



La Academia Dolores Huerta

A Dual Language Charter Middle School

1480 N. Main Street
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Phone: 575/526-2984 Fax: 575/523-5407

REGULAR GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 05/02/2013

Meeting Location: LADH

Approval: DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER AT 6:05 PM

ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHED QUORUM

Members Present: Robert del Plain, Bertha Silva, Norma Martinez Arrieta, Eva Telles

Members Absent: Saul Hernandez, John Vasquez

Public Present: Octavio Casillas, Olga Morales, Michael Davis, Jose Tena, Roseanna Ramos, Gina Trujillo, Gary Chapman,

AGENDA

- **Motion to amend agenda to move section 2: the approval of the governing council meeting minutes (March 7th, April 4th, April 8th, April 15th) to the next regular governing council meeting by Bertha Silva**
 - Motion seconded by Eva Telles
 - Approved in the unanimous
- **Public Input**
 - Olga Morales: Explained she was interested in hearing information on the facilities particularly. Would it be possible to move public input to the end of the agenda.
 - Robert del Plain explained that with the small group present it will be possible to receive public input for facilities during the discussion by the facilities committee. Mr. del Plain made sure that all those present who were interested in discussing facilities would be able to stay until that point of the meeting.
- **Principal's Report**
 - Mr. Casillas provided written report (attached)
 - Recently had to call the police due to irate homeless woman harassing the students and parents. A police report was filed.
 - A codes agent was outside today observing the traffic due to: parents blocking neighborhood driveways and parking in front of fire hydrants. Mr. Casillas wants to keep good relations with the surrounding community and neighborhood. A new system of pick up/drop off, possibly incorporating staggered release times, will be worked out during the summer to minimize problems during the next school year.
 - Staff contracts will be handed out next week. Staff will have (15) days to respond.
 - A new facility option has come up recently for \$2M. Name of the business must maintain anonymous at this time per request of the owner. This particular facility has a total of 30,000

sq. ft. and an additional (3) acres in the back that will be available to the facility, a huge parking lot. It is a two-story building equipped with elevator and a small gym. The property is very close to the FYI office off Solano Dr. Mr. Casillas will meet with the current owner and see if the possibility is financially feasible for LADH. Once more progress is made Mr. Casillas will host an informational presentation to staff and parents so that everyone is well informed.

- Assessments taking place at LADH include: Discovery, San Diego Quick, as well as in-house short cycle assessments so that LADH teachers have the data necessary to drive instruction and curriculum plans for the following year.
- 8th grade graduation and dance will be May 17th at 6pm at Alma d'Arte. Governing council members are invited to attend.
- Bonus Points have been submitted on Monday, April 29th. Last year one was submitted; this year LADH submitted (16) different activities that LADH did different so LADH could receive bonus points.
- Cinco de Mayo will be taking place tomorrow at LADH. A local artist, Natasha, will be performing at 1pm. This celebration is about bringing the community to LADH to learn more about our school.
- Calendar has been finalized for the 2013-2014 school year. August 7th 2013 will be the first day of school and May 23, 2014 will be the last day of the school year. We will be starting about (4) days before LCPS. (calendar attached)
- Staff raises have been finalized and completed. More information will be provided with budget.
- NMABE Student Performance went very well. It was a lot of work but the students really liked the travel experience.
- Interviews for Science and Conjunto/Norteno teaching positions will take place the 9th and 10th of May. Applicants are highly qualified.
- Professional Development: Many of the teachers have been taking webinars offered by the state. Mr. Casillas in encouraging all teachers to take as many professional development courses/opportunities as possible. La Cosecha – workshop will be presented in the Fall by LADH teachers.
- Mr. Casillas has become a member of the Common Core State Standards Design Coalition to receive training while also making the most of the public relations opportunities to promote LADH throughout the state.
- Aggressive RTI (Response to Intervention) continues. Summer program will target low performers, mid performers, and high performers. It will begin June 18th and continue for 3 days per week for 3 weeks total.
- Saturday School will start in September next year and continue throughout Fall the Spring semesters to give students more opportunity to make academic progress throughout the year.

- **Financial Report**

- (2) BARS are needed for draw down money received
 - 1 for spaceport in the amount of \$5,577.00
 - Senate bill (SB 9) in the amount of \$6,083.00
- Everything is going smoothly as we are moving closer to the end of the year
- Proposed budget for next year will be discussed during along with the finance/audit committee

- **Motion to approve the BARS for spaceport and SB 9 proposed by Eva Telles**
 - Motion was seconded by Bertha Silva
 - Approved in the unanimous

- **Discussion of Committees**
 - Policies/Legislation/State Statutes
 - Robert del Plain: nothing to report

 - Evaluation Committee
 - Robert del Plain explained that he and Mr. Casillas did sit down during the month to discuss goals made at the beginning of the year. Good progress is being made.

