



# Governance Council Minutes

*Discovery Charter School, in cooperation with parents and the community, will empower students to become healthy, high achieving, life-long learners through the exploration of science and technology.*

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**January 25, 2011**

**In Attendance:**

*Angi Genco , Co-President, parent*

*Joanne Grassman-Principal*

*Aaron Adams, Parent*

*Danelle Anderson–District Employee*

*Melody Taydch, Parent*

*Brian Davis-Superintendent*

*Kathy Sanders, Secretary/Community Member*

*Suzanne Zietlow-Teacher*

*Jeanne Coughlin -Teacher*

*Sue Sewell-Principal*

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**Meeting called to order at 6:16 PM by Angi**

**1. Review of the minutes with corrections Minutes approved by Angi seconded by Melody**

**2. Updates-Sue, Teachers, Green Team**

A solar panel for the elementary school water feature is being installed which should result in both a cost savings and lower energy use. Wireless access points were installed at a cost of \$1500.00 for the elementary building. This should make wireless technology more available and reliable for students and staff. Charter School teachers are working on sustainability awareness. The kindergarten students are studying birds in winter and their diet. They made feeders with suet and cranberries. They are also studying solids, liquids and gases. The first grade class has grown Amaryllis bulbs and recorded their growth patterns. They are also recording the weather each day and graphing the results. First grade charter students are reading non-fiction books and will be writing books on woodland creatures. They are also studying snowflakes. Second grade students are studying birds and charting types of bills and the foods they eat. In third grade they are doing project feeder watch. In addition they are creating podcasts on Wisconsin Birds. The third grade students are also studying the human body and will compare bird skeletons to human skeletons.

**3. Green Team Update Melody-**

The can collection is going well. There are five members on the team. The middle school will be starting a green team too with students under the direction of Dawn Stovall. In the future they hope to be working with the *Charter Green Team* on some projects.

**4. Honda Grant Sue and Joanne-**

The administrative team will be finalizing and submitting an application for the Honda Environmental Grant which is due on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>. Council members should read over the grant



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draft and send comments, and suggestions as soon as possible before the grant submission. Charter council members will also submit supporting letters. The focus for the grant project will be on agriculture and the impact on the environment. The Charter will eventually create an aquaculture in the classroom. The project will be developmental by grade. The focus will shift from individuals to growing food for larger communities. The study will look at impact of man on the environment and their needs.

## **5. Strategic Plan-All**

There was a detailed discussion about the new strategic plan and what the Charter School experience might look like in Columbus. For the first phase the Discovery Charter School will be a K-5 inquiry based learning experience, but they are also looking at the feasibility of a high school companion program that will compliment what is happening at the elementary level. The district has identified a need to look at a program that would be comprehensive and provide options in the later grades.

The administrative team has discussed the new configuration of K-5 and what may be involved with multiple buildings. Charter School K-5 Strategic Plan will be presented at the Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> school board meeting.

A proposal has been raised to potentially create a research and development model at the secondary level that partners with the community and businesses. The potential focus would be a 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade agricultural and life science model. The program would be supported through corporate sponsorship and the potential school would be located at an off campus setting. Corporate and higher education partners would provide knowledge and expertise in addition to funding. It has been suggested that the business leaders and partners serve on the charter council board. The school could potentially serve 2 kinds of students. The first focus would be on the college bound student who would pursue careers in biotech or advanced sciences. The other focus would be on the student that would follow an internship program focused on agricultural work experiences. Both facets of the programs would require high academic expectations. It is important to note that this is still at a visioning stage and there are many details that would need to be investigated. Initially the goal would be classes of approximately 20 students, but details will need to be worked out when the program goes into the implementation stage.

The superintendent provided examples of school districts that are using corporate partnerships. It is essential that there is open communication and full transparency in defining the goal, scope and structure of the charter. The superintendent mentioned that it will be essential to communicate with the public and that this proposal would be independent of the Columbus School District referendum. The proposed timeline is to first talk to the city leadership to see if this is a viable plan. If there is support then it will be taken to the school board for further discussion and then it will go out to potential corporate partners and the wider community at large.

The March School Board meeting would look at the possible partnership extension to 6th-12th.



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At this initial planning stage there were a lot of questions such as: What happens with the grade levels beyond the Charter school grades? With budget challenges how will the expansion of the charter school be perceived? Charter School design is changing on the state and national level. Charter schools need to be innovative and move beyond traditional structures.

6. Motion to adjourn at 7:37 PM by Angi Seconded by Melody

### *Next Meeting-2/15/11*

- *Strategic Plan Update*
- *Long Range Goals*
- *Community Partnership/Publicity*