

Academie Lafayette  
Board of Director's Meeting  
Special "Call" Meeting

September 28, 2009

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:**

Dave Cozad, President  
Mike Zeller, Vice President  
Kirk Farmer  
Melissa Thomas  
Pam Gard  
Jane Alley  
Brian Hendrickson  
Dr Steven Green

**Board Not Present:**

Harriet Charno  
Herb Hardwick  
Dr. Anthony Moore

**Staff Present:**

Eric Nelis  
Eric Roskm  
Jean Claude Diatta  
Sandrine Salas  
Leslie Houfaidi  
Patty Smith  
Ridley Thomas  
Amanda Loflin  
Ann Marie Glover  
Rachael Gordon

**Meeting Opened**

Dave Cozad opened the meeting by welcoming Jean Claude Diatta, teach representative to the board.

*He then stated that this meeting is being held to discuss goals, long term plans, student growth, building plans, and diversity, etc.*

Dave continued by opening the floor to stakeholders present for comments and/or questions. Andrea Yeager thanked the board for their volunteerism and hard work. She then commented that the school should pay off our current building debt by renting the gym, auditorium etc. for outside activities, pre-school, etc. and then purchase another

building. She also suggested using this building as a pre-school and placing the elementary students in another building.

The meeting was then turned over to Kirk Farmer who distributed an updated “Attrition Analysis” summary and mentioned that our attrition rate has risen from 4% to 6% (564 enrollment for 2009-2010). He then explained that the school had approached Standard and Poor’s to obtain a credit rating when we were seeking a loan for expansion. He then explained the information that was prepared and submitted to S&P to receive an investment grade rating. He mentioned that the project we were pitching to S&P was to expand this facility by doing 2 things: 4 additional classrooms and updating the 1<sup>st</sup> floor bathroom. He also mentioned that 5 additional classroom were to be added as part of the expansion by borrowing enough to refinance the debt on this building and borrow about 2 ½ million dollars more and go into a capital campaign to build kitchen/cafeteria and multi-purpose room. He explained that our student population has actually exceeded our expectations and that we are currently using space in the Broadway United Methodist Church for kindergarten classes.

Dave Cozad then asked E. Nelis about next year and the space needed for classes. Eric Nelis responded by stating that we now have 2 available classrooms that are not being used this year that will accommodate the kindergarteners and current upper grades in this building. Discussion followed regarding how we would be able to add needed classrooms and general space, i.e. cafeteria, common area, etc. Mike Zeller asked Brian Hendrickson whether or not construction costs have dropped since last year and he said, not much. Jane Alley then asked Kirk Farmer if it would be favorable for us to now go back to S&P and ask for another credit rating and Kirk thought it could be possible, but waiting 1 or 2 more years might be more beneficial.

As the discussion continued, the principals to keep in mind as we move forward to expand this building and what we are trying to achieve were suggested by Mike Zeller as follows:

1. Maintain high academic standards
2. maintain our support from stakeholders
3. extend this quality program to more children
4. preserve and/or expand our socio-economic diverse population
5. reliable school option in the neighborhood
6. public school option that families can count on
7. provide early education opportunities
8. turn our present excess demands into advantages for our stakeholders
9. expand into a high school
10. develop strategic partnerships with other charter schools, foundations, etc.
11. make our programs available to as man families as possible without compromising the program.

Jane Alley stated that we should not limit the vision of the school to this neighborhood, but to include all neighborhoods and make sure that all families can be a part of this school.

Jean Claude Diatta stated that if we enroll too many students, we could harm the academic excellence, which is why most people are attending our school.

Dave informed the group of the class sizes and asked how important it is to maintain the current class sizes to a maximum of 22 (the class size also depends on the size of the classrooms). Discussion followed regarding starting an additional school in another neighborhood.

The importance to teachers that students have a separate place to eat (cafeteria) was brought up for discussion by Eric Nelis. He indicated that their preference in covering the cafeteria as well as the pros and cons of teachers eating with students or having their own time for lunch without students is being determined. Discussion followed.

Brian Hendrickson gave scenarios and issues regarding the building expansion and how we can get back to utilizing only this building to accommodate all AL students. He also mentioned that we would have a diversity issue in the future due to the number of siblings that will be enrolled. He then presented his proposed/recommended plans explaining low growth to negative growth plan, moderate growth plan 1 & 2, and continued growth plan (**see attachment**) Discussion followed which included the possibility of purchasing a building from the KCMO school district. Lengthy discussion followed.

Dave Cozad then informed the group that Kirk Farmer had put together figures on operating two campuses as opposed to one new campus or splitting up some of the current grade levels.

Discussion followed at length regarding how to separate the school by grades into separate buildings and how it could work as well as the possibility of establishing a K-5 with one building being a middle school as well as other options.

There was concern expressed regarding splitting the school. It was discussed as to why there is some resistance to splitting the schools. It was mentioned that a forum would be held to involve parents and hear their opinions regarding growth, expansion, splitting up the students, etc.

Dave Cozad recommended that we do the following:

- Provide a survey to parents to get their input
- Hold a parent forum

Dave then brought up for discussion how fundraising fits into the discussion of splitting the school, etc. Kirk stated that we would need some equity and asked Rachael Gordo for her comments and she indicated that she doesn't feel that the market is much different

now than a year ago, but we could present the fact that we now have more internal participation in the annual fundraising campaign. Discussion regarding financing was held and Kirk suggested contacting John Archer/Charno to see if they would be interested in being our up front sponsor as we approach other foundations.

The following are some of the suggestions on how to move forward:

- Survey to K parents
- Refined list of option
- Pros and cons of all options
- Get info out to parents and have a parent forum
- Survey to all parents
- Hold a special meeting in November
- Teacher survey
- Teacher forum

Dr. Green suggested that the school put together a sponsor list.

**Meeting adjournment.**

Dave Cozad adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos McClain