

## Imagine Classical Academy Indigo Ranch

6464 Peterson Colorado Springs, CO 80923

Where students are classically trained, culturally literate, and globally prepared.

January Regular Board Meeting

6 P.M.

January 28, 2019 - Room 209

The mission of the Imagine Classical Academy at Indigo Ranch is to positively shape the hearts and minds of our students by providing them with an academically rigorous and content rich curriculum, a learning environment of high expectations for student achievement in which character is modeled and promoted within a collaborative community based on trusting relationships.

The Board shall use the Mission, the Motto and the Six Measures of Excellence (Shared Values, Parent Choice, Academic Growth, Character Education, Economic Sustainability, and School Development) as the filter for all decision making.

1. Call to Order (6:00pm)
2. Call – Chris Dempsey, Jen Reishus, Brandon Henry, Stephen Teague, Nancy Box, Scott Hunter, Dan Speer & Valerie O’Brien. Michael Phillipich is absent due to deployment.
3. Pledge of Allegiance (6:00pm)
4. Mission Statement (6:01pm) – Brandon Henry read the Imagine mission statement.
5. Approval of January 28, 2019 Board Agenda (6:01pm) – Brandon Henry motioned to approve the board agenda, Jen Reishus seconded the motion. Chris Dempsey requested a change to add PTO Directors Communication Agreement First Reading as A under item 13, moving everything down by one. Steven Teague motioned to approve the agenda as presented with the change made by Chris Dempsey. Jen Reishus seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.
6. Approval of January 2019 Board Meeting Minutes (6:04pm) – Henry motioned to approve the board meeting minutes as presented. Jen Reishus seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0
  - a. January 7, 2019
  - b. January 9, 2019
  - c. January 10, 2019
  - d. January 19, 2019
7. Comments from the Public (6:03pm) – Chris commented that Frank Fowler resigned and Scott Hunter will be acting Principal until the hiring process occurs. Dan Speer will be acting assistant principal. The district has been notified. The board has given Mr. Hunter and Mr. Speer full authority to run the school. Stephen Teague read the rules of public comments for the meeting.
  - Lucy Nelson: Read a prepared statement about the culture of the school. She stated that she is confused by the direction of the school during the transition.
    - o Response by Brandon Henry: Stated that the Board has worked with a Strategic Planner as well as the District closely on this transition. There have been some hard changes that have had to happen along the way that the Board was not always expecting. Therefore some of those changes the staff has seen are reflected in those changes. Brandon stated that the mission statement that we are currently using is owned by Imagine Schools. Therefore we needed to have a new mission statement for the new school. The one provided by Mr. Fowler did not fit the suggestions made by the strategic planning consultant. Therefore the mission statement was edited to reflect those suggestions. Henry also noted that typically when a charter school is in the founding stages the founding board is the only group responsible for development of the school. In this case the situation is out of the ordinary with employees already hired as well as an existing school that is moving. Chris Dempsey added a reminder that the teachers still work

for Imagine Schools. Early in the process the Imagine lawyers notified the Board that they were requesting that the staff not be utilized for any of the building/planning for the new school. Therefore the Board has been diligent about making sure the staff was not engaged. The board dug in to operations at some point because they had lost trust in Frank. Chris noted that it is a personnel issue that does not need to be discussed in an open forum. However there were many complaints from the district, parents etc. that were not addressed.

