



CHARTER COUNCIL MINUTES

**Meeting of February 1, 2012
3:30pm YRCS – Conference Room**

Yuba River Charter School is a community focused on the development of our children. The primary responsibility for the governance of the affairs of the school falls upon the Charter Council, composed of teachers, staff, parents and community member(s). Regular meetings of the Charter Council are held the first Wednesday of each month. The Charter Council invites input from all constituencies of the school. For more information regarding the functioning of the Charter Council, see the Charter Council By Laws and applicable policies.

1. Call to Order – 3:37 pm

CC Present: Carrie Reuther (CR), Leila Barber (LB) starting at 4:35 pm at item 4.h., Dan Martinez (DM), Kathy Eldredge (KE), Torrie Mudd (TM), Mariana Nielsen (MN)

Absent: Robert Wallis (RW)

Guests:

Caleb Buckley (CB), Director

Susan Egan (SE), Business Manager

Guests during Public Comment:

Leticia Casey, Kidspace Coordinator

Jen Scott Lifland, Kidspace Assistant

Guests during Public Comment and first agenda items:

Denise Reynolds, Ed Foundation Treasurer

Marguerite Vulfs, Little Creek Administrator

2. Public Comment – 3:37 pm

This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the council on non-agendized items. Note the council cannot discuss or take action on non-agendized items at this meeting, but such items may be agendized for a later council meeting for discussion and/or action. Agendized items may either be addressed at this time or when the items come up for discussion and/or action. All comments are to be pertinent to the business of the board as determined by the chair. Furthermore, comments which reflect adversely upon personal character or motives are out of order as are those which reflect racial, religious, economic or political views. Such statements are grounds for summary termination of the privilege of address.

Leticia Casey and Jen Scott Lifland of YRCS afterschool program, Kidspace, presented a few Polaroid snapshots of their program: Doris Rainville came to observe their program and gave them high ratings stating that they were indeed practicing "nourishing hearts" methods. Kidspace is an inspiring program that works hard to meet our children's developmental, educational, and social needs. Currently they are



very short on space. This limits the number of kids that can be accepted on a daily basis and therefore the income potential of the program. They serve kindergarten through sixth-grade students and occasionally a seventh or eighth grader. They can serve 25 to 35 students per day but no more than 22 at any one time due to certification restrictions. There is overlap in the daily rhythm as kindergarten children leave and upper grade students arrive later. Currently all slots are often filled. Kidspace is looking for creative thinking on ways they can secure more space. Perhaps they could use the library or the auditorium or a classroom. Space is required both for inclement weather days as well as to accommodate the numbers of students interested in the program.

3. Consent Agenda Action Items – None

4. Discussion Items – 3:46 pm

a. The council shall discuss the Little Creek enrollment policy and priority status criteria in follow-up to faculty discussion

CC discussed in more detail the pros and cons of the current YRCS enrollment policy that grants priority to Little Creek students. The concerns center around whether it is good policy to establish priorities for a public school based upon a private preschool, as this gives families that are able to pay and that are willing to put their children in preschool an advantage. The faculty discussed this issue and there is not yet consensus. 56 kindergarten spots are available with Little Creek providing up to 10 students per year into the program. Other solutions for how to continue a solid relationship with an in-house Waldorf preschool that does not preclude families that cannot afford to pay were discussed. It was decided to send the matter back to faculty for further discussions and alternative proposals. Because faculty has discussed this on numerous occasions recently and it is too late to affect this year's enrollment, this matter may be tabled for some time.

b. The council shall discuss the timeline for the new building project

Originally, the new building on the Rough and Ready site was scheduled to be completed approximately January 2013. At this point is highly unlikely this target date will be met. CB has requested various scenarios for when the building project would be completed from the architects. The current lease at NCE is through June of 2014. According to the funding requirements from the State of California, the building must be completed by 2015. Further discussions will be held once scenarios are available from the architects if it appears that the new target completion date warrants further action, such as an extended lease at NCE.

c. The council shall discuss the Ed Foundation mid-year budget report and excess funds

As is required per the MOU between the Ed Foundation and YRCS, Denise Reynolds presented the allocation of funds on hand as of December 31, 2011 and



budget and excess funds through December 31, 2011. Items requiring additional funds by the Ed foundation than originally expected were discussed and in line with school priorities, including seeking additional administrative support, the cost of producing the a promotional video, and other incidental costs. The CC received the reports and the notification of the funds that will soon be transferred to YRCS with gratitude.

