

SOAR Charter School Board Meeting

Date, Time and Place: October 22nd, 2015, 600 Grant St. Suite 525 Denver, CO 80215

Attendance of Board Members:

Present: Sue Sava, Rosann Ward, William Weintraub, Rona Wilensky, Claudia Gutierrez

Present by phone: N/A

Absent: Shelli Brown, Dan Smink, Ellin Keene, Ethan Hemming

Staff absent: Brad Fischer

Quorum? Yes

Also in attendance: Marc Waxman, Sonia Sisneros, Lacey Martinez, Gretchen Morgan

Members of the public in attendance: none

Meeting brought to order – Rona moved, Bill seconds 8:41 AM

Purpose of meeting:

SOAR Board members will learn about best practices in ED search processes, from a state-wide leader who has led searches in schools that are philosophically compatible with SOAR.

8:30 Welcome Gretchen Morgan, Executive Director, Choice and Innovation, CDE

Update: Rosann and Sue meeting with senior staff

8:45-9:45 Essential topics for consideration:

What are the goals for ED search process?

- Gretchen noted that we are not too late in starting the search process. The key will be to balance our process with practical thinking. We need to make sure that we don't make this process so complex that we can't follow through well or show consistency. We need to maintain the trust we have with our community. This will require the Board to be vividly engaged in doing their due diligence. The Board will also need to be very clear about roles & engagement. They have perspectives on things that others might not, this may be an opportunity to make changes that will help to move the school forward
- We need to have clear priorities. All stakeholders sharing the same vision -the Board, staff, students & families
- We will bring in possible candidates to visit the school and see if it is a place they can see themselves in.

- The hiring should take place in January or early February, with posting no later than December.
- There could be an overlap where the new person comes in & works in the building before Marc transitions out.
- The trust building process is a catalyst. We will use trust building to fill any gaps.

What are authentic and efficient ways to gather stakeholder input on SOAR's future?

- Senior staff will be interviewed one on one as well as some teachers, families & students. We will create focus groups and/or surveys & essentially let people know that we want to hear everyone – we just can't guarantee that we can implement what every stakeholder asks for
- Marc believes that the key in his transition is staff retention.
- We will want to assemble a small search committee of parents & staff members. Ideally, 1 senior staff member, 1 teacher, 2 parents plus the 4 Board members on executive committee. Marc will not be on this committee and he will not be in the formal process for finding the new person.
- During the next staff meeting Marc will ask staff, in tandem with Sonia, Claudia & Sue, to write down three names of possible staff representatives
- Some folks will need to be closer in the weeds on this even though we will have a consultant. If we plan well, we can help alleviate a lot of anxiety just through communication.
- We will talk to 5th graders who've been with SOAR since we opened and some 4th graders as well, to see what they love about SOAR.

Given stakeholder input, what are best practices around designing the ED job?

- Rona notes that qualities and characteristics should be put in place of "job description".
- Continuity is crucial. We don't want folks to feel like things are falling apart. We want the new leader to come in & establish themselves. What can they do to be an effective leader in a place that already has a well-defined strategic plan?
- Marc put together his profile and made a list of things that he believes folks would want to see in the new ED. The Board will weigh in on the profile to see what we're missing & what is essential in terms of characteristics.
- We don't necessarily want to replicate Marc but rather inspire people to feel comfortable with whom this new leader is. He/she will need to be able to relate to parents, students & staff.

What are our own assumptions about the ED role?

- Claudia, who is also a SOAR parent, feels that it will be important for Marc to mentor & guide the new person who steps into his role.

What is the role of a possible consultancy? Search committee?

- The consultant will know the internal process: where to post, where to look, etc.
- Gretchen will make recommendations of potential consultants.
- The Executive Committee will be in charge of hiring the consultant. This will happen as soon as possible so we can get started on things that we otherwise can't start on until the consultant is hired.

➤ All vote to hire a consultant – 9:15am.

9:45 Next steps to codify ED search process

10:01 – Adjourn – Rosann moved, Rona seconds