- Jan Songer: Noted that we are in a difficult situation. She discussed that we need open communication throughout this transition. She stated that the staff is scared and the clarity is missing and there is a trust issue among the staff.
  - o Brandon Henry responded that there is a meeting once a month with regular updates on the status of the current school as well as the new school. He noted that there could be a committee of teachers that could rotate each month at the meetings as teacher liaisons. Chris noted there will be a monthly town hall to provide parents with information about the new school which teachers could attend as well. Chris also discussed the hiring of new staff for the new school, reiterating that Scott and Dan are now responsible for the hiring; the board will not be included in the process. He suggested that staff take the interview seriously, come prepared and knock it out of the park. If you want to be here show them you want that in your interview. Chris noted that the board is in charge of the charter but not in charge of hiring staff. They are only responsible for hiring the principal. Chris noted that if you do not believe in what we are doing with this transition than maybe this is not the school for you.
- Gracee Ligget: Gracee thanked the board for their work on the new school. She is here tonight to share her sadness that the school leader is no longer here and she is concerned about the direction of the school
  - o Chris thanked Gracee for her comments.
- Angie Ragsdale: Angie thanked Brandon Henry for all of his responses to the public comments. She wanted to know why the board hired Frank a few weeks ago if they did not have confidence in him. Angie feels she is speaking on behalf of lots of teachers that are afraid but do not feel comfortable speaking up. She explained the culture in the school and how much she values working here. She is greatly concerned that the board has gotten into areas they know nothing about. She needs reassurance that Scott will be the leader and the board will become clear on their roles. She feels the mission statement for the new school is full of meaningless buzz words. How can she sell GPA if she doesn't understand who we really are? Comments continued beyond the legally allotted 3 minutes of speaking time...
  - o Brandon Henry noted that the board loved Frank. However, execution was not taking place. They were continually giving direction and things were not getting done. In meetings with D49 and strategic planning meetings there was continued discussion about leadership issues. Even still the board decided to push ahead with Frank hopeful that he could lead us through the transition and at least into one school year at the new school. However Frank was not ready to do that, so he choose to resign. Angie fully respects that there are things going on that she does not know about. Brandon Henry noted that it's really hard to accomplish the work that needs to get done. Therefore the Board choose to hired admin and office staff for GPA in January because they just cannot accomplish the work that needs to be done on their own. Brandon noted that each of the board members genuinely liked Frank but he chose to move on for his own reasons.
- Viola Lee: Read a prepared statement about culture of the school. Noted the amazing growth in the reading scores recently in grades K-3. Shared that Peter Hiltz, Chief Education Officer - D49 attended a literacy meeting at our school last week and commented that he is concerned that the new school will not have a library. Noted studies that adding a library adds to achievement stores.
  - o Chris Dempsey noted that it was a major goal to add a library however the funds are not available. There was a planning meeting in the spring and at that time it was determined that book nooks for now would be acceptable. However there are plans to add a library in the addition in a few years. Viola asked if it would be possible to raise money to add it now, Chris noted that at this point it is too late in the construction process to add to the first phase of the building. Brandon Henry noted there could be a potential of adding a modular to have a library on site. Chris will discuss with the contractor about that possibility at the construction meeting first thing in the morning.

- Gary Hockett: Parent at Imagine that is on the fence about moving his children to GPA. Feels confused and frustrated that staff is not being involved in the building of the new school. Would like a copy of the charter to study.
  - o Chris Dempsey addressed Nancy concerning whether the staff could work with the board. Earlier Nancy noted they could during their own hours. Chris stated that the lawyer response to the Board's request specifically concerning Imagine employees helping with the new school was no, so they did not realize at the time that it would be allowed in any way and the Board did not want to put people in difficult situations concerning their employer. Mrs. Hockett feels that Chris' body language is disrespectful.
- Katie Schoendube: A parent at the school. She was very excited about moving to the new school; however she stated that she feels Chris' tone and treatment towards the staff is appalling.
  - o Chris responded that it's been a hard week and apologized. He has been busting his butt doing 80 hours a month, on top of a job and family. He is glad that the staff is here, he wants to see them attend meetings all the time. He is tired of staff only coming every couple months when they get pissed off. Come all the time. Chris noted that the Board did not want to change anything but they have bond requirements to meet and charter requirements to meet. Things have changed and Frank was not on board with the changes. Chris stated that he is upset too. He values his friendship with Frank and this was a really tough situation for him as well.
- Jon Fairbanks: Had some things to say but they have already been said so...said he understands Chris' position. However he feels there is a fundamental difference between what we had and where we are going. Jon felt that Frank valued his staff, however Chris' comment that this is the mission if you do not like it than maybe this is not the best place for you means we are not valued as staff. Jon feels he and the staff need to feel valued in order to move ahead.
  - o Brandon Henry noted that when staff came to Imagine to work they were not asked what the mission should be. Likewise if a staff member decides to work elsewhere, they would not have an opportunity to create the mission at that new school either. Jon Fairbanks explained that he felt valued by Frank and he does not feel valued by the Board. Chris commented that he feels that all the employees are valued. He did not want to put people's jobs at risk during the process of creating the mission and vision statements, so that was the reason for the approach. If he did not care about the staff here than his kids would not be enrolled here. Chris stated that he does not know how many other ways to say it. Imagine employees have a duty of loyalty. No Imagine cannot tell staff members how they spend their free time; however Chris does not want to have that discussion with Monte and Nancy if it comes down to that. Chris commented that the mission is not in set in stone. After the school opens he wants the staff to come together and decide what worked and what did not and what changes can be made at that point.
- Libby Moody: Reminded the parents and Nancy that the staff is fully committed till the last day with Imagine Schools.
- Deidre Arbour: Read a prepared statement about the culture and staff. She is concerned by the board's actions recently.
  - o Brandon Henry reiterated that the staff is valued. He also noted that the board did want Frank to lead the school however there is a legal statute that requires a search for the leader of the new school. This was required whether Frank was with the school or not. There is a search committee that will conduct the search and hiring. The board was not aware of this requirement until sometime towards the end of December or Early January. Chris admitted they had some concerns if Frank was the best leader but because of the staff and culture they had every intention of keeping him at least through the first school year at the new building but they found out very recently that there are legal requirements that required a search, therefore Frank was hired with GPA as the interim leader until that search could be completed.
- Stephanie Pontius: What are the rules/requirements for the hiring committee?
  - o Brandon Henry noted that the committee is made up of some district staff, Brandon, a parent at Imagine as well as a PTO member.
- Emily Phillipich: Emily stated that she is in a very unique position of being a parent, PTO member and her husband is Vice President on the board (currently deployed). She has heard both sides and feels like people are talking at each other instead of to each other. She wants everybody to know how much work the board is putting in towards this and that if they were not doing this work there would not be a school.

