

The Classical Academy
975 Stout Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Board of Directors Special Meeting
North Campus
Thursday, April 23, 2009

- I. Call to Order. Secretary Steve Pope called the open session to order at 6:07p.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call
 - A. Steve Pope led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - B. Roll Call. The following Directors were present: Steve Pope, Chris Bender, Vance Brown, Lisa Sutton, and Jim Kretchman. Matt Carpenter: Telecon. Clark Miller: Excused absence. Also present: Ron Mast, Director-Elect, Jim Woody, Director-Elect, and Mark Hyatt, President.

Steve Pope thanked the audience for attending. Since this is a Special Session, there are no audience comments.

Veronica Wolken opened the discussion by stating at the last Board Meeting, on April 13th, the Administration was tasked to readdress the calendar/schedule proposal and find an agreeable solution for the 2009-2010 school year, followed by a phase in process for 2010-2011. Steve Pope added that he and Ron Mast met with Veronica and Leesa Waliszewski on Monday. The Board's packet included updated calendars and explanation documents. The calendars are 2009-2010 (Year One of a Two Year Phase In Plan), 2010-2011 (Year Two of a Two Year Phase In Plan), and the 2009-2010 Approved Calendar (in need of adjustments, if the proposed calendar is not approved).


The entire process started on February 9th and is a package, addressing the calendar and the schedule, including federal and state mandates in literacy and math and the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Secondary is following the same path as elementary since they have the same need to meet these mandates. Major changes were proposed including 15 extra minutes per day and half-day Fridays. These changes have the following issues identified: child care issues, students in both elementary and secondary schools, timing of the process, and changes in the workflow for all elementary specials teachers. The Board, Administration, parents, faculty, and staff have been engaged in the entire process together. Today, the Administration is presenting to the Board an adjusted proposal and a more detailed presentation. They propose a two-year phase-in plan. For 2009-2010, all children will come to school at the same time and leave at the same time. All 1st -6th graders will track. The proposed secondary calendar preserves the 15-minute gap between elementary and secondary dismissal (the status quo) by also adding 15 extra minutes per day and also has an addition of 7 half-day Fridays. The Board's packet includes the Master Draft of the Elementary Schedule with the current proposal; this is the kind of schedule that will meet the goals that were stated in the beginning for quality of instruction and federal and state mandates. This kind of schedule makes sure specials classes are blocked, with no specials on Friday, that lunch is preserved, and that primary grade students have large blocks of time with their teachers.

Ron Mast said this schedule was important to him. It allows an uninterrupted block of time for younger grades at the state of the day. Currently, teachers fit curriculum around specials classes. This allows a more effective use of time in the classroom for teachers.

Steve Pope asked for clarification on the adjusted 2009-2010 calendar. Veronica replied that there are added half-day Fridays due to lab school children and teachers and mandatory testing days.

Ron Mast asked the Administration to further discuss the two-year phase-in plan, namely the difference between the two years' calendars. Veronica replied that for the first year, if students have the Monday off, then it is a full day of school on Friday. For the second year, even if Mondays are off, the students will still have a half-day on

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Friday. This was done in order to minimize the child care impact in the first year. There are an additional 4 days of half-days in 2010-2011.

Chris Bender asked if phase-one still includes the 15 minute time adjustment and the only change for phase-two is the additional half-days. Veronica replied both are correct, however, the Administration may also consider starting the school years one day earlier than TCA has traditionally started.

Steve Pope summarized the parent comments from the survey. The highlights included the following positives: increased family time, extra teacher prep time, improved instruction time, education professional decision, and a consistent schedule. Parent comments also included the following negatives: impact on TCA families, extra day care, and concerns on extra trips for families with both elementary and secondary students (8 to 12 extra trips over what families would have had with approved calendar).