CC was saddened to hear that due to other commitments Denise Reynolds will no longer serve on the Ed Foundation. CC expressed its deep gratitude for the dedicated and exceptional work that Denise has performed for the school over the past four years and wishes her the best in her new pursuits.

d. The council shall discuss first reading of new policy The Roles of the Board and School Director

This policy was updated by the attorney when it was reviewed during the charter renewal process. No comments during the meeting. CC members are requested to submit comments to SE.

e. The council shall discuss first reading of new policy Code of Ethics for Board Members

This policy was updated by the attorney when it was reviewed during the charter renewal process. No comments during the meeting. CC members are requested to submit comments to SE.

f. The council shall discuss first reading of new policy Governing Board Meeting Agendas and Supporting Information

This policy was updated by the attorney when it was reviewed during the charter renewal process. The primary comment during the meeting was that agendas should be set not only by the director but "in collaboration with the CC Chair." CC members are requested to submit additional comments to SE.

g. The council shall discuss revisions to the Bylaws

This policy was updated by the attorney when it was reviewed during the charter renewal process. No comments during the meeting. CC members are requested to submit comments to SE.

h. The council shall discuss the summary of the 1-11-12 Brown Act Training

CR presented highlights from the training:

- It may help to keep meetings moving along and indicate the level of review expected for an item if approximate times for each item are included on the agenda. CC agreed to consider this idea as long as all times were stated as being "estimates" and are used as guidelines only.
- It is important that members not use the e-mail "Reply All" feature as electronic communications are interpreted as being private meetings. Communication between more than two CC members should be done in a public forum where the public may observe the deliberations.



- During special meetings, any public comment must be limited to agenda items. TM will update the standard paragraph for special meeting agendas.
- If something urgent occurs since the time the CC agenda is posted, it may be added to the agenda with a vote during the meeting. The justification for the item's urgency should be stated in the minutes.
- It was stated that it is legally acceptable to discuss employee matters during closed sessions without notifying the employee as long as the board does not take action during the session. CC members agreed that it is unlikely that YRCS would want to use this option, as keeping good employee relations is a priority.

i. The council shall discuss the summary of the 2010-11 parent survey – Torrie Mudd

TM included a summary of the survey in the most recent newsletter. Overall parents are looking for better communication, but in general the survey results were favorable and YRCS received many kudos.

j. The council shall review (annually) the Board and Administrative goals regarding Star Testing

General oversight expectations from STAR testing were discussed. It was stated that the state of California will soon be revamping its standardized testing policies. Because the standardized tests are so critical to a charter school's renewal process, CC must routinely monitor the results. It was determined that this could be done annually at the CC retreat. Review should include achievement of subgroups including English-language learners and special education students. Any other trends noticed by faculty or administration should be discussed. Presenting data from the current year in comparison to previous years, presenting graphical data, maintaining the graphs developed for the charter renewal, and other such data summarizing documents would help CC perform this oversight efficiently.

k. Shall the Council discuss revisions to the Director's Evaluation Policy (1st reading)?

The director evaluation policy was reviewed with no immediate comment. It was decided to include the following groups on the distribution of this year's director evaluation survey: District Superintendent, CC members, credentialed teachers, co-teachers, Home Study Coordinator, Special Education Director, and Little Creek Administrator. All responses are due by February 10. Once responses are received the director evaluation committee will meet to discuss the results in draft a summary evaluation. They will then meet with CB. In March the committee will present the findings to the full CC.



5. Discussion/Action Items

- a. **Shall the council approve minutes for 1-4-12 and ~~1-11-12~~ 12/1/11?** DM 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously as amended

Minutes for January's meeting and December's Special Meeting were passed. Minutes for the January 11 meeting are still due.

