

PHMS LLC

From: John Bleich [john_bleich@mho.com]
Sent: Monday, August 27, 2007 5:25 AM
To: 'B.I.'
Cc: Charla Hannigan; 'Krystal Kroeker'; 'Helen Sneed'; Fred Crofford; Betsy Craley; Jay Campbell; John Bleich; Kurt Malerich; Kurt Malerich; Scott Walter
Subject: RE: Policy Governance

I have put responses below each of your bulleted points about measurable goals and standard of care.

In addition to these, I have spoken to Mrs. Hannigan and with Miss Kroeker about the possibility of putting together a testing review that will show how well students that have been in our program for say 3 years or more stack up on testing scores. The software we have cannot do this easily so the students would have to be cherry picked in order to put the study together. Since this is a very busy time for the Admin staff I am not expecting this immediately, probably October or later when things have hopefully calmed down to a strong wind rather than a hurricane of activity. I think this is essential information so we know how well our program is working. It should remove a lot of the fluctuations we get from new students entering midterm and give a more accurate indication of just how well we are doing as a school with our programs. If we do not have something of this nature, we are not truly able to gauge how well we are doing because with such a small population to test, 5 to 10 students coming in to a class can make a significant swing up or down depending on the level of the 5 or 10 students that are new in relation to the level of the 5 or 10 they replaced. This could also explain a lot of the fluctuations we see in CSAP tests from year to year. It would also be helpful to have a study of student's growth, not just a measurement against norms for those students who have been with us for a few years. After all, it is the growth from each student's particular starting point that is the most important indicator as to how well we are doing.

In another e-mail I explained that I have put Mrs. Hannigan in touch with Mike Munier from Jefferson Academy to be an experienced and respected resource to her to help with her inexperience in charter schools. We believe that Mrs. Hannigan will be a fast study and that she will have no problem grasping our program essentials. We believe that she is well on her way to understanding our curriculum and the potential that it encompasses. She has already embraced and fully supports the core knowledge curriculum and is learning the charter school structuring which is far more efficient and responsive to educational demands than the traditional school structure is.

Anne Stanley, who has extensive background in facilities management, has been managing the facilities for the last year. She has agreed to continue doing so this year. She has done a spectacular job so far and we have agreed that if the task becomes too large for her, we would hire a part time Facilities manager to either supplement her or take over facilities management altogether. I believe this school has become too large for a single person (the Principal) to do everything and know everything. Facilities are one area where delegation to another person makes perfect sense as long as they are working together with the Principal for goal setting and scheduling. As for Mrs. Hannigan's inexperience with Construction, I think you would have to agree that to expect a highly qualified principal that is responsible for running a school to also be an expert at building or expanding a facility is a pipe dream. When we do decide that the facility is to be expanded, then the board will need to look into methods of putting a person in charge that is an expert at that task. This person would work with the principal to assess the needs for the expansion and plan the expansion in such a way as to meet those needs.

The board has every intention of addressing these concerns and is in the process of doing so. However this is another area where we will not be doing it in a knee-jerk fashion. Thought must be put into setting these goals and monitoring criteria. Too many things have been done in the past without thinking them through clearly and usually when that occurs something is missed and we end up with something that we did not ever intend to have. So attempting to do everything at once causes us to do a little of everything and all of nothing. We are attempting to set a sequence of priorities and a sequence of goals to match those priorities. As each of the goals is achieved they will lead to new priorities with new goals in the future. Building this school into something everyone can be even more proud of will be an ongoing challenge. We will not get nirvana in 1 year or even 2 years. It will take a good plan and the good people to bring that plan to fruition. I truly believe we have the right people in place to create and execute a good plan. But no roadmap is of any use if there is not a destination that we are trying to get to.

One other thing, some of the topics you have mentioned the board should be doing are dangerously close to execution rather than vision and policy setting for the school. I believe the board, while being overall responsible for the school, should not be involved in detail planning or the executing tasks. The Board should be involved in vision, policy setting and monitoring progress against goals. The execution should be left to Mrs. Hannigan and her administrative staff who are

trained to do these things. I believe blurring these lines will bring about more problems than solutions. I also believe blurring these lines is one reason the board meetings run longer than one might think they should. This is a difficult thing to keep in check and will require constant vigilance but I firmly believe we need to work on making that line more clear for the sake of everyone involved.

You have brought up many good points and we appreciate it very much. I find it encouraging that most of these are issues we have already brought up ourselves and are in the process of addressing. Hearing them from you and others in the school tells me that we are all on the same page and hopefully moving in a good direction. This will not happen overnight though; thank you Brooks for your patience and for working with us as a team whose focus is on what is best for the school and its students.

