Yuba River Charter School

**CHARTER COUNCIL MINUTES**

**Meeting of March 7, 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 – 3:40 pm**
   CC Present: Carrie Reuther (CR), Leila Barber (LB), Dan Martinez (DM), Kathy Eldredge (KE), Torrie Mudd (TM), Mariana Nielsen (MN), Robert Wallis (RW)
   Absent: None
   Guests:
   Caleb Buckley (CB), Director
   Susan Egan (SE), Business Manager

2. **Public Comment – 3:40 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. NOTE: For special meetings only, the public comment must pertain to the agendized items only. 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.

Jackie Weills, the director of a local Waldorf inspired preschool, presented a proposal for accepting students into the YRCS preschool and kindergarten programs. Her idea centered around very young children being accepted into YRCS programs late in the spring, causing disruptions in the child's sense of security and rhythm. She requested that if children are accepted late in the spring, they could defer their actual enrollment until the next fall, by keeping their current high position on the waiting list.

**Note: It was proposed and accepted to discuss items in priority order due to the length of the meeting. For ease of record keeping items in the minutes follow the order of the agenda.**

3. **Consent Agenda Action Items**
   a. **Shall the Council approve Warrants for July 1 – Feb. 29, 2012?** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously

4. **Discussion Items**
   a. **The council shall discuss the summary of the 2010-11 parent survey – Torrie Mudd** Tabled due to lack of time
   b. **The council shall discuss the updates from the Spring 2012 action items from the Strategic Plan – Leila Barber?** Tabled due to lack of time
   c. **The council shall discuss the safety on walking field trips**

      A police officer recently came to the school and presented a safety demonstration to the fourth through eighth grades.

      New wording for field trips safety procedures was proposed that will be included in the teacher and parent handbooks.
   d. **The council shall discuss solutions for Kidspace**

      The Kidspace aftercare program is recognized as an important component at YRCS. Due to space restrictions in the classroom available at the NCE facility to house this program and imperfect bookkeeping procedures, the program is running more than $8,000 in the red to date this year. The coordinator of the programs and administration continues to work out solutions to correct these issues. Kidspace would like to grow the program but needs more space to make this possible. Currently the peak hour is between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. Kidspace asked for use of the library at least one day per week, but the library is in use for other activities between two and three in the afternoon. After three in the afternoon on rainy days Kidspace can often use the auditorium. The current solution is to offer Kidspace the use of first grade between two and three and to monitor the situation to see if this helps with enrollment and can be managed without disrupting classroom activities.
   e. **The council shall discuss the present update of the building project**

      RW passed on information to the charter Council from the building team. 450Architects had been on hold until completion of the purchase of the new parcel for the parking area, and has now been asked to restart the project. An on-site meeting was held a few weeks previous to get clearer on the current budget and schedule. A new schedule has been received and will be monitored by the building team. The goal is to submit plan to the California Division State Architect (DSA) within two months. Typically it takes 6 to 10 months for approval. The next step will be to send the building contract out for bidding. This will be handled by a

construction manager selected by the building team. This organization adds up front cost but limits YRCS risk in the project and provides professional oversight against cost overruns. The current schedule projects that school will be open in the fall of 2014. Although the new parcel is still an escrow, all is proceeding as expected. Currently an environmental study is underway. This escrow is expected to close in early July.

The design was discussed, including the common dilemma for building projects of desiring more building than is possible with the current budget. The most that is available in the budget for construction is $5.9 million. Certain trade-offs had to be made. The main buildings of the school will be quality modular units and a company has been selected. More useable square footage was made available by reducing the amount of centralized mechanical space. The design includes an auditorium that will not be suitable for use as a gymnasium.

Another issue the building team is facing is finding the best lead agency to oversee the process. The current best candidate is the Nevada County Superintendent of schools. Administration continues these negotiations and would like to thank RW for his heroic efforts to obtain needed information.