- b. **Shall the council discuss (3rd reading) and approve the Disenrollment Policy?** TM 1st, LB 2nd - Passed unanimously

Disenrollment policy passed with no further comments.

- c. **Shall the council approve clarification to job descriptions for ~~Kindergarten and preschool teachers~~ Little Creek Administrator, Kidspace Coordinator, and their assistants limiting off-site work duties?** CR 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously as amended

The change in the job descriptions will limit errands and other extracurricular to these to normal work hours unless a special assignment has been approved by a supervisor. Credentialed teachers are exempt per the education code. The change in policy has not yet been reviewed by teaching staff. In the future this policy could be expanded to kindergarten teachers since they have hours built into their routine work schedules to allow for errands. This vote approves the change to job descriptions. A change in policy is also required and will be brought to a future meeting.

- d. **Shall the council approve modification from Blue Shield to Domestic Partners requirement in Personnel Policies (classified and certificated)?**

LB 1st, TM 2nd - Passed unanimously

A change in definition for domestic partners is required by our current healthcare provider.

- e. **Shall the council approve revisions to the Bylaws?** Tabled

Changes are required to the bylaws in order to conform with the school's new nonprofit status. SE will bring changes to the next meeting.

- f. **Shall the Council discuss the updates from the Spring 2012 action items from the Strategic Plan – Leila Barber?** discussion item, no motions required

LB led a discussion about progress towards items in the Strategic Plan.

Highlights are provided below and more details are included in the attachment:

- DM talked to Raelynn Noel, Home Study Coordinator based out of Woolman School, to confirm our continuing relationship with the school's organic farm for next year.
- It is unclear who is responsible for items under the category "enhancing school spirit." TM to follow up.
- We have exceeded our goals for community outreach in getting articles published in The Union.



- Regarding developing a plan for reaching out to extended families, it was determined that the Ed Foundation is in the process of creating this plan and will also work towards a plan for reaching out to alumni.
- The faculty is still discussing how best to showcase science achievements. It was confirmed that the audience is intended to be the greater community, not simply YRCS families.
- CB will ask Parent Council for an update on the school buddy/mentor program and report back next month.
- From now on CC will discuss active items from Strategic Plan at regular meetings.

6. Reports

a. Director – Caleb Buckley – Enrollment report, update on auditorium sports changes, update on Kidspace Program

- CB presented the enrollment report which continues to show record level enrollment. Little Creek preschool is also fully enrolled in both 2-day and 3-day programs for a total of 20 children. Once licensure is obtained, enrollment may be increased to 11 students per program. This year there are approximately 12 eligible kindergarten students.
- There is a very full list of applicants for the kindergarten program. Sixteen families are already on the wait list from this year and 20 families are returning. Thirty more applications have some level of priority such as siblings, preschool or staff relationships, with an additional 16 applications that do not have a priority and approximately 30 more families due to visit soon.
- Currently the only openings at the school are a few slots in the first grade and the Home Study program.
- Every year the decision is made whether to overenroll the fourth grade by using the assistance of us co-teacher. The decision has been made that next year's fourth grade will remain with the class size of 29 students and therefore will not use a co-teacher.
- Attendance from the start of school through early January has been an excellent 96%. Teachers warned that January's attendance was not as good due to many illnesses.
- Use of the auditorium as a gymnasium was discussed. Administration updated CC on the discussions they had with Nevada City School District and our maintenance staff. Because NCE is a state architect approved campus, any changes will need to be approved by the state, a costly and time-consuming process that NCS D is discouraging. The auditorium is currently approved as an auditorium, not a gym, and therefore cannot be used for ball sports. Any structures also require approval, therefore what is added to the playground must be carefully reviewed. For example, shades sails and pop-up tents may be



acceptable, but no built-in wooden structures. New water fountain installations are another addition that would require approval and are therefore discouraged.

