

# T.R. Paul Academy of Arts and Knowledge

aka Northern Colorado Academy of Arts and Knowledge

November 7, 2013 7:00 pm

4512 McMurry, Fort Collins, CO 80525

## Board Meeting Minutes

### ***OPENING SECTION (20 minutes)***

1. **Call to Order**

Board President

Time Started: 7:01 PM

Pride through Performance

The mission of TPAAK (NCAAK) is to teach students the joy of learning and the importance of expressing individual talent artistically and academically while enhancing community & culture.

2. **Roll Call** Board President

Board Members present in attendance:

( ) Bennett ( x ) Clark ( x ) Gorski ( x ) Kornfeld ( ) Wager - Robertson

### ***SCHOOL & STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT (60 minutes)***

1. **Strategic Planning** – Status of the Middle School

The board started this meeting by each member present describing their views on being a board member as well as a parent with children in the school. Board president then detailed the statistics and findings of how many children moved through TPAAK grade school into middle school and how many students came directly to TPAAK into middle school. Also discussed were the lower grade averages in middle school that adversely affect the overall “grade” of the school that parents see when investigating school options when compared to the rich middle school offerings this area has to offer. Because we can’t separate the middle school scores from the grade school scores, the score of the entire school has the same “grade”.

2. **Budget overview** – Current Budget Deficit and options for closing the gap

The board president continued the discussion with the exact financial position of the school for both the grade school (K-5) and middle school and projections into the future. Including CSI’s stand on fiscal stability with respect to the entire school, not only the grade school or the middle school and how TPAAK cannot separate the two with its current charter and reporting rules. CSI may decide that the entire school’s performance is not acceptable and recommend closure. This even though the TPAAK grade school (K-5) has outstanding scores. The board then took suggestions from the audience on how to improve TPAAK finances as well as our visibility to the public and discussed them with the room at large.

Primarily these questions:

- a) Can we make our small size a virtue for the middle school? Answer: we have been using this discussion point as well as individualized instruction for years, but the attendance has not budged.
- b) Can we privatize our middle school? Answer: Only by changing the charter and finding a separate site for the middle school. The funding is not there to do this.
- c) Are we pursuing grants to help the school? Answer: Yes, many grants are in the works and we had a grant writer create a grant boilerplate as well as apply for large grants. We also had an intern this last year whose sole position was to investigate and apply for grants.
- d) How about finding sponsors and patrons? Answer: We have been working strategic partnerships with many local businesses over the last two years toward this end.

3. **Board terms of Office Policies and Elections**

#### 4. Audience Comments Board President

Finally, the board opened up discussion with the audience to take concerns and suggestions. The purpose for having this discussion so early in the year was to allow parents to seek other options for middle school should the Board vote to petition CSI to remove the middle school from the charter. The meeting was well attended with many parents and TPAAK teachers. Many parents and teachers discussed the issues with each other. These are specific comments directed to the board concerning the decision to close the TPAAK middle school:

**Parent 1:** We'd do better if we focused on the K-5 to build it up since it was healthy now and can only get better. Parent has a middle school student now.

**Parent 2:** We should negotiate with a "feeder" high school to partner with. (We have tried this in the past with no success.)

**Parent 3:** Parent chose another middle school which allowed better social opportunities before high school and which had larger programs to be part of.

**Parent 4:** Parent's kids LOVE the arts focus of the school and believe that TPAAK should build the Paragon brand and continue to build up the K-5 foundation.

**Parent 5:** Parent believes that the small middle school is essential for their child to succeed. Would not like seeing the middle school go and would likely home school if it did rather than another school.

**Parent 6:** TPAAK needs to find both the reasons families leave and why they stay for middle school. (Board responded with a discussion of the research that has been done on this.) Parent agreed that the school couldn't continue to fund an operation that can't be supported, even if it is painful to part with it.

**Parent 7:** Parent asked what the middle school enrollment would need to be to fund it and Board informed them that we would need 25/class. Board informed parents that given enrollment trends, financially, the only way the Middle School could be kept into 2014-15 year would be to have 1 combined class with 1 teacher and online enhancements. This would be very difficult to do, due to new Colorado State standards regarding teacher qualifications - 1 teacher would need to be certified in 4 categories. Board member asked parents if they would enroll their children in such a configuration and parents responded no.

**Teacher 1:** Prepares students for opportunities in middle school, only to have all the "stars" leave for other middle schools. So the time is not well spent.

**Teacher 2:** Middle school is "draining the life" out of the school. Should consider closing it, with reluctance.

**Teacher 3:** Although middle school teachers are doing well with students, teacher thinks that the K-5 is the more important part of the school.

The overall sentiment of the parents and teachers was that although it would be sad to close the middle school part of TPAAK, it should not happen that this smaller part of TPAAK risks the larger K-5 part of the school.

#### 5. Board Action

a. Recommended Motion: To apply to amend Charter with CSI to change TPAAK to K-5 effective 7/1/2014.

Motion made by:           Seconded:       **MOTION DEFERRED to November 12, 2013 meeting.**

Roll Call: ( ) Bennett ( ) Clark ( ) Gorski ( ) Kornfeld ( ) Wager - Robertson

#### 6. Executive Session

a. none scheduled

### ***CLOSING SECTION (10 minutes)***

#### **1. Adjournment 9:30**

Adjournment motion made by: Clark