

**BOARD WORKSHOP
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WESTLAKE CHARTER SCHOOL**

JANUARY 26, 2008

**Natomas Charter School
4600 Blackrock Dr
Sacramento, CA 95835
Media Center
10:00 am**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTATIONS TO
THE BOARD BY PARENTS AND CITIZENS**

The Westlake Charter School ("School") welcomes your participation at the School's Board meetings. The purpose of a public meeting of the Board of Directors ("Board") is to conduct the affairs of the School in public. We are pleased that you are in attendance and hope that you will visit these meetings often. Your participation assures us of continuing community interest in our School. To assist you in the ease of speaking/participating in our meetings, the following guidelines are provided.

1. Agendas are available to all audience members at the door to the meeting.
2. Blue "Request to Speak" forms are available to all audience members who wish to speak on any agenda items or under the general category of "Oral Communications."
3. "Oral Communications" is set aside for members of the audience to raise issues that are not specifically on the agenda. However, due to public meeting laws, the Board can only listen to your issue, not respond or take action. The Board may give direction to staff to respond to your concern or you may be offered the option of returning with a citizen-requested item.
4. With regard to items that are on the agenda, you may specify that agenda item on your blue request form and you will be given an opportunity to speak when the Board discusses that item.
5. Members of the public may request that a topic related to school business be placed on a future agenda by making a request to the Board President. Once such an item is properly agendized and publicly noticed, the Board can respond, interact, and act upon the item.
6. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and upon request, the Charter School may furnish reasonable auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities. Individuals who require appropriate alternative modification of the agenda in order to participate in Board meetings are invited to contact the Board President.

I. OPENING (10:00am)

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

| | | present | absent |
|----|---------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | Phil Nanni | _X_ | _____ |
| 2. | Paris Coleman | _X_ | _____ |
| 3. | Carol Moore | _X_ | _____ |
| 4. | Ting Sun | _X_ | _____ |
| 5. | Community Member LB | _X_ | _____ |
| 6. | Gretchen Hanson | _____ | _X_ |
| 7. | Lisa Kaplan | _____ | _X_ |
| 8. | Debbie Hightower | _X_ | _____ |
| 9. | Christina Thorall | _____ | _X_ |

The meeting will now convene to closed session to discuss the following matters described in Section II.

II. CLOSED SESSION-NO ITEMS

III. PUBLIC SESSION

A) RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION: The meeting was reconvened to open session at _____.

B) BOARD COMMENTS

PN – Expanding to middle school is not a new topic to the Board. The current charter expansion plan goes to 2012.

PC – There are 3 parents present , much fewer than expected. Please pass on the information presented here to your friends. The possible middle school expansion would impact the quality of our school in the short run and the ultimate make-up of the school in the long run.

LB – He will be serving as chairman of the Yolo County Planning Commission and therefore will not be seeking re-appointment on the WCS Board; however he will continue to work in the school garden.

C) PUBLIC COMMENTS

This portion of the meeting is set aside for members of the audience to make comments or raise issues that are not specifically on the agenda or for those that are on the agenda. These presentations are limited to three (3) minutes per presentation and the total time allotted to non-agenda items will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.

Lisa Kirkland suggested a music program be added

IV. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR ACTION-NO ITEMS

V. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATE

A) Expansion of grade levels/curriculum

Space

This is a huge issue even without Middle School expansion. The parking lot is also an issue; the price tag for a “fix” came in at \$160,000 – 4x the anticipated cost. With the current expansion plan of adding 5th grade plus one additional kindergarten class each year will require 7 more classrooms in the future. Christine Smith has requested 4 rooms for next year to house two 5th grades, one additional 1st grade, and Special Ed. Prop. 39 – NUSD must provide us with facilities consistent with the level of accommodation at other schools.

Factors: H. Allan Haight will not open as anticipated for 08-09, so attendance at Natomas Middle will not drop as anticipated; Levee requirements/flood control requirements; NUSD controls facilities

The decision to add one more class at the kindergarten level beginning 07-08 was a budget decision to increase ADA. The expansion fit with the existing charter. NUSD has been cooperative in approving the expansion to ultimately 3 classes per grade level.

NUSD is not obligated to provide classrooms other than those required under our current approved charter. Space issues will be decided by NUSD in June; possible room for 2 portables on the west side of the playground where the sheds are. Also possible expansion into the field behind Westlake, which is used by Little League. Adding a 6th, 7th, 8th grades would require even more classrooms.