She reminded everybody to listen to each other and take a breath.

- Chris apologized to the staff. Stated that the Board never tried to intentionally exclude anyone. They wanted to protect the Imagine employees and they have every desire to keep the culture during and after the transition to the new school. Does changing the polo shirt color really change the culture? The board has to try everything to bring people in and get this school going. Obviously we are not doing everything right, but we are trying. We really do appreciate you!
8. PTO Update (7:19pm) – Chelley Bresnahan and Elizabeth Roth reviewed activities coming up with the PTO for February. The Fun Run fundraising starts the 4<sup>th</sup> and the run is on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The PTO meeting was rescheduled to the 12<sup>th</sup> due to snow. There is a PTO night at Freddy’s on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
  9. SAC Update (7:21pm) – Gabe Cardenas is the new president of the SAC. Quick background, recently retired from the military for 22 years and has children attending the school. He loves to volunteer for the school. The first SAC meeting was a few weeks ago, he has been reviewing all the documents he was provided. He would like to build a wish list from teachers, board & parents. He would love to have any insight of input, please feel free to contact him.
  10. Treasurer/Business Manager Report on Trend (7:26pm) – Jen noted that in December the school received a refund check from PERA for PERA contributions that were incorrectly deducted from bonus checks. The employee portions have been refunded to the employees. Also noted that General & Administrative expenses increased due to legal expenses and the Christmas party. The final student count was reflected in the December PPR from the District. Right now the school is showing a loss of \$74k; however this will most likely be adjusted due to recent staffing changes.
  11. Board Dashboard/Principal Report (7:29pm) – Scott Hunter reported on the board dashboard. STAR Testing percent proficient and advanced is showing green, highlight in the scores is that we are showing the greatest middle school growth in STAR Testing since Scott has been at the school. Seeing the same sort of outcome for math as well. The tests were taken in December which is showing growth from August to December and will again have a benchmark test in May. Mentioned earlier, on Friday there was an early literacy meeting for grades K-3, with some district representation including Peter Hilts. Comments were made about what we are doing and how they would like to duplicate the results in other schools within the district. For the third year in a row we have the top literacy growth in the district. We have the best model in the district at this point. Discussed new writing prompt programs and Write Now Right Now that we are implementing for K-4<sup>th</sup> grade, with benchmarks and writing data which can be very difficult to collect. Incredible things are happening in the school to improve writing. Also, earlier in the year we had a teachers professional development around Talk Read, Talk Write, that instructor is coming back in a few weeks to spend the day at the campus monitoring and helping to grow the staff in this area. This will be funded by D49. Brandon would like to see an updated Needs/Wants list that reflects Scott and Dan.
  12. Imagine Schools Inc. Regional Report (7:41pm) – Nancy commented that they are working through some pieces around student privacy laws on STAR testing etc. D49 will handle programs such as PowerSchool. Nancy came down with another Imagine Regional Director, it is really clear the progress on all of the pieces that the staff have put into place to improve the writing.
  13. Discussion Items
    - a. PTO Directors Communication Agreement First Reading (7:45pm) – Stephen Teague reviewed that the Board wanted a clear operating agreement between the Board and the PTO to determine roles and responsibilities between each entity. This includes financials, authority of the board and principal approval of fundraisers. There will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading at the next meeting.
    - b. School Leader Search Committee Report (7:47pm) – Brandon Henry reported that the search committee met recently and have developed a job description for the principal position. If there are no suggested changes to the job description, the committee would like to post the job tomorrow. Hoping to have a formal list of finalists by Feb 14<sup>th</sup>. Once posted they would like to make an offer 14 days later. Pushing to hire by March 1<sup>st</sup> ideally.
    - c. GPA Staff Employment Status (7:50pm) – Applicants have until Monday to apply for positions at Grand Peak Academy, currently there are 5 teachers and 6 paras that have not applied. After Monday interviews will be

