

# CLASSICAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

November 14, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. – ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING  
Classical Prep campus, Pasco County, Florida

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Susan Gainer, Chris Nocco, Bob White

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ben Davis, Stacie McIntyre

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Anne Corcoran

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:17 p.m.

### **Topics of Discussion**

Anne Corcoran opened the meeting with reviewing the mission and vision of the school. She noted that in a recent meeting with a marketing firm about messaging to stakeholders and the public about the school's mission and vision, the marketing firm's staff stated that Classical Prep's strength was knowing its "brand" (mission and vision) and internally ensuring that it was in alignment in all areas. They stated that this is rare with a school. However, they also noted that the school needed to continue working on messaging this brand both internally and externally, especially because it is unique and introduces an educational paradigm that is different than the current philosophy of education.

She also reviewed briefly the areas of a traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assessment. On strengths, she noted the school's successes in assessments, strategic planning of curriculum, teacher recruitment and retention, the administrative team, student retention, long waiting lists, and financial planning. On weaknesses, she talked about how the board continues to work on messaging its unique vision so that stakeholders and the public understand generally what are the benefits and requirements of a traditional liberal arts education. She also noted that the board continues to wrestle, as evidenced in meeting minutes, how to structure the administration as the school grows, especially since the board wants to focus administration on professional development and mentoring of teachers. This has been a constant discussion at board meetings about how to divide administrative tasks with tasks related to supporting teachers and enhancing curriculum. She said that this indicates how strong this board is that members realize the importance of this issue and are determined to find the best solution. On opportunity, she stated that the long waiting lists and interest in the school bring the option of expanding the number of students who can receive a liberal arts education. Finally, on threats, as the board has also talked about repeatedly, 99% of schools, public or private, are based on a progressive model of education. Classical Prep must be constantly vigilant to avoid mission drift because of the constant pull of the status quo.

She then opened the meeting up for discussion of the four areas discussed at last year's Annual Meeting.

### *Long-term Financial Planning*

Board members stated that they were committed to continuing the school's commitment to save 5% a year. They noted that this goal had not been fully achieved this year because of unbudgeted bond costs, but that these costs would be recouped at the closing of the bond, thus, allowing the board to achieve its goal.

Board members also reiterated the need to adopt surplus funds policies and procedures but agreed that these were not needed until the next fiscal year. Ms. Corcoran distributed the Five-Year Financial Forecast that was prepared by King & Walker as part of the bond process. It was based upon the projected numbers of enrollment and projected expenses that would correlate to staff and facility needs to provide services to that number of students. Ms. Corcoran noted that the projected savings were about 10% a year in order to allow for adjustments for unforeseen expenses.

Board members discussed the importance of hiring the right teachers and the difficulties faced in the large increases in teachers that will be needed over the next several years. Board members discussed recruitment options and agreed to put more money in this year's budget to stay ahead of the curve on this issue.

They discussed that teachers are the biggest component of the school's budget and that the school should focus on quality over quantity whenever there are limits on the budget in this area.

### *Long-term School Marketing Plan*

Mr. Davis discussed the meeting with the marketing firm regarding how to best market the school and its unique vision. He discussed that the marketing firm will work with the school to develop its two mailers this year for the enrollment period and that the marketing firm will also produce the Teacher of the Year finalist videos for the Gala, which will be eventually placed on the website. Ms. Corcoran mentioned that the first issue of the school's bi-annual magazine will be ready to be mailed in January and that the main purpose of this is to explain the school's vision both internally and externally. She and Mr. Davis also discussed the possibility of in the next year or two doing a "deep dive" research project with a marketing company to understand how the school needs to hone its message to best explain its vision.

### *Long-term Facilities Planning*

Board members spoke about the progress of the bond and the possibility of building a new gym for the 2018-2019 school year, once the new building is completed in August 2017.

### *Long-term Academic Goals*

Board members reaffirmed their commitment to having 90% of students reading at grade level and 90% of students at grade level in math by 2020 (five years after the school's opening date). Board members discussed that the school again received an A for 2015-2016 and that math scores had increased between the school's first year, 2014-2015, and its second year, 2015-2016, by 13 percentage points (to 66%) and reading scores had improved by 8 percentage points (to 71%). They noted that these levels of increase would have the school reach its goal within four years but that they would maintain the goal of five years because increases may not continue at such large rates as proficiency percentages increase.

## *Miscellaneous*

### *Organizational Chart*

Board members wanted to discuss the Organizational Chart for next year, continuing on the discussion of the last meeting. They agreed that the big idea behind it should be to advance the vision and mission of the school, and that difficulty in finding the appropriate leadership for certain aspects of the school should not cause compromise on the Org Chart. Instead, though this may entail more work for the board, members should continue to devise ways to meet the vision of the school through the Org Chart.

### *Curriculum Mapping*

Ms. Corcoran stated that a goal for the coming year was to continue to add to the Curriculum Map to ensure that all content and skills are purposefully covered in the VPK-12<sup>th</sup> grade progression. This will include textbooks, required memorizations, required declamations, etc.

### **Adjourn Meeting.**

- Meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.