- Gratitude was expressed for the eighth grade families whose hard work made such great improvements to the auditorium's stage area.
- The Kidspace program was discussed. Due to the smaller space and the resulting reduced enrollment, along with some bookkeeping procedural issues, income is down for this program. Administration continues to work with the coordinator to find more space to help expand the program and to tighten payment paperwork processes to capture all income.
- The county votes on our Charter Renewal application next week.
- A recent incident in a nearby school emphasized the need to have a carefully thought through lockdown procedure. Administration is currently working on this. It will notify parents that if for any reason local authorities require the school to go on lockdown, no access to the school is allowed until the incident has been cleared. This means the school retains custody of the children until law-enforcement deems the situation safe.
- An update was provided regarding costs that may be forthcoming due to a former student's independent special-education assessment request. Administration is handling this complicated situation that involves several schools.

b. Business Manager – Susan Egan

- SE successfully represented YRCS in the suit brought by the previous landlord. The judge dismissed the case because it had been filed incorrectly and it has now passed the allowable time window for filing. Because of the dismissal, it was decided that YRCS would not pursue its countersuit.
- Because our nonprofit status had not been formally received, SE was required to file taxes. Nonprofit registration is expected soon.
- SE is working on the second interim budget which includes higher ADA income figures from the state of California that are deemed unreliable and should be reserved until the state's financial situation is deemed more stable. Her instructions are to present a budget with a \$350 per student cut, although the hope is this will not be required based on various tax proposals and other solutions the state of California is currently investigating.
- Because our liability and workers comp insurance has grown very expensive due to several recent claims, SE is sending the contract out for bid to see if she can secure improved rates.
- A discussion was held over which handbooks should be reviewed by the CC: the Parent Handbook, an in process Employee Handbook, the Little Creek Handbook and the Kidspace Handbook. It was decided that any CC member could review these on the website, as they are public information. A more formal review and revision will be considered early next school year during a less busy time.



c. Parent Council - Caleb Buckley

- Discussions were held about parent co-ops because several families are requesting a space to use to care for siblings during the hours between kindergarten and first and second grade dismissals and upper grade dismissals. The crowded new school site makes it really difficult to find such space.
- PC is now exhibiting great control over their finances and also shows improvements on their income from various fundraisers.
- A parent education evening is planned for February 6 showcasing Rudolph Steiner College's Eurythmy instructor.

d. Ed Foundation - Caleb Buckley

- The educational foundation used some of their funds to produce an excellent promotional video about our school. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation from the architects was also produced. The video can now be seen on a YouTube link accessible from the school's website.
- The annual fund-raising campaign drive will begin soon.

e. Faculty – Leila Barber

- Play season is underway with many great performances.
- January proved to be a month with many illnesses, especially in the first and second grades.

f. CC Chair – Torrie Mudd – update on Director's Evaluation

- The primary current task is the director evaluation which was discussed above.

7. Closed Session: 7:20 pm

The Council invited in guest: Caleb Buckley (CB) and Susan Egan (SE): LB 1st, CR 2nd - Passed unanimously

a. Shall the council approve contract for Shauna Maziarz, Substitute for Director?

b. Teacher Evaluations – Caleb Buckley

8. Reconvene and Report out of Closed Session: 7:45 pm

a. The council approved the contract for Shauna Maziarz, Substitute for Director. DM 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously

b. The council heard and discussed the teacher evaluation for Erik Bell.

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

a. March Meeting

- Approve minutes for 10/1/11 Charter Retreat, 1/11/12 special meeting and 2/1/12 meeting.
- Director Evaluation
- Discuss timeline scenarios for the new building project.
- Second reading of new policy for the Roles of the Board and School Director.



