

LaSalle Language Academy Meeting Minutes from LSC Organizational Meeting July 24, 2018

(Final minutes, as approved Aug 21, 2018)

Meeting held at LaSalle in the principal's office.

In attendance: Chris Graves, Rob Schnitz, Esteven Gonzalez, John Falck, Rachael Russ, Jason Emeott, Rosalynn Walker, Steve McClellan. Quorum present.

Absent: June Andalcio, Kathleen Murphy, Leigh Ann Dreves.

Note: Martin Herrera is no longer at LaSalle so his non-teaching staff LSC position will need to be filled after the school year begins.

Meeting called to order at 5:40pm by Rob Schnitz.

Chairman (outgoing) Report – Rob Schnitz

Rob displayed the LSC Reference Guide and recommended that all members get an electronic copy if paper versions are not distributed by CPS this year. [2016-18 version <https://www.keller.cps.edu/lsc/2016-2018%20LSC%20Reference%20Guide.pdf>] Among other benefits it includes a summary of the Open Meetings Act which is very important to LSC conduct, and details LSC authority and responsibilities.

Open Meeting Act requirements sometimes cause challenges, e.g., when the LSC meeting schedule does not match when things need to be approved such as school usage requests or minor budget transfers. Formally, the LSC needs to post an agenda with 48 hour notice that lists any items to be voted on.

Primary LSC responsibilities include:

- Approve the CIWP (school priorities),
- Approve the budget and monitor school finances, and the allocation of school resources (to meet school CIWP priorities),
- Approve use of school facilities and any fundraising in the name of the school,
- Advise the principal on new hires, discipline policy, curriculum and textbook selections,
- Evaluate and make recommendations on the allocation of teaching resources and staff,
- Conduct the annual principal evaluation (and select a new principal).

Goals for the past year's LSC included increasing participation at LSC meetings - and some of the meetings had very high attendance so that was a success. Another goal was to increase coordination and dialog with the FOL and to support wider participation in the school by families and community, both of which had some success.

Election of New Officers (who serve through June 2019 in these roles)

Chairman. John Falck elected unanimously.

Vice-Chairman. Esteven Gonzalez elected unanimously.

Secretary. Leigh Ann Dreves elected unanimously. [Leigh Ann previously stated her interest in this position; this appointment was not just because she was absent from this meeting.]

Freedom of Information Act Officer. Rob Schnitz elected unanimously.

Committees

Noted that LSC committees have no power to vote on any topic – all LSC votes must take place at a full LSC meeting. Also noted that Open Meeting Act requirements kick-in if more than 3 LSC members meet as part of a committee, so a limit of 3 LSC members per committee usually is observed. Non-LSC members may be members of LSC committees. The following LSC committee chairs were elected:

CIWP. The principal automatically is the chair of the CIWP committee, which documents school priorities and strategy.

Technology. Esteven Gonzalez elected unanimously as chairman. Suggested priorities for the year include getting the improved school website up and running, and working with the FOL and the Principal to agree a multi-year plan for repair / replacement / retirement of student computers.

Budget and Finance. Jason Emeott elected unanimously as chairman.

Building, Traffic and Safety. Rachael Russ and Steve McClellan elected unanimously as co-chairs. A major focus will be supervising and supporting the playground rebuild project which will impact many aspects of the school as well as the local community.

Community and Alumni Relations. Steve McClellan and Jason Emeott elected unanimously as co-chairs. This covers both school and local community relations. A key priority will be communicating and coordinating about the playground rebuild project.

Budget and Finance – Jason Emeott elected unanimously as chairman. Priorities include reviewing the financial procedures to help the new administration start with good controls and reports.

Principal Evaluation – no election yet.

Question / discussion if we should have a standing committee to focus on the needs and performance of diverse learners (special ed) at LaSalle. Mr. Graves and Ms. Walker will meet separately to discuss diverse learners, but it was agreed to not establish a committee at this point.

Schedule of Regular LSC Meetings for 2018-19

Discussed and agreed to generally hold LSC meetings at 5:45pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month,

- August 21 (exception – this the 3rd Tuesday)
- Sep 11
- Oct 9
- Nov 13
- Dec 11
- Jan 15
- Feb 12
- Mar 12
- Apr 9
- May 14
- Jun 11

It was discussed to check this calendar with the FOL to avoid event conflicts.

