

EAGLE EYES MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 21, 2009

ATTENDEES:

Parents/guardians: Amber Shafer, Candi and Joe Latino, Chris Sonnier, Bobby Sheppard, Carolyn Clark, Kecia and Edward Sanders, Laura Gresham, Sharon Thibodeaux

Staff: Linda Thomas, Kevin Lemoine, Persis Daniels, Laurie Grier, Laurie Self, Susan Blackwell, Joyce Pourciau, Ruth DeWitt, Carol Bell, Connie Greenlee, Loraine Loup, Melinda Partin, Paula Rodriguez, Maria Stephens, Trish Mann

AGENDA:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Approved minutes of last meeting on March 19, 2009.
- Update on letters to BESE Board – There has been an issue as to whether or not Chris needs to register as a lobbyist. He will contact the Ethics Board to obtain an opinion.
- Update on LSD-LSVI sharing the campus, brainstorming valued traditions – Chris had a meeting at the school with representatives and shared ideas. Waiting to hear more. Will update us as needed.
- Contacted Liz Moore about Director search – Email response from Liz Moore attached after minutes. Seems that Liz will be contacting Eagle Eyes after the initial applications are submitted when a slate of final candidates is available.
- Dash for Deaf Kids reminder – PARTICIPATE AND SHOW SUPPORT! Deadline for T-Shirts in Mon., April 27.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Introduction of the Academic Review Team (ART):**

Betty Bounds – retired from Texas School for the Deaf. Thanked us for having her at the meeting. She now does contract work. Age appropriate language acquisition is important. Qualified teaching staff should teach language. Dormitory staff role models the conversational use of sign language. Strong skills in ASL as a first language are important for children to acquire as early as possible, then they need to go on to acquire English as a second language.

Cathy Wroten – principal at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Pittsburg. Specializes in language, reading, writing and does research. This is her second trip to LSD. Very excited about her visit here. Has two hearing children and her husband is deaf. He is the Superintendent of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, lost his hearing at 8 years old. Agrees that LSD needs a good Director to guide the school. Today she participated in meetings and had a chance to visit classrooms. Tomorrow she wants to see more classrooms and the dorms.

Joe Fishgrund – Interim Director of the Delaware School for the Deaf. It has not been an easy year at LSD, for parents, faculty, staff & children. The children have done the best in coping with all of the changes. We need to keep focus on the children's issues, not on the adult issues. He sees the glass as $\frac{3}{4}$ full with more work to do. He was formerly the Head Master of the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Philadelphia. Said deaf education is the oldest form of special education, dating back to the 1700's

in France. Even so, many issues regarding deaf ed. are not resolved. Important to develop language base early, that's about all that's agreed on regarding deaf ed. issues. The Academic Review Team (ART) visited in Sept '08 because of academic concerns. LSD was given AUS (Academic Unsatisfactory Status). Concerned that tests were not measuring how much children know because the tests are designed in English. Need to determine how deaf children learn best. High stakes tests are based on a language that hearing children learned from day one, but how does this assessment test a child who has never heard a sound? La. Dept of Education is interested in this discussion. However, when ART visited the school in the fall, other issues came up. At the impromptu parents meeting he heard frustration, anger, but also an underlying caring for the children. ART was put on the back burner and the survival of the school was a concern to all. We are beyond that now, and moving LSVI to the LSD campus will help insure the school's survival. Liz Moore and Superintendent Pastorek want to make it work. ART issues: Find a new director. Address the communication issues, all should sign on campus – children need to oversee conversation to contribute to their world knowledge and education. Push for a fully visual language for education Address residential and faculty communication issues. They are starting to address these issues, but it takes time. Don't expect a new Director in place by July 1st. Joe is now retired but has taken a position as the Interim Director at the Delaware School for the Deaf. Presently addressing similar problems – communications between administration, faculty and staff, and dorm and instructors, consistency in instruction, switching between ASL and English, addressing assessment issues and how to test. There are no perfect schools, but the goal is to continuously improve. ART wants to support the process of continuous academic improvement, but will also address safety issues. The search process for a new Director is a long process, qualified candidates are hard to find. Just went through the process in Delaware. ASL is language of instruction; ASL should be used at all times on campus. Search for the LSD Director should be an inclusive process with Parents, Deaf Community, Special Ed Director included. Will advocate this with Pastorek. Inclusiveness and conscientiousness is needed. Has been visiting classes, talking to people on campus and had a lot of positive responses and some concerns. Will make suggestions for progress and improvements. Need to get beyond the adult issues and focus on the children's education again.

Betty – LA was the first state to have a Deaf Children's Bill of Rights. Now there is a national agenda for deaf Ed. LSD was the first deaf school in the US that required sign language evaluation (SCPI).