scheduled. The goal is to have offers out before Spring Break.

- d. Board Dashboard/Principal Report (7:51pm) – The district wants to see more than the same test scores over and over. Needs to see actionable items that reflect meeting the mission and vision of the school. Brandon Henry thinks the dashboard is missing the context of the discussion that we have during the meetings. Need to have the dashboard reflect accordingly.
- e. Strategic Plan (8:02pm) – Will defer to the marketing plan discussion
- f. Marketing Plan (8:03pm) – Brandon Henry stated that we needed the mission and vision to market the new school at enrollment fairs. Based on the trend of previous years we could lose 50+ students from attrition. Brandon wanted to be ambitious and planned for 850 students but realistically the school probably cannot support that many students. There is a delicate balance between class size and funding. Teachers would not mind 27 students...24 is sweet but 27 is doable. District and Bond want 700 students. Therefore as a business perspective our goal is 800. Will update goal classroom sizes of 24 which should still give us a number over 800. Need to raise awareness of GPA, have some tactics in place for that. Utilizing digital media tools and brochures to track and know what is working for us and what is not. Want families to apply and enrolled in the school swiftly. Targeting 10 zip codes in the local area. Need some more brochures printed. Working with JHL to have large signs built in the area. Going to reassess in April and decide what is working and what is not. Quarterly marketing plan to determine which action items need to be done. Once we get the school open we can reduce our marketing engagement if the school is full. We want to encourage enthusiasm among the parents. The mission and vision is a marketing driver to open the new school. PTO will be working on the spirit wear. Deidre Arbour commented that middle school should not have pockets in the hoodies as phones are being brought into the classroom in pockets. Brandon noted that the website went live on the 31<sup>st</sup> and have had 75 kids enrolled that are new families for GPA. Currently have 621 intent to return forms received with 92 unknowns. If we get half of those unknowns plus the new enrollments we are looking positive with enrollment.
- g. GPA Parents Handbook (8:19pm) – Needs to be updated and revised by Scott and Dan. Goal of approval at April meeting.
- h. Board Policy Manual (8:20pm) - Needs to be updated and revised by Scott and Dan. Goal of approval at April meeting.
- i. GPA Uniform Policy (8:22pm) – The board would like to have a conversation about adjusting the middle school uniform. Deidre commented that Mrs. Rafferty had students doing surveys around uniforms for a class project and will share the data with Brandon Henry. Have a desire to keep K-5 relatively the same. Gracee Ligget suggested considering plaid in the elementary uniforms.
- j. Imagine Schools Inc. Proprietary Information List (8:28pm) – Nancy does not have the answer on proprietary information.
- k. Water Mitigation (8:31pm) – Valerie spoke with Sam at R&R Ditching. Sam stated that the costs on materials may have gone up slightly but the pricing should be fairly similar as long as the work is completed in warmer months. There are two concerns, one is having small children in the area around the work and the other is weather. The work should take a maximum of 2 weeks. Valerie tentatively scheduled the work to begin the first week of June. Chris will get approval from the building owner to complete the work before the date is finalized.
- l. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Enrollment Policy 8.0 (8:31pm) – This meeting acted as a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading for the enrollment policy update.
- m. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Policy 7.19 Primary/Pre-Primary Education (8:32pm) – This will policy will only apply if Gov Pollis' proposal for full day kindergarten is passed. This was an effort to be prepared ahead of time for the impending legislation.

