

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees**  
**Academic Committee**  
**November 16, 2009**

**PRESENT:** H. Barlow, K. Caron, B. Child, P. Paquette, R. Rhault, H. Singleton, A. Spalding, T. Stokes

**ABSENT:** P. Green, P. Harrington, S. Young

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Philippa Paquette at 5:31. Approval of the minutes was deferred to the next meeting. Items 4 & 5 were deferred until the arrival of Mrs. Singleton.

**SENEGALESE EXCHANGE REVIEW**

Mrs. Paquette had the opportunity to receive feedback from Mrs. Burke regarding the Senegalese Exchange with respect to interaction and contact with Academy teachers during their visit. The feedback was such that there were numerous opportunities for contact and activities with faculty and students. Mrs. Burke provided a schedule of what took place. There was very exciting work done.

Mrs. Paquette expressed concern for the declining enrollment in French and she would hate to see it disappear. She stated that it was her understanding that there are no feeder schools offering it. Mr. Caron stated that French is declining everywhere and that it is a national trend. There is more persuasion to communicate with our neighbors (Spain). There has been a movement toward Indian and Chinese dialects.

Mrs. Singleton stated that she has met with the World Language Department to discuss where the languages fit in with global education and how we market that to students. Suggestions have included introducing a more conversational experience, particularly in the French language, to make it more appealing. There are approximately 40 students enrolled in French. There are 200+ students enrolled in Spanish. Mrs. Spalding asked how dramatic the loss has been in French and languages overall. Mrs. Singleton stated that Latin enrollment is up so high that we offered to pay a teacher to fill in with their prep time. We have a Latin 4 & 5 and will have 7 sections of Latin next year. Chinese is growing; Mandarin 1 & 2 was offered this year. This is a new Chinese teacher with a very different personality than the previous teacher. Mrs. Singleton stated that personality is a very important factor in enrollment. Mr. Barlow asked if students may choose who they have. Mrs. Singleton stated that they may not. Mr. Stokes asked about the development of the Senegal and Exchange program. Mr. Caron stated that it is on the radar and that the foreign exchange program is very valuable to our students. Mr. Stokes stated that it is important as the Academy Difference. Mrs. Paquette stated that the idea of going conversational and encouraging all students to take languages would be tremendous. Mrs. Singleton stated that we also have a world language teacher who is certified in three languages – Mrs. Onofrio who is certified in French, Italian and Spanish. She stated that the department is thinking about what they need to do and are in the process of self preservation and promotion.

**FRAMEWORK FOR ADVANCEMENT**

Mrs. Singleton gave an update on work being done toward the Academic Committee's specific goals in our Framework for Advancement in specific categories.

**1) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

In the area of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, the Professional Development Committee of the faculty is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill group. They are identifying those that we already have imbedded in the curriculum and identifying areas that we could use improvement on, particularly in the area of instruction and technology. The group is made up of 15 people and each has been assigned to different professional development experiences. The goal is to figure out where we are and identify where we would like to go and build it into the professional development plan for the next two years.

In the area of technology, the Technology Committee is doing the same thing from a technology point of view – where are we and where do we want to go. Both committees are doing well. Both are supported by the PD Committee’s almost complete 5-Year Professional Development Plan. This is a handbook for PD that brings together scattered paperwork, regulations on certification, goals of what PD should do, how it fits into the big picture and how we define its role in the Academy. In the area of technology, a big step was introducing Edline this year.

## **2) Rigor and Accountability**

Mrs. Singleton stated that there is a new CCT (Common Core o teaching), published at the end of last year from the state, updating and revising teacher evaluation. The Academy is looking at evaluation to realign with CCT and make sure it is a useful document of teacher evaluation and is aligned with certification. We are going green in making the document electronic. The PD group is in the process of doing this.

