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**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD  
OF TUCSON COUNTRY DAY CHARTER SCHOOL OF MEETING HELD  
DECEMBER 10, 2024**

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A public meeting of the Governing Board of Tucson Country Day Charter School was convened on Tuesday, December 10th, 2024, at 5:30 PM via Zoom.

Present at the meeting were the following members of the Governing Board of Tucson Country Day Charter School:

Christina Brown, Michelle Bullock, Renee Danielson, Cassidy James, and Allan Stockellburg

Absent: None

Quorum present? Yes

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM by Allan Stockellburg

**The following matters were discussed, considered, and decided at the meeting:**

**CALL TO PUBLIC**

- None

**ACTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE FOLLOWING BOARD MEETINGS:**

**November 12th, 2024:**

Motion to approve the minutes of the School Board meeting for November 12th, 2024.

Motioned by Michelle Bullock and seconded by Christina Brown

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Christina Brown, Michelle Bullock, Renee Danielson, Cassidy James, and Allan Stockellburg

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE DESERT LAB SCHOOL**

Jordan Krause presented why we should pursue the Desert Lab School.

- Kids and teens' bodies and brains benefit from more time outdoors.
- Advancements in technology allow students to more efficiently acquire basic skills and knowledge in preparation for standardized tests, freeing up more time for kids to be kids and to develop the durable, transferable skills that make them more human.
- Explore more transformative practices to influence the TCDS High School establishment as well as K-8 program.
- We have the space.
- There are many kids and teens who need this type of schooling experience.
- The DLS provides the potential to increase enrollment by 14 for the 2025-2026 school year, and many more students in future years.
- Jordan sent out a one question survey to current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents to gather their interest regarding the Desert Lab School on a scale of one to five (five being very interested). 43 parents responded with 33 of the responses being 4 or 5.
- The activities the students would be doing in DLS on a weekly basis include:
  - Gardening
  - Low ropes challenge course
  - Swimming
  - Wood carving
  - Chess
  - PBL site visits to state and national parks
  - Journaling
  - Mini lessons
  - Reading
  - Public library visits
  - Skills practice/test prep using IXL
  - Agency block to allow students time to discover their passions
  - Biking
- The DLS would operate as a cohort of 28 students, 14 from our existing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students and 14 potential new enrollments. Two coaches would oversee the cohort of 28 students. If less than 20 students were enrolled, the cohort would operate with one coach. The hope is to add two additional cohorts for the 2026-2027 school year made up of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and of 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- The DLS students would use the two school vans as their primary mode of transportation, along with the school bus and the city bus system. A transportation fee for parents is to be determined.
- There will be optional quarterly overnight trips and an annual three-day trip to a west region National Park.

- For the dress code, students would wear an orange shirt with no collar, and hiking boots would be recommended.
- The annual goals used to gauge DLS success are as follows:
  - Ensure each student scores higher in Math and Language Arts on the state exams compared to their prior year.
  - Achieve a minimum of 95% student and parent satisfaction as measured by mid and end-of-year surveys.
  - Ensure each DLS cohort reaches student capacity.
- The estimated costs to set up the DLS would range from \$30,000 to \$60,000 depending on if TCDS is awarded the Angel Charity Grant that Jordan will be applying for.

The following questions were brought up by the Board Members:

- What happens if the DLS is not the best fit for a student who is already enrolled in the program? Since this is completely new to TCDS, will we be transparent with families ensuring them that this is more of a pilot program that will likely have kinks to work out?
- *Before students are accepted into the DLS, there will be an interview with the parents as well as the students. If the student rarely spends time outside, this would not be a good fit. However, if a student needed to be moved back to a classroom it would be an easy transition. Jordan intends to be very transparent with families, making sure they understand the risks and that they really want this for their child. Parents would also be invited to shadow the class and join them on field trips.*
- What would happen if mid-year benchmarks showed that a student is not where they should be academically?
- *We would recalibrate, break down the data and work with the coaches to become really focused on crafting and effective process.*
- Have you thought about finding the right person as the Coach for the DLS?
- *Yes, finding the right Coach is key. There are a lot of people that are likely looking for this kind of position.*
- Why 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students for this first cohort? It seems that the Nature Schools that exist are geared towards Kinder and first grade, yet we are choosing to pursue this with older students.
- *4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade is a great middle of the road development age. They have the right level of independence to participate, they are still innocent and thirst for adventure, and these are also grades that are state tested. You can do more with older students based on their stamina and strength.*
- How much deprogramming will need to be done for these students who have only known the classroom setting?