Principal Report – Chris Graves

Will align the written principal report with principal evaluation standards so there is a consistent format. May do part of the written report in Spanish (but not all). (Discussed with Mr. Graves if he will do and report his Rosetta Stone minutes as part of his effort to learn more Spanish.)

Meeting with teachers to discuss instruction and training plan for the year. Heard from teachers they want more visits by the principal in their classrooms, so definitely will do that

Facilities management is being shifted to a private company. A new manager starts Aug 1.

Started beautification of 2nd floor

Project to install new security cameras is underway

Hiring Update

Have a strong candidate for a new 7/8 grade math algebra teacher (Ms. Whitaker left). Have hired a new teacher for 1st grade. Hired a temporary teacher to cover for Ms. Jones (4th grade) while she is on maternity leave. Interviewing for a new special ed classroom assistant.

Hiring search has started to replace Ms. Gonzales (Art) who is taking a position at Franklin Fine Arts Center and Ms. Howerter (guidance / counseling) who took a job at a school near her home.

Usually get around 175 applications for a regular classroom teacher job posting and 30 for a special ed position (fewer teachers have special ed certification). Often fewer candidates apply for a maternity

leave position since that is just a temporary spot - though it becomes permanent if the maternity leave teacher does not return.

Question if maternity leave coverage candidates get the same recruiting focus as other hires, since they are teaching for much of the year and have a big impact on student performance. Answer: Yes.

The interview process is the same for both temp and permanent hires, and includes meetings with Mr. Graves and other teachers who will be working with the candidate. Going forward want to expand the interview process to include some parents, perhaps LSC parent reps, parents with professional hiring expertise, or others who might be a good fit to the interview and recruiting process. When possible want to observe teaching candidates interacting with students, ideally delivering a lesson.

[about 7:15pm Rob left the meeting; quorum still present]

Assistant Principal Hiring Update

Need to post the job for 10 days. After talking with other principals who recently recruited APs expect about 30 applicants. Will narrow that to about 7 or 8, and after discussion and review will go down to 4 or 5. Then will have them meet with network people (including other principals) to get their advice. Plan to have an informal candidate forum for AP finalists where they can walk around and talk with any teachers, parents and students who want to attend, in addition to giving them short interviews with the LSC. Hope to make an offer by Friday August 10th.

It was noted that Ms. Miller was the only African American instructional leader who had been at LaSalle for many years, and that LaSalle's teacher and administration demographics, as at many CPS schools, do not reflect those of the student population.

Discussion of using CPS School Support Center for a few months of assistance getting up to speed on budget and financial processes. This is a special group within CPS that charges schools for direct support. Will submit at the next LSC meeting a motion to spend money on this. [<https://cps.edu/SchoolSupportCenter/Pages/SSC.aspx>]

Question about threshold for Title I funding. LLA recently was around 33% low income students and there is a 40% threshold to receive federal Title I funding. This is measured by the number of families who submit income statements at the beginning of the school year. Not all families respond to those, but if we are close to qualifying for extra funding that could need additional attention.

New Business

Question about having a back to school party and inviting those who live in the neighborhood (but aren't LLA families). Agreed to discuss with the FOL which specializes in great events.

For community engagement, discussed the idea of Mr. Graves offering 'meet the new LaSalle Principal' gatherings at some of the local places (perhaps Marge's, Twin Anchors or Sedgwick Stop) for anyone who wants to chat and learn more about the school.

Question/ discussion about computer science instruction at the school. Noted this is an important topic, even to have a basic understanding of coding. There are different ways it could be taught – replace a current topic of instruction, integrate in other classes, and / or to offer as pre or post school program. Agreed to discuss computer instruction as part of the CIWP and the wider topic of school curriculum.

Mr. Graves asked about increasing the spending allocation for extended-day pay (for office clerks) who have been working extra hours over the summer, including Ms. Sierra who has been helping even though she now is employed by a new school. Will have as an item to approve at next LSC meeting.

Adjourned meeting at 8:20pm.

Next LSC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 21 August at 5:45pm. (the 3rd Tuesday of August)

Minutes by John Falck

Approved at the August LSC Meeting on 8/21.