- Second reading of policy Code of Ethics for Board Members.
- Second reading of Governing Board Meeting Agendas and Supporting Information.
- Second reading of revisions to the bylaws to conform with nonprofit language and for revisions required by lawyer due to charter renewal review.
- Second reading of Director's Evaluation Policy.
- Second reading of policy defining work hour requirements.
- PC Report: update on school buddy/mentor program.
- Policy for safety on walking field trip.
- Second interim budget.
- Detailed review of parent Survey results.

b. Future Meetings

- Alternative proposals from faculty on Enrollment Policy regarding Little Creek priority
- CC Retreat: detailed STAR testing results including presentation of data summaries that show trends over time, trends between the grades, trends within subgroups, etc.
- Add routine Strategic Plan update to Reports or Discussion section of the CC agenda.
- Approximately September: review the Parent Handbook, the Employee Handbook, the Little Creek Handbook and/or the Kidspace Handbook

c. Action Items

- TM will update the standard public comment paragraph for Special Meeting agendas to indicate that only agenda items may be addressed.
- Allow teaching staff to review changes to job descriptions regarding extracurricular activities.
- TM to review lists and action plans from strategic planning sessions to verify if anybody volunteered to help with items relating to "enhancing school spirit."

10. Call to Adjourn – 7:50 pm

Respectfully Yours,

Mariana Nielsen
Charter Council Secretary



**Attachment 1
Details for
Strategic Planning Tracking**



Strategic Directions and Objectives - *"What innovative substantial actions will deal with the underlying barriers and move us toward our goals and visions?"*

Under each strategic direction, here are the objectives identified for Spring 2012:

1. Grow and Strengthen Fundraising and Partnerships for Thriving Waldorf Programs

Enhanced Curriculum

- ***Incrementally establish a farm program that is integrated into science, history, art, and other classes, for 2nd through 8th grades*** DM to contact Woolman to set up a continuation of our visits to their organic farm for the upcoming school year.

2. Celebrating YRCS and Sharing with the Greater Community

a. Enhancing school spirit

1. *In Spring 2012, designate a staff member or volunteer to monitor successes of students, faculty, staff, and parents; develop a plan for publicizing these successes; and implement the plan beginning in Fall 2012. ???*

b. Community Outreach

- 1) ***By Spring 2012, create a calendar of community events identifying those at which YRCS should have a public presence. By Spring 2012, establish a plan for creating this presence at each event. Implement the plan beginning in Fall of 2013.***

Community Events YRCS should have a public presence at, annually:

- Nevada City Summer Night (4 Wednesdays in July)
- Grass Valley Street Market (12-14 Wednesdays from June through early September)
- Nevada City Victorian Christmas (The tie-in with the Chamber of Commerce is good, but this event, as it has been, is a TON of work! Lots of coordination and class participation required.)
- "Day of the Young Child" at Sierra College – a Sat. in late September
- Nevada County Fair – our Slushie Booth is a lucrative hit! Lots of coordination and class participation required.

- 2) **Establish a goal of generating at least four stories annually about YRCS in The Union, and at least one in the newsletters of state and national-level Waldorf-related educational associations.**

Dates YRCS was in the Union since Spring 2011:

- 1/19/2012 – (not a direct YRCS piece) Two of our grads (Olivia Lawrence-Weilmann and Dylan Fitzwater) were recognized for their debating skills and effort to "change the world."
- 1/12/2012 – Joy Castro-Wehr recognized for winning and placing in 2012 Nevada County Writing Tournament
- 11/27/2011 – YRCS grad, Shawn Jordan's 8th grade project on the cover and main feature of the Sunday Express section of the Union, "A Real Barracuda: 8th grader restores 1968 car for class project."