Joe – This school had & has a BAD relationship with the LA Dept of Education. Not one successful deaf school in the US has a bad relationship with its Dept of Ed. Successful schools have GOOD relationships with their Dept of Ed. Need a cohesive relationship with the Dept of Ed. Now LSD has their attention and can build relationships. Oct. was a bad month, but things are improving. The search for a Director can help connect the parents, staff, Deaf Community as a community.

Lorraine – LSD has had a good relationship with the Assessment Div. at Dept. of Ed. Problems seem higher up.

Joe – Heard lots of negative comments about the LA Dept of Ed around the school. Says that they are willing to listen. This school is good and needs to be promoted. Our job is to educate the children.

Betty – Parents and staff should get on Dept. of Ed. committees and be active. Remind them that we are here!

Joe – Relationships are important and LSD will lose with an adversarial relationship with the Dept. of Ed.. LSD needs to demonstrate itself as valuable, and a resource. ART wants to promote Academic Improvement, Accountability, and Language.

Candi – Will you encourage a bilingual program?

Betty – Excited about bilingual education.. Parental involvement is important. Linda Thomas suggested having the LSD bilingual education program be a topic at a future Eagle Eyes meeting.

Chris – Need to keep meetings to one hour. Thanks to ART for coming. Let us know what parents can do. Remember that the first week of May is Staff Appreciation Week – do something nice.

Ruth – Assembly of God Deaf Camp brochures are available and will be mailed out. Camp is the last week of July for deaf children ages 9 and older. Camp has been active for 34 years and her husband, Ron DeWitt is the Director.

Chris – Will be in touch regarding next Eagle Eyes meeting date to discuss information table at Registration Day, Sunday, August 9

- **Meeting Adjourned**

Response from Liz Moore regarding director search:

From: Christopher Sonnier [<mailto:csonnier@mckaylawfirm.net>]
Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2009 8:48 AM
To: Elizabeth Moore
Cc: paul.pastorek@la.gov; klemoine@lalsd.org
Subject: Re: Director Search

Thank you for the responses. I think this information will help answer questions raised by several members at the meeting. I am also happy to be able to report to them that we will have an active role in the selection process. This flow of information is the type we envisioned when founding the group and I think it will help with our long term success. Thank you.
Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 21, 2009, at 8:09 AM, Elizabeth Moore <elizabeth.moore@lassd.net> wrote:
Mr. Sonnier:

I have responded to each of your questions below. Please let me know if additional information is needed.
Thanks,
Liz

From: Chris Sonnier [csonnier@mckaylawfirm.net]
Sent: Friday, March 20, 2009 3:05 PM
To: paul.pastorek@la.gov; elizabeth.moore@la.gov; klemoine@lalsd.org
Subject: Re: Director Search

Dear Mr. Pastorek, Mrs. Moore, and Mr. Lemoine:

I am writing on behalf of Eagle Eyes, the parent teacher organization at LSD. First, I would like to report to you that those present at the meeting last night were encouraged and optimistic about the LSD/LSVI "campus consolidation" proposal. As an organization we believe that it will help ensure the future of the school and we are eager and willing to help with the process in any way. We are also interested in learning more about the search for the new Director of LSD. I have been asked to inquire about the following:

1) How will the search committee be organized?

Since this is not the first search process for an LSD Director, we have a database of newspapers for our advertisements; a database of publications for the Deaf Community; a database of State Directors of Special Education; and other special interest groups to receive the announcement and a link to the application for this position. Establishing a search committee has proven to be a delay in getting the search process started.

2) Will members of Eagle Eyes be invited to participate? If yes, how many?

Eagle Eyes and all other stakeholder groups will be encouraged to solicit applications from viable candidates.

3) Will members of the Deaf Community be invited to participate? If yes, how many and how will they be chosen?

As stated in #2, all stakeholder groups will be encouraged to solicit applications from viable candidates.

4) How will the national search for candidates be conducted? Will ads be placed in publications? If yes, which ones? Will a professional search organization be used? If yes, which one?

Ads will be placed in newspapers and publications across the United States. We have requested quotes from the newspapers and are in the process of updating contact information for our publications and the database lists of State Leaders. At this time, a search organization has not been contacted. However, this is something that is being investigated. If a search organization is used, I will provide you with this information once a determination is made.

We would like to be involved in this process and believe that we are a necessary component to the search. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

More important than being involved in the search process is the actual interview and selection process. Involvement of all stakeholder groups and national Deaf education leaders will be important to the successful selection of LSD's next Director. The process of advertising, receiving applications and interviewing applicants, takes time if it is appropriately done. As we move through this process, communication with all stakeholders will be an important to the successful identification of a new Director for LSD.

Thank you,
Chris Sonnier