 - Facilities Committee
 - Robert del Plain provided a description of LCPS proposed Las Cruces Charter School Center at location of current Court Youth Center. He stressed that nothing has been finalized as of this date and that this initial proposal is just a starting point. He explained that the governing council voted only to enter into discussions with the (4) organizations involved and work towards modifying the plan. There will be more opportunities for any of the (4) organizations involved to pull out of the project if the end result is not favorable to them. He explained most of the funding would come through the bond monies in February 2014. He welcomed any input at this time or in the future.
 - A visual of the proposed Charter School Center was passed out to all in attendance. (attached)
 - Chris Bardey: Clarified crossroads will be moving out of its current location at Court Youth Center and would not be part of the Charter Center plan.
 - Olga Morales: As a parent (of a student at LADH), voiced her concerns: How will LADH protect its mission statement and vision if it becomes a part of this larger group? She feels this proposed center is a matter of convenience for LCPS, and creates numbers for them. She explained that in the United States we have a history of creating facilities, but not social capital. She believes this proposal by LCPS does not help meet the needs of LADH –and that the facility will not create social capital but could potentially create problems LADH does not currently have including safety. She wanted the governing council to ask the question, “Are we creating a solution or a problem for future generations?” She believes facilities can be found in the future, but we need to have a common goal. Ms. Morales wants to encourage the governing council not to lose the vision and mission of LADH. She suggested the governing council line up the LADH mission and values to the other schools involved in the charter school center. She believes involvement in the project would dilute the culture of LADH and the school would lose its identity.
 - Michael Davis: Explained for the past (2) years LADH has maintained students with GPAs of 3.0 or better. This year we had (35) students who went on to the high school level—(30) of them continue to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better. This information was provided to help illustrate the fact that LADH maintains high academic standards. He shared that the staff had a meeting last week and voted not to join LCPS with the Charter School Center because they feel LADH will lose its independence. He continued that another issue is the facility itself: LADH has been around of (8) years and J. Paul Taylor Academy has only been around for (2) years and they are the ones receiving the brand new facility which he does not understand. Mr. Davis raised another concern of intermingling of middle school students with high school students. “It is not in the best interest of LADH to go to a

Charter School Center. “We are not cattle—we are people and our students are very important to us. We feel we would lose a whole lot of our independence, academics, and pursuit. Just because it looks good doesn’t mean it *is* good.”

- Jose Tena asked for more information regarding the finance process – how much is it going to cost? What is the process? Will we be able to own or are we going to lease?
- Robert del Plain addressed Mr. Tena’s concerns with information provided by LCPS during the last meeting. He explained that the initial thought is to receive money through the bond funds to help with the financing of the facility. Initially, the facility would be under a lease agreement with the maintenance taken care of by LCPS. LADH would have an option to own the facility and the land it stands on in the future. The financing part of the plan still is in the preliminary stages and still has to be worked out through future discussion. Mr. del Plain included some thoughts to consider: By law, according to the LADH charter, in the next (5) years (at the end of our next charter) LADH needs to be into a public building (something that is owned by a government agency). LADH cannot be leasing as it is now. The state has approved we can enter into a lease to own agreement *if* there is nothing available or nothing that can be found in good faith. There is a concern that at the end of the (5) years, if we don’t have a new facility, the state can say that there was not a good faith effort put forth if this opportunity is completed negated in the initial phase. Mr. del Plain explained the funding provided to LADH through lease reimbursement by the state. He also explained the potential opportunity for LADH to have the new building currently designated for J. Paul Taylor Academy through future discussions on the needs of LADH and also in the event that school pulls out of the plan altogether. He stressed that this was just the preliminary plans and that many changes could take place during the modification/discussion process. He believes that it would be the best option for LADH if we continue forward and remain a part of future discussions with LCPS in order to see what the final result becomes. He agreed that future discussions with LCPS should incorporate the concerns brought up by the teachers, staff, parents, and those present in today’s meeting: protect the mission and vision of LADH and the students as well.
- Chris Bardey: Expanded on potential conflict with LADH situated next to a high school. He articulated potential positive outcomes with collaboration with the (4) organizations involved, but explained his main concern: maintain flexibility and use of space.
- Michael Davis: Wanted the governing council to remember LADH went through this before with LCPS and that deal fell through. He continued that 85% of Charter Schools are not in public buildings. He does not foresee the (5) year stipulation on facility as a problem or that it will mean LADH loses its charter—he feels that it is more of scare tactic.
- Mr. Chapman: Explained that Irene Oliver-Lewis gave a presentation to LADH staff the last time a deal like this was presented and it sounded good, but did not turn out to be good. He was concerned about talk around the county is that LADH is going to be there at the Center for sure. His top reason LADH students shouldn’t be there: autonomy.
- Olga Morales: Asked, “What is LCPS’ understanding of a Charter School?” She continued that charter schools in relation to public schools do not have the same culture. She believes this is a funding opportunity for LCPS. She posed several questions to the governing council: What do they understand of any of the cultures of the Charter Schools? Why would J. Paul Taylor want to move if they have already have brand new building? Ms. Morales stated, “...for LADH –it’s not about

the building... it's about what happens *inside* the building...we have a *community* here with teachers, staff, students, and families that goes beyond the walls of this building." She concluded that she doubted that LCPS understands this concept.