**f. The council shall discuss transitional kindergarten and enrolling of students into kindergarten that have birthdates after November 1, 2012.**

Due to many mixed messages from the state of California, it has been confusing to determine how much the state is willing to fund children who use a transitional kindergarten program. The expectation is that due to the ongoing state budget issues, these programs will not be funded. Since NCSA is housing a transitional kindergarten program in the county, YRCS is not required to have one. As recommended by Administration and in an effort to ensure that a four-year-old child will not displace a five-year-old child, YRCS will require that children turn five on or before November 1 to be eligible for the kindergarten program. The date will change as the law changes and the enrollment policy will be revisited as needed.

**g. Added agenda item: Check in regarding reduced working hours for director.**

Some discussion was held regarding the success of the Director's reduced work hours. Survey responses requesting input were received from 15 individuals. So far, the situation progresses adequately although it can be a challenge at times. The situation will continue to be monitored.

**5. Discussion/Action Items**

a. **Shall the council approve minutes for 2-1-12, 1-11-12 Special Meeting and 10-1-1~~2~~1 CC retreat?** DM 1st, RW 2nd - Passed unanimously as amended

b. **Shall the council approve the expansion of the Farm Home Study Program to include a 2 day a week kindergarten class in the Sweet Pea classroom?** Discussed only

Many discussions have been held between Administration and the lower grade teachers regarding the very large interest in the kindergarten program. Because the current size of our kindergarten has been determined to be appropriate to fill a first grade class, Home Study solutions were identified to increase the number of students served by a YRCS kindergarten. The current proposal involves adding a two day a week home study program with one day spent on site with Suzanne Scirpo of Little Creek and one day spent participating in the Woolman home study farm program led by Raelynn Noel. The children in this home study program would primarily be tracked towards the home study farm program by being granted priority for enrollment at first grade. They would also gain second highest priority for the on-site first grade program, after on-site kindergarten students.

Administration will present further details including contracts for approval at a future meeting. These discussions are presented now as they will need to be incorporated prior to the March 15 kindergarten lottery. There was general agreement among the council for the direction being considered.

c. **Shall the council approve a contract with Silver Creek for modular buildings for new facility project?** TM 1st, RW 2nd - Passed unanimously

The new building team recommends these modulars, particularly as they can handle the needed snow loads for our area and because it could speed the process as they have already been approved by the DSA by another school district. This is not the final contract needed but allows initiation of a customization project.

d. **Shall the council approve the Roles of the Board and School Director policies with a change in terms from "Charter Council" to the "Board of Directors" and "Charter Council Member" or "Board Director" to "Board Member, and granting SE the authority to change these terms in all YRCS policies? (2nd reading)** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously as amended

SE discussed the issue of the Charter Council organization with our attorney. After discussion, the CC will follow these recommendations. This organization is typical for other charter schools and will also be more in line with typical nonprofit boards. The Charter Council will be re-named to the Board of Directors. Charter Council members will now be known as Board Members. It was determined that the schools Director can serve on the board of directors as the president, as a nonvoting member. Additionally, the school of business director can serve as treasurer and be a nonvoting member. The board agreed to grant SE the authority

to change these terms and all documents where they exist, knowing this will be an ongoing process.