Mr. Rhault stated that he is on the committee and they have made great progress, coming up with ideas to restructure, help new teachers, and make evaluation more meaningful. He stated that they are looking at the focus, numbers of evaluations, timelines, and tiers with teacher coaches as opposed to administrative observations, etc. They are looking at lesson plan templates and how it fits in smaller learning units and curriculum as a whole. Mrs. Singleton stated that it is helpful that this is coming from a teacher’s point of view and that it is insightful in what is important in good teaching. They are also using student work as a way to bring it back in post observation. She stated that we don’t always get to see what students were able to produce during an observation. She stated that the evaluation schedule currently is also dependent upon your teacher experience and tenure. Mr. Rhault stated that the committee is looking at the process of more of a teacher growth opportunity as opposed to being punitive in nature. Sharing right now is teacher driven.

Mrs. Paquette asked how we as a system can make sure that sharing happens. Mr. Caron stated that time is the great equalizer for all of us. There is an ad hoc committee on how we use faculty meeting time, which currently is traditional and usually business items. We need to use time to focus on professional learning communities, interdepartmental time, and it needs to be teacher driven. He stated that this will be start to establishing professional learning communities – talking about student work and how you increase student performance.

Mrs. Singleton stated that the PD group is also working on use of data for class exit surveys. They have come up with a laundry list of questions that could be asked of students in different categories. There has been training on Survey Monkey, a free survey tool that is webbased and will be useful in compiling the data. They are also looking at macro surveys of freshmen and sophomores, at the beginning and end of each year. Collection of data will be assist us in evaluating programs and give us a sense of where our needs are.

Mr. Stokes stated that an 8<sup>th</sup> grade survey may be helpful as well. Mrs. Paquette stated that needs to be a personal connection for the students so that they can see the result of the impact of their responses. The results will be important for them to see personally. It will help to build a connection for their presence at the Academy. Mr. Barlow asked if college students were surveyed. Mrs. Singleton stated that Futuristics has been used in the past. We are trying to eliminate the cost involved with that type of vendor which is approximately \$15,000 each time. We want to make it more useful for us as well.

Mr. Caron stated that we are trying to develop a systematic way to evaluate our performance as a school and we need to drive continual improvement. Mrs. Singleton stated that we are looking at all types of data. Some statistics are for the public. We will also look at individual or in-house results, by specific tests to see how teachers are impacting results. We will be collecting data on things like foreign trips to see what the result has been – who, how many, and what was the experience.

Mrs. Singleton stated that there is also the TEAM program (Teacher Educator and Mentor Program), formerly BEST. We are ahead of the state with respect to this program. Instead of presenting a portfolio at the end of 2 years in the BEST program, beginning teachers will complete 6 learning modules with specific goals determined by the teacher and their mentor. They will have a timeline and produce a journal, and a reflection paper. The paper will go to a review committee after two years, with all domains completed, and the superintendent will recommend certification of the teacher to the state after completion.

#### **CLASS SIZE POLICY**

Mrs. Singleton presented a draft class size policy that will be recommended to the Policy Committee after Academic Committee review. The intent is that as our economical issues become more severe, and we look at making sure that we are using public monies effectively, there is a rationale in place for whether we offer or cancel a class. She stated that the intention was also to make it broad enough for flexibility for program pilots or needs of different populations, class offerings specific to school-wide goals, and support initiatives. It gives us flexibility but ideally, how to calculate the numbers and class sizes that make sense. Assumptions are based on average class size and a bottom number for class size. She stated that the language is not so limiting that we can't offer something just because of a specific number.

Discussion took place with respect to various classes and enrollment figures. The draft will move onto the Policy Committee. Mr. Caron stated that this policy allows us to anchor our class size in a Board philosophy and helps the Administration to move forward, balance classes, and use funds appropriately.

Mrs. Paquette stated that she would next like to focus the agenda on the goal of engaging the sending towns as a PK-12 learning community.

**MOTION:** (Stokes, Child) To adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Willis  
Board Secretary