

**RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**One Corliss Park**  
**Providence, Rhode Island 02908**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** November 4, 2004

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Minutes recorded by:** Jake Camara

**Minutes Approved on:** December 2, 2004

**Interpreters:** Jonathan Henry, Jennifer Maloney

## **Minutes**

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees was called to order by **Trustee Dorros** at 6:06PM in the RI School for the Deaf Cafeteria.

### **II. Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

In Attendance: Bonnie Abols, Carol Dorros, Steve Florio, Tracy Karasinski, Maureen McEntee, Phil Wheeler

Excused: Bill Walker, Travis Zellner

**III. Motion** was made by Steve Florio to move agenda item “**Strategic Planning discussion with MJ Kaplan**” to the top of the agenda. Seconded by Maureen McEntee. Approved unanimously.

### **IV. Strategic Planning discussion with MJ Kaplan**

- a. MJ Kaplan has been doing consulting work for about 20 years, and has worked with many organizations.
  - i. The majority of the work has been in public and non-profit sectors and she has worked with several schools.
  - ii. A fair amount of the work has been on strategy but also organizational effectiveness.
- b. Three time frames which need to be considered are covered in the following topics.
  - i. **Honor the Past**
    1. If the past isn't addressed on the front end, it comes out later.
    2. Different people have different ways of viewing the past.
  - ii. **Be Truthful About the Present**
    1. Take a look at the present and see what is working and what is not working.
    2. Try to paint a picture of where the strengths and

weaknesses are in the school today.

3. This can be hard but it is an important process.

**iii. Boldly Envision the Future**

1. What future are we intending to create?

2. What is the vision; what are the goals and actions to reach that vision?

3. Together everyone needs to have a shared view of the past and how it honors and has been improved upon.

c. MJ Kaplan distributed a handout titled “Model for Organizational Strategy” and explained it.

i. Most organizations have 4-6 core strategic issues which drive the organization to think about what they need to change in the future.

ii. In the end you need to make sure the “why, what and how” all are lined up.

d. The plan needs to be adaptable so that in the future as visions change, who is served is changed, capabilities change, etc, the plan is able to be adjusted and not discarded.

e. **What is the Strategic Planning Process?**

i. MJ Kaplan distributed a handout titled “The Strategic Planning Cycle” and explained it.

**1. Analysis/Internal Capabilities/External Trends**

a. Looking internal and external. Stepping back and saying what is working well and not working well. There need to be different parts of the organization weighing in, and outside people sharing perspective as much objective as possible.

b. Gather trends off the web, establish focus groups, and be in touch with experts in the field.

c. This step can be fairly quick or it can take longer depending on how many perspectives you need.

**2. Strategic Questions**

a. What are really the critical issues facing the school?

b. If you figure out the questions, the rest of the process goes very smoothly.

c. Often more time and effort goes into refining these than originally anticipated.

**3. Preferred Future: Where do we envision the organization?**

a. Trying to sketch out a preferred view for the future.

**4. Decision Making/Strategic Choices/Priorities & Goals**

a. What are the specific goals we need to commit to?

**5. Evaluation/Celebration/Recalibration**

a. How do we evaluate success?

b. There need to be some processes in place to evaluate the plan.

ii. There are often so many ideas on how to resolve certain issues.

This often boils down to thinking of the organization in three ways:

1. **Quality:** We're doing a great job but we would like to improve quality in certain areas
  2. **Growth:** Either student enrollment or program growth.
  3. **Innovation:** Something you really would like to see done in the school that is completely different from what is being done today.
- iii. MJ Kaplan distributed a handout titled "Strategic Planning Lessons Learned" and gave a brief overview.
- iv. Trustee Wheeler asked who typically participates in strategic planning when it comes to a school environment.
1. There always need to be core board members involved. Not all Board members usually can make the commitment and not all may have interest. There should be a good match for the people (6-10 in number) who have the time and are very excited about it.
  2. Leadership from the administrative area of the school.
  3. Some representation from teachers/coordinators
  4. Someone from the outside. Organizations tend to be so inward that someone from the outside should be brought in who really cares for the school and doesn't have an agenda. In her experience every time the person from the outside has played a critical role. In schools it is often alumni.
  5. As small as the team can be, the better. It is often hard to get people together.
- v. Trustee Wheeler asked about the number of meetings, frequency and time period
1. When working with a volunteer board, it tends to go slower. Generally the tolerance is 1-2 meetings per month and people will sometimes have a group meeting on a smaller issue.
  2. In the age of email, taking advantage of this can greatly speed up the process in terms of information sharing.
  3. For a school like this, it would be hard to get in done in less than a year.
- vi. Trustee Wheeler asked if there usually reporting done to a larger group/full board.
1. She recommended reporting at every board meeting. At the front end, a longer meeting is recommended with the full Board.
  2. Have the process be as open and transparent as possible.
- vii. Trustee Wheeler asked how long these meetings typically are.
1. 3 hour meetings work well, but this always depends on the group's availability and tolerance.
- viii. Trustee McEntee asked for a ballpark cost estimate.

