Gateway LabSchool

BoardofDirectors Meeting

DATE: December 2nd, 2014, 7:00 pm

LOCATION: 2501 Centerville Road, Wilmington DE [Room 103]

**Come to Order and Attendance:**  **7:00pm**

**Directors Present**: Pam Draper, Joyce Henderson, Rachel Anderson, Anne Budischak

**Directors Absent**: Devie Smith, Kecia Blackson, Chris Santantasio, Ron Miller

**Administrators Present**: Catherine Dolan, Stacy Solomon

**Public Present**: Ellen Marie Cooper, Bill Doolittle, a number of Gateway parents

* **Open for Public Comment**: **7:05 – 7:15pm**
  + Bill Doolittle, president elect of the Delaware PTA and an advisor on the Governor’s Council for Exceptional Citizens, shared his experience with the Framework having given feedback to the state Board of Education on how the Framework would negatively impact students in special education programs. He believes that the Framework needs revising to incorporate a high quality comparative component. The Framework also neglects to address the functional curriculum required by IDEA. In his opinion the Framework results in gross discrimination against special education students and, in turn, Gateway Lab School.

**Old Business**

* **Discussion of Charter School Renewal –** This formal meeting of the Board will take place in a workshop format, permitting the public to dialogue with Board members.
  + A parent asked whether or not using the word “discrimination” during public comments will be inflammatory. Ms. Cooper pointed out conflicts between NCLB and IDEA which result in discrimination against students with special needs and suggested this discrimination should be illuminated by parents during public comment at the hearing. The same parent asked whether parents should use the term “learning disability”, and conversation clarified that LD is a specific diagnosis, but the term “students with disabilities” should be used to bring attention to discrimination.
  + No school like Gateway truly exists in the state, especially for elementary students.
    - **ACTION ITEM**: The percentages of students with IEPs and 504 Plans should be separated by elementary and middle school.
  + Ms. Cooper shared that another way to capture the Secretary and Board’s attention is with data. Longitudinal data can be used to determine how long it will take Gateway to reverse any previous disenfranchisement experienced by the students. Ms. Solomon would like the Board to identify specifically what data should be examined.
    - **ACTION ITEM**: Ms. Solomon will head a committee charged with determining what data should be presented at the public hearing.
  + Mr. Doolittle believes that schools have the ability to create their own comparative model, which could incorporate functional curriculum.
  + Positive Outcomes did not meet in the Academic Framework, but was renewed because they showed growth.
  + Ms. Cooper pointed out that the law says that if you don’t meet the Academic Framework it’s nonrenewal or probation, which is of higher authority than the regulation which mandates nonrenewal.
  + Ms. Draper shared the impending regulation from USDOE that eliminates the state’s ability to alternatively measure students with disabilities. Ms. Cooper believes this issue is separate from Gateway’s. Ms. Draper also asked about parents’ ability to have students opt out of standardized tests. Ms. Cooper shared that LEAs carry the burden of ensuring students take the test. Part of the Performance Framework examines the percentage of students who take the test. Parents opting their students out of the assessments would be detrimental to Gateway’s performance.
  + The State Board of Ed meeting is at 1:00 on December 18th in the Townsend Building in Dover. Gateway should have a presence there as well.
  + An update from Ms. Dolan:
    - Two parent meetings were well attended with 60+ per meeting.
    - Representative Kim Williams and Senator Nicole Poore visited and toured the school.
    - Dr. Baylin is writing a letter on the school’s behalf after seeing his patients succeed at Gateway.
    - Matthew Albright from the News Journal was in the school today and interviewed Ms. Dolan for an article which will be published tomorrow or Thursday.
    - WDEL issues a press release on Gateway.
    - Catherine has been invited to meet with Markell the morning of our public hearing.
    - 2 buses have been reserved to transport parents to the public hearing and will leave the school at 5:00 pm on December 10th.
      * **ACTION ITEM:** Those who wish to take the busses to the hearing must contact Holly in the main office to reserve their seats.
    - Ed Emmett suggested we use our parent satisfaction survey.
    - Ms. Dolan has been in contact with Robert Overmiller, Chairman of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens.
    - ACLU attorney Richard Morse contacted Ms. Dolan. At this time he sees no grounds for legal action, but would like to speak with our attorney about equal protection.
    - Councilwoman Sherry Dorsey Walker will attend the public hearing.
    - Ms. Dolan will meet with Sam Waltz on Friday for his insight.
    - A faculty meeting is also scheduled for Friday.
    - Ms. Dolan has been in contact with Kendall Masset from the Charter School Network.
  + Gateway has 1 hour at the public hearing. This equates to approximately 5 minutes per speaker.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** A strategic approach to presenting must be organized to avoid repetitive presentations.
  + Ms. Draper suggested we point out how closing Gateway would impact other charters’ willingness to take special education students.
  + The video Gateway created for promotional purposes this year will be submitted for the record at the public hearing.
  + A final parent meeting will be held tomorrow evening at 6:30. The location is TBD.
  + Joyce contacted Channel 6 and Hockessin Public news to see if they’d be willing to send someone to cover the hearing.

**Announcements**

* None

**Close Session** **8:55pm**