Thanks Brooks,
John

From: B.I. [mailto:brooks@forethought.net]

Sent: Saturday, August 04, 2007 12:57 AM

To: John Bleich

Cc: LegacyAcademy

Subject: Policy Governance

Dear Director Bleich,

In the past you've said I was too confrontational. So there is no misunderstanding between us, my intent here is to clearly name some of the difficult challenges facing the school and then hold school leadership accountable for their solution. I see this as constructive problem solving, not confrontation. The new administrator brings a great deal of experience to Legacy Academy, however, there are multiple concerns at the outset of the new administration that cannot wait for a trial outcome, such as;

- Wide performance differences between Genoa-Hugo and Legacy Academy CSAP tests.
- Legacy Academy's anemic 2007 CSAP performance in many grades.
- Legacy Academy's goal to become a college preparatory school of excellence.
- Genoa-Hugo's nature of a poorer community than Elizabeth's, with more of a vocational focus.
- New administrator's inexperience with charter schools, the charter school movement, and non-profit corporate governance.
- New administrator's inexperience with facilities management, construction, and public school finance.

Given the number of concerns, and guided by the theory of Carver's Policy Governance to state measurable goals by which the board can be held accountable, it is reasonable that the standard of care for this board and administration be stated at the outset of the school year. The standard of care can be expressed any number of measurable ways, such as;

- Targeted CSAP test score improvements by grade and subject.

I do plan to ask for targeted scores in the Goals based, of course, on the rest of the board agreeing that is a good idea...In preparation for that I have already forewarned Mrs. Hannigan in a previous e-mail. Some of the other board members are concerned about overanalyzing the CSAP scores. We have to remember that it is only one assessment and reflective of about 2-3 hours of time. Teachers have a whole list of items they use for the body of evidence. After hearing their concerns and thinking of it from that perspective I tend to agree. If it is a lot more time and energy to try tracking goals this way, better methods of tracking should be looked

at. On the other hand, we need some way to monitor progress on goals for the year to know whether we are successful or not and this seems like one method that would be possible. We will have to discuss it during goal setting in a meeting.

Excerpt from an e-mail to her

p.s. I am considering suggesting that when we set target goals for this next year that we might do it by grade and CSAP area (Reading Writing Math Science) rather than just by Elementary Middle and High school in general. Just a heads up to allow you to think about the best way to do that. Thanks again Charla.

- Use of formative assessments (i.e., MAP testing) to monitor progress in delivering differentiated, information-based instruction, and improving LA's standards-based curricula. (from a contributor)
We already do use MAP testing. I am not sure what (from a contributor) means.
- Curriculum additions to fulfill the board's expressed mission of creating a college prep high school.
This is an ongoing discussion. This year we have added an AP History class. The Board will be attempting to quantify "College Prep". Those 2 words were never quantified or defined. I am guessing this is because everyone at the time thought they were self explanatory. Since then we have found out that everyone has a different view of what they mean. In order for Mrs. Hannigan and her staff to put together a road map for reaching "College Prep" she needs to know where it is. There is also a High School committee that Mr. Walker initiated at the end of last year that was specifically set up to address this topic.
- Facility expansion and improvement milestones.
This has been discussed. Facility expansion is not an inexpensive thing. Last cost estimate was 1.5 million dollars to complete the facility for K-12 / 2 tracks with up to 24 students per track. In order to make this a financially viable option we will probably need a waiting list for the high school that will come close to filling each class. I believe we will not be in that circumstance until we have molded our high school into a shining example of a "College Prep" high school. Once we have done that, I believe students will be lining up trying to get in to LA. So milestones have not been set for the expansion yet as the prerequisites to make the expansion a viable option have not been reached. I believe we are doing the right things in the right order at this time. If we try doing the expansion and find out that the high school will not be filled as a result of not having the right program to attract students to fill it then we could end up putting the school into a situation where we cannot pay for the expansion. I believe this is not a situation where we can assume that if we build it, they will come.
- Spending allocations that mirror the priorities outlined in the standard of care.
Once we have defined the College prep vision we will work with the administrative staff to set goals and an appropriate budget accordingly to the goals. We need to be diligent in making sure the right decisions are made. While we will be making them in as timely a manner as is prudently possible, we will not rush into it with a knee-jerk reaction. If we do not do this in a logical manner now, then we will just be leaving it for another board to fix later on. In the meantime we will waste precious time and resources which could have been used to implement a better and more permanent solution. That is not something we feel is in the best interests of the school in the short term and most especially the long term. Careful planning must be exercised or we will end up in worse shape than we are now.

An expression from the board stating measurable goals that target the above concerns, goals by which the board will be held accountable, should be made at the August 14th board meeting. The board and administration need to get out in front of these challenges, take full responsibility for them, and lead the school to a better future.
Sincerely Yours,
Brooks Imperial