- *Very little deprogramming will need to be done. Given the interest from parents and students, these kids would come alive and fit perfectly into the DLS.*
- Michelle Bullock stated that these current 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students started school in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, so they may already see learning differently and not understand why they have to sit in a classroom or do things just one way.
- Should we be concerned with potential learning loss, that students would fall behind their peers? How would we fix that?
- *So much classroom time is wasted while waiting for kids who learn at different rates and managing the learning experience. This model is the remedy, there is much less time spent herding students. With the right Coach, students could infuse a fraction lesson into a 45-minute nature walk with a conceptual understanding of fractions. We are more concerned with the potential learning loss happening in the current school environment. The DLS would help students learn more transferable skills and that is more important than how students score on state tests.*
- What are the eligibility requirements? Will students with 504 plans or IEPs be considered? How is the selection process going to be handled?
- *Any child could qualify, including students with a 504 plan or an IEP. More likely students that like to experience the outdoors. Anyone who is interested would fill out registration paperwork, interview with a few staff members, and then potentially qualify for the lottery. During the interview we would ask about the child's interests, and how comfortable and adaptable they are.*
- There may be a lot more costs associated with this program. It may be best to ask for something more than just a transportation fee. Is every student going to get a bike? Are there trailers that carry 28 bikes?
- *Yes, each student would have a bike and there are trailers that hold that capacity.*
- Do you have anyone in mind to place as a Coach from our existing staff?
- *We would like to explore outside of TCDS. There are a couple of existing staff members that have expressed interest, but we would like to see who else is out there with the qualifications we desire.*
- What will our insurance cover? Have we talked to legal counsel to see what a lawyer might see as a concern outside of an insurance claim?
- *Our current policy would cover any student accidents. However, we may consider increasing the current coverage.*
- If activities such as chess and biking are good for students, why isn't TCDS already doing them?
- *It's easier to start something and sustain it with a smaller group.*

- Will this pull our focus away from other programs we have instituted but are not great at yet? We aren't proficient in PBL, yet we are refocusing again. Why aren't we doing these new activities in our existing classrooms.
- *We are currently doing some things such as Woodworking, Broadcasting and Art as electives. PBL projects are happening in elementary. These elements are being infused we are just prioritizing them in a different way with the DLS.*
- Is the goal to have the whole school as a DLS eventually?
- *No, this would stay small. The experience is not for everyone.*
- If we don't get enrollment for the DLS, and we aren't awarded the Angel Charity Grant, how would the financials be handled?
- *We would start with just getting electrical and supplies to the areas we need on campus. We would need to have at least 22 students enrolled to justify a second Coach.*
- The Board Members continued to discuss additional grant opportunities that Jordan could apply for. The idea of only moving forward with the DLS if we are awarded a grant from the Angel Charity. Jordan will continue to pursue the Angel Charity Grant as well as look for other grant opportunities.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Next Board Meeting is scheduled for December 18th, 2024, at 5:30 PM on campus with dinner.
- The Champion Showcase is December 11<sup>th</sup>, tomorrow at 5:00 PM.
- There is a Band performance scheduled for Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.
- The Tanque Verde Market took place on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. TCDS showed very well with an estimate of 1,500 to 2,000 people attending. Most of the comments heard were "I didn't even know this place was here." We are interested to see if there will be an increase in tour requests. Most vendors exceeded their financial goals for the day.

Motion to adjourn meeting.

Motion by Michelle Bullock and seconded by Cassidy James

Final Resolution: Motion Passed

Yes: Christina Brown, Michelle Bullock, Renee Danielson, Cassidy James, and Allan Stockellburg

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM

Dated this 10th day of December 2024

The Governing Board of Tucson Country Day Charter School Minutes taken by Board Secretary, Pam Hubble