade students about HS, 6. Further integration of the arts, and 7. Revive excitement of what it means to be a small school – family-like atmosphere, sense of community, etc.

HS – 1. Expand opportunities for community service and keep close track of who is serving, where, how many hours, etc, 2. More help to ensure HS students graduate on time, and 3. Expansion of the Spanish program.

We need to pare down the above goals and provide more detail.

3. CSG/PTA Meeting Time – Stacey

At last month's PTA meeting the parents voted, by cluster, to keep the meeting schedule as it currently is – that is, to have the CSG and PTA meet back-to-back on the same night.

4. New Business

The HS boy's bathroom stall needs a new door.

The seniors want to leave a permanent mark of their time at the school through the creation of a mural. There is very little available wall space left. Where can they draw the mural?

Announcements: The Board of Trustees will be meeting on December 5th. There will be a meeting of 7th grade parents on December 12th. The alumni dinner will be held on December 21st.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:55 pm