- Eva Telles: thanked all in attendance for their input and stressed that we are all doing this for the benefit of the students. She asked if anyone has asked the students what they wanted.
- Several public and staff present responded yes the students have been asked and they (students) do not want to go to the new building. Mr. Casillas shared that most students do not want to go to a new building at all as they identify the Dennison building as LADH. Mr. Casillas offered to survey the students and provide their input as documentation to the governing council.
- Michael Davis suggested governing council members come to LADH and talk to the students themselves.
- Jose Tena shared that all students were invited to go and see Alma d'Arte/proposed new facility and only one student wanted to go see it. He noted that he felt it was interesting that LCPS wants LADH on the bond now, as they never before wanted LADH on the bond before. He sees this more as a financial convenience for LCPS and not for the students of LADH to receive a better education.
- Robert del Plain added that he agreed that there is a financial aspect to the current plan and that Mr. Rounds has a fiduciary responsibility to LCPS. He stated that he does not believe that Mr. Rounds would enter into an agreement if it did not benefit LCPS in some way. He clarified that just because a plan benefits one entity financially, doesn't mean it can benefit the others involved as well in different ways.
- Olga Morales shared her recent experience with the culture in Russia by giving examples of ways the government is currently investing in their county's social capital: after school programs and activities as well as charter school programs. She feels proud that many of the strategies that are implemented in that country, while not currently implemented throughout the United States as a whole, are implemented at LADH.
- Alejandra del Plain shared that it is good to see parents and staff members present at the meeting today. She expressed that while community is a main concern, she believes that (LADH) doesn't come together as a community as much as it should. She explained that parents attend the fun stuff, but when it comes to helping out to get/keep things going it is hard to get parent/family participation. She continued that parents need to come together to support the governing council as a community and help generate ideas and not just come to meetings to complain. She included that the governing council is made up of voluntary individuals who have full time jobs and families and they should not be looked upon to "do it all." She concluded that LADH needs to come together as a charter school and community to create something better for the kids.
- Michael Davis shared that parents are concerned about their kids and concerned about what the governing council is going to do. It is a two-way street: the governing council must keep parents as well as faculty staff informed. It is important that the governing council seeks input from parents and staff and students.
- Olga Morales extended appreciation of the governing council member's time and commitment to LADH.
- Roseanna Ramos asked the board when the next meeting with LCPS will take place and what type of decisions will be made at that time.
- Robert del Plain explained the next meeting is scheduled on May 8th with Herb Torres. He clarified that the committee will just be continuing

discussions/negotiations during this meeting. The final answer as to whether or not LADH will officially be a part of the final project will not be decided until sometime in August. Mr. del Plain will be taking back all the input and concerns received during this meeting to see if these can be overcome.

- **Community Relations Committee:**
 - Norma Martinez Arrieta: Shared there are continual efforts being made to get LADH's name out in the community. She is currently working with Mr. Casillas to produce a quarterly newsletter that will be shared with our state community including business, state representatives, as well as parents/families. During the summer we will be planning more parent involvement workshops/activities for next school year and focusing on quality programs/activities that meet the needs of students and families of LADH and make the biggest impact.
- **Finance/Audit Committees:**
 - Update on Finance Committee: Robert del Plain discussed the meeting that Mr. Casillas and Ms. Trujillo hosted for parents and staff which included some of the things parents would like to see for LADH, how they would like to see our funds being spent such as after school activities and those types of items.
 - Presentation and review of proposed 2013-2014 Budget provided by Ms. Gina Trujillo (see attached reports)
 - Budget will be approved by LCPS school board at their next general meeting and is on the agenda for May 21, 2013. All governing council members are encouraged to attend. The meeting will start at 6:30pm but LADH is not the first on the agenda.
 - Update on Audit Committee: Robert del Plain

Discussion of Governing Council Officer nominations

- **Motion to nominate Norma Martinez Arrieta as Secretary/Treasurer proposed by Bertha Silva**
 - Motion seconded by Eva Telles
 - Approved in the unanimous
- **Motion to nominate Bertha Silva as Vice President proposed by Eva Telles**
 - Motion seconded by Norma Arrieta
 - Approved in the unanimous
- **Motion to adjourn proposed by Eva Telles**
 - Motion seconded by Bertha Silva
 - Approved in the unanimous

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:55 PM

Minutes Taken By: Norma Martinez Arrieta