14. Vote to Adjourn to Executive Session (8:35pm) – Brandon Henry motioned to approve adjourning to Executive Session. Jen Reishus second the motion. Motion passes 4-0.

- **C.R.S. § 24-6-402 (4)(f)(I)** Personnel matters except if the employee who is the subject of the session has requested an open meeting, or if the personnel matter involves more than one employee, all of the employees have requested an open meeting. With respect to hearings held pursuant to the "Teacher Employment, Compensation, and Dismissal Act of 1990", article 63 of title 22, C.R.S., the provisions of section 22-63-302 (7) (a), C.R.S., shall govern in lieu of the provisions of this subsection (4).

15. Action Items (10:03pm) -

- a. Anything form Executive Session Requiring a Vote – Nothing requiring a vote
- b. Approval of Enrollment Policy 8.0 (10:03pm) – Brandon Henry motioned to approve the Enrollment Policy 8.0 as presented. Jen seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0

16. Board Member Communication (10:04pm) Brandon Henry has completed 19 out of the 30 training modules. There is no update on the sports program at this time. Steel was delievered today so the calendar was tabled till next meeting once we have a better idea of construction dates. The website bid will stay on the agenda for now. Stephen will meet with Scott, Dan & Chelsea about moving forward with a new website.

17. Other Business – Jen will not be able to attend the meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Also the League Conference is February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>.

18. Adjournment (10:16pm)

19. Informal Board Self-Assessment (After Meeting Five (5) Minutes)

#### **PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS:**

*Board meetings are generally a time for the Board to hear from the Principal, other senior administration representatives, and those who are scheduled to make presentations on selected topics. Colorado law prohibits the Board from discussing public business other than during public meetings or executive sessions (see below). Therefore, these public sessions are working sessions of the Board that are intended to provide interaction between Board members and administration in an effort to reach decisions on a wide variety of issues. With rare exception, these meetings are not the best place for initial discussion to take place. New initiatives or proposals should typically be discussed first with administration and a formal proposal prepared for presentation at a time when the item can be scheduled on the agenda. Nevertheless, there are times when the Board is discussing a proposal that certain individuals attending the meeting can provide valuable insight, expertise and perspective to assist the Board in making wise and well-informed decisions. Generally, those involved in bringing forth an idea, and those most active in the process of researching and presenting a proposal, will be the ones most likely to be called upon for input during the Board's discussion. In addition, senior administration officials and representatives from other active task forces will be relied upon for their perspective concerning a particular proposal and the impact it will have on various constituencies.*

#### **OPEN FORUM/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

*During each meeting, the Board sets aside a period of time when anyone who wishes to do so may make a brief statement or mini-presentation to the Board on a non-agenda item. The Board will take these comments and suggestions under consideration, but will typically not have adequate time in the schedule or enough information to be able to make a decision or respond during the meeting. The Board may choose to refer such items to the administration for research and the possible future preparation of a recommended course of action to be considered at a later meeting. Open meeting forum is not a time to discuss students, staff, or parents by name.*

#### **OTHER VENUES FOR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

*New ideas and suggestions are often best handled by contacting the administration. In addition, there are a number of other venues where interested individuals are encouraged to bring forth ideas and suggestions. These include, but are not limited to, Student Character Council; Parents Teachers Organizations (PTOs), Town Hall Meetings, Principal's Coffees, regularly scheduled parent meetings, and various Task Forces. Proposals which are brought forth through groups such as these, in*

*close cooperation with the administration, are typically organized in a manner that make them easier for the Board to properly consider them and make well-informed decisions.*

**EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:**

*While the law requires that most Board meetings be open to the public, the Board may meet in a private, "executive" session to consider the following types of matters: (i) purchase or sale of real estate; (ii) conferences with an attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice; (iii) matters required to be kept confidential by federal or state laws or regulations; (iv) specialized details of security arrangements or investigations; (v) determination of positions relative to contract negotiations; (vi) personnel matters; (vii) consideration of documents protected by the Open Records Act; and (viii) discussion of most individual student matters.*