Ron Mast expressed that some parents are not agreeing with a four-day Kindergarten. If we go with the proposed calendar, then we cannot have 5-day PM Kindergarten. Ron suggested offering both a 5-day AM Kindergarten and a 4-day PM Kindergarten. Part of this proposal is that Kindergarten would be four days a week, while the current calendar stays at five days. Veronica added that currently when we have a half day, Kindergarten does not come to school. Early in TCA's history, we experienced split Kindergarten schedules due to half days and snow delays. With the four day schedule, Kindergarten will meet the state required hours. Steve Pope said Kindergarten is off 13 Fridays in the approved, amended 2009-2010 calendar.


Chris Bender asked what teachers will be doing during block specials time; is it anything different from Friday afternoons? Veronica answered that the specials time addresses the instructional needs of the students. RTI students need to be pulled for assessment and instruction during the specials time and that teacher cannot attend the group meetings (as planned on Friday afternoons). Leesa Waliszewski added the specials time will be opportune time for sponsor teachers to meet with new teachers for mentoring.

Steve Pope said the Board has talked over the months that if this calendar discussion was happening earlier in the school year, then it would not be a Board vote. The 2010-2011 calendar is still in that category. The lateness of the conversation has caused it to come to the Board.

Jim Kretchman asked if the proposed Elementary Master Schedule will disappear if the Board goes with the current, approved calendar? Veronica replied Yes. Steve Pope asked if there was a way to work with the existing calendar and still block schedules. He said that if the Board does not change the calendar, how the Administration breaks up the day isn't a Board discussion. Leesa added that she and Susan Stone explored that option and the daily schedule would have to stay the same schedule we currently have. A rotating schedule was another option, but TCA has several teachers that are part-time and it would not work for them.

Steve Pope and Jim Kretchman asked if dropping specials time by 1 or 2 minutes would work to achieve the block schedule without changing the calendar. Although it may not be an ideal situation, it might be okay for one year. Veronica replied that the concern is the change in workflow for all specials teachers. Every single specials teacher will teach every single grade level every day. Before the proposal came to the classroom teachers, the Administration talked to specials teachers to see if they would be willing to try that kind of workflow. They agreed because they saw what it meant to the classroom teacher. To assume that we could cut another 2 minutes, Veronica is not sure the specials teachers would be willing to do that. Don Stump added that its not just a simple math problem when dealing with people. Diana Burditt said that this is an ideal schedule. She loves the blocks of time and her teachers are jumping for joy. Diana does realize the negatives for parents, however.

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Leesa Waliszewski continued that the missing piece in this option is that the half-day Fridays aren't there. All planning time gets moved to Fridays with specials blocked Monday through Thursday. Every classroom teacher will have children all day long on Friday. Steve Pope summarized that the current calendar with full day Fridays, the classroom teachers will have no specials with no breaks. The specials teachers will have no children and all planning time on Fridays.

Steve Pope said that the Phase I calendar minimizes impact on child care; it is better than it was but it still not zero. The other idea that was discussed at previous meeting was if there was a way to utilize those Friday afternoons for Science Matters, Great Starts, or Classical Institute activities. Now that the delta is down, the Board and Administration do not have to consider every Friday afternoon for an activity. Ron Mast also loves the idea of providing after school activities but does not want to guarantee availability for all students. He thinks it would be a benefit to students and to TCA. Although those afternoons may not be able to meet the needs of everybody, the goal would be to keep the cost to a minimum for TCA and for those participating; consider adding a scholarship fund. Vance Brown appreciated the win-win aspect of the Friday afternoon activities. He asked how the Administration felt about these activities.

Leesa Waliszewski noted the task may be pretty big, considering there would need to be separate activities at each individual campus, but it is something that could be explored. Mark Hyatt added it could be discussed outside of the Lead Team with Scott Wilson (Classical Institute) and Laurie Queener (Great Starts) then brought back to the Board for consideration.

