

Valley Academy Special Board Meeting Agenda
539 N 870 W, Hurricane, UT 84737
September 16, 2013 at 5pm

1. Work meeting of the Board for strategic planning
2. Adjourn

Valley Academy Special Board Meeting Minutes
Sept 16, 2013

In attendance: Lane Blackmore, Tonya Heyder, Alisha Terry-Martin, Jill Cotton, Jimmy Ashley, Kevin Dunkley, Dave Monson, Ben Ruesch, Doug Beecher.

1. Opened meeting at 5:12pm

- 3 main topics for discussion tonight: updated information on the school grades, lunch, and student enrollment.
- Grades: Kevin went to SLC last week for training and learned that our school grade isn't realistic. They told him that it takes two-three years to fully grade a school and that growth can't be shown because it was only our first year. The CRT testing is now gone, and replaced with the SAGE testing, so we will have another year of creating a baseline before we can show real growth. The CRT scores follow the students, however, so there was some accuracy to the scores. The State explained that the low overall scores could be reflected by students coming in already low or behavioral issues.

Kevin said that the plan for improvement this year will include practice assessments during the year. Teachers will have online access to UTIPS where samples will be available for the new SAGE testing.

Last week the faculty went over last year's test results by teacher and grade teams. They are coming back together this week to make plans for improvement based on areas of strength and weakness within their teams. They will be setting benchmarks as teams and as a whole.

Kevin has been going into classrooms to check on progress so he can keep an eye on struggling students and trends. He will keep us updated on this.

The faculty has discussed purchasing the DIBELS test for the upper grades. It is currently required for K-3, and is a great tool to assess the current reading level of the students. For \$2,100, we can purchase the test for 4-6th grades and be able to monitor our progress better through the year- making adjustments earlier.

Kevin also said that the State's SIS system has been updated and has all the information we need to assist in student tracking. A student's SIS folder is the master folder that follows the student through their school years in Utah. The WCSD uses PowerSchool instead of SIS, and there are other brands, but SIS is a good system and is run by the state.

- Where are the areas where we can really shine? Instead of trying to do everything, what are our strengths and what can we provide to our students that is exceptional?

We are the only school with an SEI program- we can expand that.

Our arts programs are great and very strong.

Our technology is great and we can expand that.

We can always improve our academics and they should be strong.

We need to get the word out and tell our story. We need to let our parents know what we've found out and empower them with the information they need. The media hasn't been able to put out the whole story and the school grades are confusing to most people.

Ideas: competition with other schools (letting the students shine in the areas of their strength), more physical education/large field in back, forming partnerships with other charters and with Dixie College for performance space and inviting teachers from strong programs to come help us strengthen our core programs, marketing by social media and video with comments from our satisfied parents and students and facts from experts at the State, inviting our families and the public in to see what we are doing (Technology night and Student dance this week), school lunch program.

How can we build partnerships with other schools? Teacher time is very busy. We might be able to take teachers over to other schools and make invitations for some to come to us. We will need to meet again to form a plan, then reach out to the other schools.

- Lunch: We are all aware that WCSD decided this week not to serve lunch to our school. We also found out this week that WCSD has dropped Vista and said they aren't sure if they will keep GWA. The State Nutrition Office has been extremely helpful to us as we have wanted to create a new plan to keep lunch on board for October 1.

Kevin and Alisha met with DRMC cafeteria this morning. The manager gave us a tour of the facility and seemed very eager to work with us. Their menu is USDA approved and looks like food that the students would enjoy. They would prepare the food in bulk in their kitchen and we would need to pick it up in warmers to transport back to school. They would share their dishes with us and we would need to provide serving plates, utensils, etc. We discussed how many students would need to be served daily and Kevin has sent out a survey to the parents to find this out.

Alisha also made contact with another charter school in northern Utah that has been running their Free and Reduced lunch program out of a kitchen smaller than ours. They started with a rice cooker and a microwave. They said they are very willing to help us to create menus and give us pointers on how to run our program efficiently. Although school lunch programs are not generally money makers, this school has a surplus every year and has now expanded to help serve other charters that are nearby. After discussing what our kitchen has, they felt confident that we could run our program, if needed, out of our kitchen. We may need to purchase a commercial oven in the future for a wider variety to our menu. Lane asked if the warming cabinets we have would cook food. We don't know, but we will find out. Jill Cotton, a VA parent, has offered to head up our lunch program. We will be working with the State over the next couple of weeks to get our application and required trainings accomplished. If setting up the free and reduced program takes a little longer than October 1, some charters have subsidized the program during the waiting period. Lane suggests that we utilize the funds we just had returned to us from Ash Creek to help get this started. We will keep everyone updated as we find out more.

Jimmy made a motion to adjourn at 6:20pm. All members in favor.