- 11/19/2011 – Moondance on the front page of the Saturday “Learning” section of the Union. Large photo and story of Gary Upton’s table written.
 - 11/18/2011 – Moondance featured in Town Talk
 - 11/10/2011 – Sidebar in the “Learning” section featuring a photo and information about the 2nd grade Moondance Chicken Coop.
 - 9/30/2011 – Front page of the Union hot air balloon photo and article, “A Lesson Aloft”
 - 9/8/2011 – YRCS grads (Matisse Geenty & Keaton Hilde) featured in “Young Musician Competition Winners Announced.”
 - 8/23/2011 – Page A3 photos and article written on new YRCS playground work, “Dig Right In”
 - 7/31/2011 – “Other Voices” section “Yuba River Charter School in Downtown Nevada City” article with YRCS sign.
 - **ADDITIONALLY:** Caleb may have submitted articles to the Lilipoh Journal and was interviewed about Waldorf education by the New York Times.
- 3) ***Develop a plan for reaching out to extended families (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) by fall 2012, and to alumni by 2014.***
- During the 2010-2011 school year, the YRCS Educational Foundation determined we needed to reach-out and engage YRCS grandparents, in order to inform them about our amazing school, the school that their grandchildren attend, with a future possibility of inviting grandparents to financially contribute, of their own volition, to YRCS. A collaborative effort between the Ed Foundation and teachers, transpired twice (Spring 2011 and Fall 2011), and letters, pictures, art, etc was sent to grandparents. The Ed Foundation paid for the postage to make this happen. This program has since been scrutinized and the future efforts of this bi-annual program are up in the air. No financial solicitations were ever made to grandparents through this program vision.
 - For the 2012-2013 school year, YRCS Development will include a grandparent solicitation request form asking families to opt-in for YRCS contacting them.
 - On the alumni front, Melissa is in conversation with Thea Beiling, with the idea of establishing and launching an Alumni Association at YRCS. This comes at a perfect time, as YRCS is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. We will have 20 years of graduates to be proud of! (Patricia Montijo is also interested in supporting this effort.)
- 4) ***By Spring 2012, develop a program to showcase science accomplishments.***
- Faculty continues to discuss this

3. Catalyzing Innovative and Inclusive Community Interactions

a. Information Modes/Channels

1. ***Improve use of the newsletter as a way to provide families with information about Waldorf methods and school events and volunteer opportunities. Doris Rainville will be writing an article soon about The Nurtured Heart approach and will ensure forthcoming articles on a regular basis***



2. ***Continue to improve upon policies for communication and empowerment of the school's SHINE (Social Health and Inclusion Network for Everyone) committee. Susan Egan will talk with Krissa about this.***

3. ***Develop programs for parents to interact and assist each other's families through the grades.***
School Buddy/Mentor Program: This is something that was in our Strategic Plan. This was discussed at our last Parent Council meeting last week. A Parent Mentor/Buddy Program would be fairly intensive at the beginning of the school year, when we have MANY new families in the kindergartens, arriving to YRCS, with their heads spinning. I plan to come to (this week's) faculty meeting to discuss the picture for this. (i.e. would 1st grade families buddy the kinders? Or maybe 2nd grade families buddy the kinders? Would the class parent oversee this? Or the PC Rep? Lots of Qs to answer, but we want to see this in place for the 2012-2013 school year.

4. ***Beginning in Spring 2012, record as many Parent Education evenings as possible and make them available over the school's website.*** Melissa's feedback: I feel that for this to happen YRCS needs to identify a number of people within our community to handle this technical process. If we truly want to record and then broadcast these talks, we need a proper camera, release process and committed "body" to do this. I attempted to record George Hoffecker's talk with poor success. I understand there may be a 3rd grade Oregon House parent who is willing to record some of these events. (Rachel Nobel ?? Or Andreea Federspiel?) The best way to handle this would be to hire a professional who can mic our guests, etc. But that requires money.

4. Organizing, Engaging, and Expanding Human Resources

b. Volunteers/ Parents

1. ***Develop a survey in Spring 2012 to understand how best to meet parents' needs for education regarding Waldorf methods; use this feedback to develop a parent education program in Fall 2012, implement the program in Spring 2013. TM to include a question in the upcoming survey about requests for specific parent education events.***
2. ***In Fall 2011, develop a database to begin to gather a "Skills bank" of YRCS talents. During the Back-to-School registration event, all the required Skills Bank information was captured. A parent volunteer input all of the information into an Excel spreadsheet for us. The information is useable, but not able to be manipulated easily. We need to look at what and how we want to use this information. How to make it available. It has been helpful to me, but not to the larger community or school.***
3. ***Develop a means to identify and reward exceptional volunteer families. CB to investigate adding a regular volunteer section to the newsletter.***