1. An estimate would be \$10,000 - \$20,000.
  - ix. Trustee Dorros asked who would do analysis.
    1. It depends what the issues are. Either the consultants would do the analysis or find someone who has that expertise.
  - x. Trustee Florio asked for more information about the cost estimate.
    1. She is estimating based on other schools without having talked about any of the details of this project. The two areas that tend to increase her time are the analysis step and the pacing. It typically ends up taking longer than originally estimated.
    2. She would do a proposal after discussing the process as a benchmark. Once the process is started, changes may need to take place along the way.
  - xi. Trustee Dorros asked what the next step would be.
    1. The Board of Trustees should meet and discuss whether or not strategic planning makes sense for the school.
    2. Set up another meeting with MJ Kaplan to discuss the project further.
- V. Trustee Dorros asked is someone is going to be chair for this meeting.
- a. Trustee McEntee officially confirmed that she has resigned as chair as of November 1, 2004.
  - b. Trustee Florio volunteered to chair tonight's meeting.

## VI. Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

- a. October 14, 2004
  - i. Trustee Dorros
    1. **Page 2:** Add "in June" to "personnel committee had met"
    2. **Page 3:** Change "going out to big" to "going out to bid"
  - ii. Trustee Florio
    1. **On Page 2, D.II:** Trustee Florio was invited to go to a retreat hosted at ASD at their campus called "Camp Isola Bela" not at Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.
  - iii. **Motion** was made by Trustee Wheeler to accept the minutes of October 14, 2004 as amended. Seconded by Trustee Karasinski. Approved unanimously.

## VII. Reports

- a. Interim Director
  - i. Mr. Plante gave an update on his Interim Director's Report
    1. The locker room project is complete except for heat sensors being installed in the ceilings. The locker rooms cannot be used until these sensors are installed.
  - ii. Trustee Florio asked the status of the ASL Competency evaluations.
    1. Mr. Plante has called Dr. Robert Hoffmeister at Boston University on a monthly basis but has not heard back.

2. The Learning Center has someone who can evaluate ASL proficiency, but only at the Learning Center. They do not contract out. They suggested calling Robert Hoffmeister at BU.
- b. Coordinators**
- i. Trustee Florio asked if there are any issues in High School since there has not been a report in several months.
    1. Mr. Plante said that he would relay the question to the High School Coordinator.
  - ii. Trustee McEntee asked about the status of the Oral Program.
    1. Mr. Plante said there is a meeting which will take place with representation from the Providence School Department, Department of Education and RISD Staff on November 10. There should be more information in the December report.
    2. Mary Jane Johnson said that some teachers did visit an oral program in Connecticut and saw several things which were very good and would like to incorporate some of these things into a program that would be developed here.
  - iii. Trustee Wheeler thanked all the coordinators for the informative coordinator's reports.
  - iv. Trustee Florio mentioned that last month Trustee Dorros asked what the needs were in the Early Childhood report that could not be addressed at the school.
    1. Mary Jane Johnson responded that the school needs more Special Ed staff and professional development.
    2. Mr. Plante said that at the Friends of RI School for the Deaf meeting yesterday, the friends voted that they would be willing to hire consultants to come and give professional development workshops for staff on a regular basis.
    3. Trustee McEntee stated that under IDEA, Functional Behavior Assessment training is absolutely necessary.
      - a. Mary Jane Johnson said consultants from Providence Center come here on a regular basis to train, but this is not enough.
- c. Finance Director**
- i. Wayne Hannon gave an update on his "Items over \$5000" report.
  - ii. Trustee McEntee asked if the insurance policy listed here has the Board insurance policy included.
    1. Mr. Hannon said that it is not included but it will be paid shortly.
  - iii. Mr. Hannon gave a brief update on the audit report.
    1. Security Policies: 90% Complete
    2. Fire Safety: 80% Complete
    3. A location has been established at Davies' in the case of a necessary evacuation from the School for the Deaf.

- d. Chairperson
  - i. Correspondence
    - 1. Trustee Florio informed the Board that there is the letter from Maureen to Peter McWalters stating that she has resigned as chair effective November 1, 2004.
  - ii. Trustee Update
    - 1. **Motion** was made by Trustee McEntee for John Plante to send a certified letter to Bill Walker asking if he wants to stay on the Board or for his formal resignation by December 1, 2004. Seconded by Trustee Dorros.
      - a. Discussion took place regarding who should send the letter.
      - b. It was decided that the letter should come from the Board of Trustees.
      - c. Trustee Florio offered to write the letter and give it to John Plante to send via certified mail.
      - d. The motion was approved unanimously as amended.
- e. Sub-Committees
  - i. Building
    - 1. Trustee Dorros briefly explained the committee report to the Board of Trustees.
    - 2. **Motion** was made by Trustee Dorros that the Board of Trustees agrees to the sending of a letter from the Building Committee to the staff. Seconded by Trustee Abols. Approved unanimously.

## VIII. Old Business

- a. Board of Trustees Membership
  - i. Trustee Florio requested that next months agenda include an election for Vice Chairperson and Secretary.
  - ii. Trustee Wheeler suggested moving the meeting up to the first week in December.
  - iii. The Board of Trustees agreed to change the December meeting from December 9 to December 2.
    - 1. Trustee Florio said that he will contact the nominees to inform them of the date change.
- b. Director Search
  - i. **Motion** was made by Bonnie Abols to form a National Search for the Director Committee with Trustee Florio as the Chairperson. Seconded by Trustee Wheeler. Approved unanimously.
  - ii. This committee should involve the Parent Group, Alumni, 2012, Council 94, NEA, Board of Regents Employees and 2-3 Board members.
  - iii. Trustee Wheeler asked if the chairperson of the Board of Trustees can serve as a chairperson of a sub-committee.