e. **Shall the council approve the Governing Board Meeting Agendas and Supporting Information? (2nd reading)** TM 1st, RW 2nd - Passed unanimously
f. **Shall the council approve the Code of Ethics for Board Members? (2nd reading)** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
g. **Shall the council approve revisions to the Corporate Bylaws?** Tabled
   The bylaws will be resubmitted with the terminology changes required for the Board of Directors.
h. **Shall the Council approve revisions to the Director's Evaluation Policy? (2nd reading)** CR 1st, RW 2nd - Passed unanimously
i. **Shall the council approve revisions to the Little Creek Enrollment Policy regarding declining a position and priority status?** DM 1st, CR 2nd - Passed unanimously
   After discussion, the board agreed with Administration's recommendation to revise the Little Creek Enrollment policy to protect the feeling of security and rhythm for very young children. If a three-year-old is accepted into the little Creek program after March 1 they will be allowed to decline the position and remain with their current program, while remaining at the top of the wait list for enrollment in Little Creek the fall. These changes will be brought to the next meeting for approval and do not affect the kindergarten or other grades enrollment policies.
j. **Shall the council approve revisions to the Enrollment Policy regarding priority status and lottery process for students into kindergarten with birthdates after November 1, 2012?** DM 1st, MN 2nd - Passed unanimously
   The enrollment policies will be clarified as to what is considered age appropriate for YRCS. A student must be five by November 1 to be eligible for the kindergarten program and must turn seven before April 15 for first grade, and so on for each grade with a cutoff date of April 15. A caveat will add that if there is no one on the wait list of the appropriate age for kindergarten, a student may be accepted once they turned five years old.
k. **Shall the council approve Resolution 1112-03 Authorization to Withdraw from CCSA JPA & Self Excess Liability Fund?** DM 1st, MN 2nd - Rejected unanimously
   SE did extensive research on the school's current insurance policy, including obtaining policy reviews from a parent that specializes in insurance. It was determined that although YRCS could attain cheaper insurance, the coverage would be significantly less and may not cover all contingencies; therefore, it was decided to remain with the current policy available through the CCSA JPA.

l. **Shall the Council approve the final 2nd Interim Budget including attachments (Summary, Narrative, Multi Year Projection and Cash Flow Analysis)?** RW 1st, CR 2nd - Passed unanimously

SE presented the second interim budget showing that the school remains on target including providing the recent increases for the teachers' HSA program. Based on the current projections, next year's budget is expected to be very, very tight, however manageable with no teacher cost-of-living increases or program expansions. Careful cash management will allow YRCS to manage its cash flow despite payment deferrals from the state.

m. **Shall the council approve receipt of the 2011 Audited Financial Statements?** DM 1st, RW 2nd - Passed unanimously

n. **Shall the council approve the revisions to the classified Personnel Policy regarding work hours? (2nd reading)** KE 1st, CR 2nd - Passed unanimously

**6. Reports**

**a. Director – Caleb Buckley**

- Enrollment continues very high with high interest from new families.
- The eighth grade boys basketball team clinched the championship in a very exciting game.
- Many alumni are coming back to YRCS to offer their services; for example as coaches for basketball and volleyball, to teach afterschool drama programs, to offer safety programs, and as puppeteers. Some have even been hired such as the swing dance teacher and the drama assistant.
- A YRCS' 20th anniversary celebration is being planned with a focus on alumni.
- A proposal is being developed with Karin Meadows to act as Volunteer Coordinator to work on how to best track volunteer hours and how to beautify the campus hallways and to get more YRCS artwork displayed throughout the county.
- YRCS is working with SYRCL and Sierra Streams Association to obtain a grant such that seventh and eighth graders can help with this year's salmon count.
- Shauna Maziarz has been gathering information for the school accountability report card, including organizing statistical information such as test scores and physical fitness data.

**b. Business Manager – Susan Egan**

- Distributed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form 700s, which must be completed by all board members by March 23.
- A new school calendar must be approved showing that snow days have all been used.
- Marguerite Vulfs, the Little Creek Coordinator, is back at work after time off to heal from an injury.

c. **Parent Council - Caleb Buckley**
   - Mark Dahlstrom and Catherine Janicke have done a great job organizing the PC finances such that now an overall budget is approved versus spending time during each meeting approving each expenditure.
   - Lisa Gorbet is stepping down as hospitality lead. Thanks to Lisa for so many years of excellent hosting!
   - It was decided that each class parents will be given the responsibility to be a "Parent Buddy" to new families.
   - The on-site fingerprinting service was canceled due to lack of interest.
   - Parent education classes have been completed for this school year.
   - Spring assembly will be on April 26 on the YRCS playground.
   - CB will remind PC Chair to begin the process for electing two new Board of Director Members. RW will not run for reelection but has offered to continue to volunteer on the new building project team. TM is graduating from being a parent at YRCS but may continue to serve on the board as a community member. The board is very grateful for the continued service.
   - PC will also be asked to find volunteers for the Hiring Committee.