Vance Brown loved to hear that the Board and Administration went back to the table to work a calendar that helped minimize the delta with half-day Fridays. He enjoyed hearing of a possibility of ideas for Friday afternoons. Steve Pope is optimistic about the delta being brought down but isn't sure of the proposed calendar without the Friday afternoon activities to help families being part of the vote. Ron Mast is concerned that the adjustments to the approved calendar would present more objections with the mix of on days, half days, and full days; there is little consistency. He has heard families say they would much rather have the proposed first year calendar for consistency. Jim Kretchman is hesitant to add anything else to the Administration's task list by having them look at Friday afternoon activities. Vance Brown agreed and wants to keep the calendar vote and after school activities discussion separate. Matt Carpenter added that he is not in favor of having a vote on the calendar that gives the community the impression that TCA is going to have programs on Friday afternoons.

Vance Brown added that the fourth on the list of negatives from the community was the too early start time for secondary. The proposed schedule has secondary starting school at 7:45am (currently 8:00am) and elementary starting at 8:00am (currently 8:15am). He asked the Administration to comment. Peter Hilts said that research says that adolescents, as they get older, should start school later (9-9:30am). The problem is that if you are going to expand the day, expanding the afternoon is much more disruptive and any students involved in after school activities will frequently miss more school at the end of the day. Ron Mast asked how the proposed 7:45am start time compares to other district high schools. Peter replied that 7:11am and 7:25am are other high school start times.

Matt Carpenter motioned to approve the proposed calendars, elementary and secondary, as presented for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Seconded by Vance Brown at 7:20pm. Steve Pope opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board and added that Matt's motion does not include Friday afternoon activities.

Ron Mast asked the Board if it would help if a "Friday afternoon activities" discussion added to the next Board Meeting Agenda would help. Jim Kretchman did not want to put anything else on the plate of the President.

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Every minute the Administration is looking into these activities, they are being pulled from doing something else. Vance Brown added that it depends on what Mark Hyatt says; he may be able to ask a group that may not be as burdened as the Lead Team to look into these activities. Mark agreed to meet with Leesa, Scott, and Laurie for one hour and make a brief presentation at the next Board Meeting.

Ron Mast noticed the 2010-2011 calendar dates were not correct. Veronica agreed, but the calendar format will stay the same when the dates are updated.

Steve Pope said he would vote for the calendar on the predication of having after school activities on the half-day Fridays. Jim Kretchman wanted to honor the amount of effort and work that went into this process, while driving the pain to as small as possible. Chris Bender supports the calendar, but not for the 2009-2010 school year. He wanted to stay with the approved calendar for one more year, saying we owe that to our parents. The Board approved a calendar and subject to an emergency, TCA needs to stay with it. The pain is not down to nothing. Lisa Sutton added that she would consider waiting to implement the calendar in 2010, but the new proposal is not that much of a change since Steve, Ron, Leesa, and Veronica worked together to minimize the impact on families.

Leesa Waliszewski agreed that although the impact was minimized from previous proposals, it still was not zero. After conferring with Leesa, Veronica offered the following additional Fridays as full-days (vice the proposed half-days): November 13th, April 9th, and April 30th. With this, the impact on Friday afternoon childcare is further minimized to zero, 1 day, and 3 days across the different grades.

Chris Bender would now support he proposal. Jim Kretchman agreed that this reduced the pain on families as much as possible. Vance Brown agreed with these "friendly amendments."

Moved by Matt Carpenter, seconded by Vance Brown, to approve the proposed 2009-2010 TCA elementary and secondary calendars, with amendments to November 13, 2009, April 9, 2010, and April 30, 2010 as full day classes in elementary. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote at 7:39p.m.

Steve Pope thanked the audience for attending.

III. Executive Session – per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(e)(f), for the purpose of discussing the Colorado Department of Education Investigation and for the purpose of discussing personnel issues.

Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Jim Kretchman, to adjourn to executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(e)(f) at 7:40p.m. for the purpose of discussing the Colorado Department of Education Investigation and for the purpose of discussing personnel issues. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Adjournment

Moved by Vance Brown, seconded by Lisa Sutton, to adjourn meeting at 10:04p.m. Roll Call. Approved by unanimous vote.