Curriculum

TS – Charter Schools are associated with school reform and seek to provide a unique educational vision. Westlake parents used the Charter movement to open an elementary school in the Westlake area. The vision was vague – global-mindedness, exposure to the arts, language program - but these were not well-defined. Charters have 5 years to prove themselves. At year 4 we need to prove to NUSD we are solid and that they should renew the charter for 5 more years. We are doing OK, but the curriculum needs to be framed around global-mindedness. Also at 4th year, we have a WASC accreditation full self study. WASC looks at every aspect of the school – it is comprehensive and intense, but will help focus on our goals and our program. We don't want to be an OK school – we have much work to do yet to have a GREAT school. She is feeling pressure by parents who want Westlake to go K-8.

PC – He does not feel pressured despite having a 4th grader himself. From the turnout at the workshop (9 parents by the end of the session) there is not a strong parent response.

In line with this, Christine suggested a dedicated curriculum person would be a great help next year for Westlake. The staff discussed the issue of expansion to middle school and the concern is with the *timing*, since we are still struggling with aligning the curriculum within and between the grades. There isn't time to work on this while school is in session.

Other Factors:

The budget cuts and Westlake Board changeover. A new Charter middle school is being formed with a science emphasis.

LB – Davis School District just denied a charter school. NUSD may not back us even if we wanted to go forward.

Summary:

WASC accreditation will go hand in hand with curriculum development.

Look for a Curriculum Coordinator for next year. Need a job description and determine financial impact.

Teachers need time next year for curriculum development

B) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lisa Kirkland asked about preferences for Natomas Charter School. There is no preference for Westlake students. There are approximately 80 slots each in the PFFA and Leading Edge programs. There is also a new middle school Charter school opening with a science emphasis. It is affiliated with UOP and a consortium. Info on this program will be presented at the next Board Meeting.

Desiree Ganzon asked that in the future, staff development days be more evenly spaced throughout the year. There are 3 staff development days in March plus Spring Break. Day care is expensive. She would also appreciate information on middle school options for the current 4th graders.

Sherri Inenaga commented that Westlake has some extraordinary staff members and hopes the Board will look in-house when considering the Curriculum Development position.

Barbara Ros is both employee and Westlake parent and feels Westlake needs to focus on our current program and current expansion. Specialties in particular need to be looked at to figure how they will serve 14 classes next year. Mr. K needs a classroom, too.

Walter Anderson – We need to focus on the specialties as that is what distinguishes Westlake from a “regular” elementary school. With regard to parent volunteer hours, there should be a “to-do” list for volunteers to work on when they come in.

PC – Budgeting challenges are looming – we need to be creative and find ways to expand community involvement, such as through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and student teachers.

**LUNCH-BOARD WILL ADJOURN FOR LUNCH
RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION (12:55pm)**

VI. ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/UPDATE

A) Expansion of grade levels/curriculum (continued)

Went over the Pro’s and Con’s from the staff regarding middle school expansion. Discussed items line by line.

Looked at budgets prepared by Jodi Retzloff. The first assumes a new charter with new Implementation Grant and revolving loan. Middle School would require 3 classes of 45 students and at that would be in deficit spending after the first year. Currently we have 47 4th graders – so a majority of middle students would have to be neighborhood students from other schools.

The second budget assumes that the existing charter expands to 8th grade. This model would eat our cash flow and facility reserve funds for the first three years. There would be no money for extras such as sports or band. For our current 4th graders, the school would be struggling financially during their entire middle school years.

Looking at the current approved budget for Westlake, our facility reserves and cash reserves give us options for someday having our own facility. Banks will loan money if we have cash reserves. Economic viability is crucial to the future of our school.

Conclusion: The Board is not ruling out the possibility of expanding to Middle School but for now, it does not seem prudent.

B) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Desiree Ganzon: Middle Schoolers need the opportunity for sports and after-school extracurricular activities. If we can’t offer them these extras, we are doing them a disservice. Can Westlake require tuition? No, public school cannot *require* monetary

contributions.

When will the Board decide? This was not an action item, no voting. This workshop was to look into the issue – there will be a statement. The Board will look into this issue annually.

Lana Lucas – Can you inform parents and have them sign something to verify they've read it? The Board feels it has done due diligence in having this workshop discussion and investigating the middle school option; results of the meeting will be communicated. PC thanked the Board for their thoughtful handling of this issue and thanked those who attended. The Board has a good sense of our current status and what we can do to strengthen the program.

Christine Smith reminded parents of upcoming Board elections for 2 parent members and 1 community member. She will try to set up a meeting with Natomas Middle School so parents can hear more about their program.

VII. ADJORNMENT(2:00pm)

Workshop was adjourned at 2:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherri Inenaga, Operations Manager
Westlake Charter School