d. **Ed Foundation – Robert Wallis**
   - The Annual Fund Drive is not going as well as projected.
   - The Ed Foundation is missing key officers and missed a meeting due to snow.
   - Administration will continue to work with existing members to reinvigorate and realign this important group.

e. **Faculty – Leila Barber**
   - Due to many calendar breaks, the faculty has been having fewer meetings.
   - STAR testing was completed for 4th and 7th grades for writing.
   - A police officer came to present a safety talk to 4-8th graders.
   - Optional parent conferences to be held next week.
   - The stage in the auditorium has brought the drama program to a whole new level.

f. **CC Chair – Torrie Mudd**
   - CC elections are due.

**7. Closed Session**

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

a. **Shall the council approve contract for classified position Classroom Aide?**
b. **Shall the council approve contract for classified position Volunteer Coordinator?**
c. **Shall the council approve contract for 1st Grade Teacher for 2012-13?**
d. **Shall the council approve contract for 1st Grade Co-Teacher for 2012-13?**
e. **Shall the council approve contract for grade 5 substitute for 2011-12?**

f. **Director's Evaluation – Torrie Mudd**
g. **Teacher Evaluations – Caleb Buckley**

8. **Reconvene and Report out of Closed Session -** 7:30 pm
   a. **The council approved the contract for classified position Classroom Aide for Danielle Reed.** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
   b. **The council approved the contract for classified position Volunteer Coordinator for Karin Meadows.** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
   c. **The council approved the contract for 1st Grade Teacher for 2012-13 for Erik Bell.** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
   d. **The council approved the contract for 1st Grade Co-Teacher for 2012-13 for Elise Hierman.** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
   e. **The council approved the contract for grade 5 substitute for 2011-12 for Lisa Gorbet.** LB 1st, KE 2nd - Passed unanimously
   f. **Director's Evaluation –** Tabled until next meeting due to time constraints
   g. **Teacher Evaluations –** Tabled until special meeting due to time constraints

9. **Next Meeting Agenda Items**
   a. **April Meeting**
      - Approve minutes for 3/26/12 special meeting and 3/7/12 meeting.
      - Director Evaluation
      - Expansion of the Farm Home Study Program for kindergarten.
      - Revisions to the Corporate Bylaws, including new Board of Director terminology
      - Revisions to the Little Creek Enrollment Policy regarding declining a position and priority status
      - Revisions to the Enrollment Policy regarding priority status and lottery process for students into kindergarten with birthdates after November 1, 2012.
      - Discuss School Accountability report card.
      - Approval of new school calendar showing used snow days.
      - Approval of 2012/13 school calendar.
      - Contract for Patricia Montijo to provide main lessons in 5th grade for the month of May.
      - Second reading of revisions to the bylaws to conform with nonprofit language and for revisions required by lawyer due to charter renewal review.
      - Policy for safety on walking field trip.
      - Detailed review of parent Survey results.
      - Strategic Plan progress review
   b. **Special Meeting 3/26/11 3:30pm**
      - Teacher evaluations

**c. 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.
- Approximately September: review the Parent Handbook, the Employee Handbook, the Little Creek Handbook and/or the Kidspace Handbook

**d. Action Items**

- DM incorporate field trips safety procedures into the teacher handbook.
- SE incorporate field trips safety procedures into the parent handbook.
- SE to ask Kidspace to advertise in the newsletter that more space is now available.
- TM to add routine Strategic Plan update to Reports or Discussion section of the CC agenda.

**10. Call to Adjourn – 7:55 pm**

Respectfully Yours,

Mariana Nielsen
Charter Council Secretary