

Valley Inquiry Charter School

August Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2024 | Zoom Meeting, 6:30 PM

Board Members

Board President & Chair	Cammi Menager
Vice Chair	Terry Rohse
Treasurer	Stephen Staten
Secretary	BJ Foster
At-Large	Ed Austin (absent)
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Lacey McNay

Meeting Agenda Minutes

Secretary absent until 7:01 PM

7:01pm Staffing update

Lacey - Staffing update: Almost done, just one school support position to hire.

Steve - Appreciates efforts to get hiring completed, can be a full time job of itself.

7:05pm Curriculum

Lacey: Considering writing and Spanish curriculum

- Units of Study (Reading/Writing)
 - \$5,568.95 proposed price from sales rep
 - Seems to align with some of the IB principles in its approach to units of inquiry
- Calico Spanish
 - Recommended by our Spanish teacher

Cammi: Have you had experience with online components?

Lacey: No, but rep talked about cool AI suggested feedback on writing assignments that can help make up for lack of one-on-one teacher time.

BJ: Spanish curriculum only vaguely familiar with but have heard good things for beginners other than being weak in grammar, but supportive of that overall. Concerned with Units of Study curriculum as that is very controversial and has been the subject of studies that pointed out substantial flaws and lack of an evidence-based approach as well as weak phonemic awareness. Coming from a background of having a published reading curriculum author for a mother, so have had a lot of exposure to reading research and major programs. Have heard good things about the Units of Study's attempts to instill a love of reading and writing, but the cueing approach, which amounts to reinforcing guessing, is something that has caused a number of students to have long-lasting struggles after initial gains. See that Haggerty was mentioned as something in place that has more phonemic awareness training, but would want to see some sort of active mitigation of any methods still in place which reinforce guessing or consideration of a curriculum using an evidence-based approach.

Lacey: Spoke with a principal that agreed that improvements were made but wouldn't really cover it alone, would look into other options or mitigation efforts other have made. First grade teacher has gotten science-based reading instruction and agrees cueing or prompting isn't evidence based and we wouldn't want to utilize that approach.

Terry: Agrees that hinting at the correct option doesn't work even in higher ed.

7:27pm Meeting Technology

Terry: Spoke with an associate to get recommendations. (Terry lost power and disconnected.)

7:29pm Improvement Projects

Cammi: Improvement projects moving along nicely, parking lot should be completed by school start, crew working on drain field. Wanted to know if we wanted a quote on gravel filling center area that gets muddy, should hear what that additional cost would be if we want to pursue it. May need some signage to keep people off of areas we need to keep vehicles off of.

Electrical project moving forward. PGE got some equipment earlier, so instead of 47-52 weeks, likely in place by end of year. Starting prep work in August. Facilitates electrical for new portable.

Stephen: Has DC electrical's timeline been able to be moved up as well?

Cammi: Appears DC timeline won't be a roadblock

School District had nine portables that needed a new home, as land they were on was not going to be able to continue housing them. Spoke with district, some portables going to auction, but district wanted to know our plans for expansion toward middle school. Advised district we still are pursuing it and had any interest in acquiring some. Cammi advised looking at potentially 5, one to replace old portable and four more for expansion. District has 3 wet and 2 dry portables, in discussion with district about future plans and the possibility of purchasing our building, as well as transporting portables to our property in the meantime. Talking with our financial advisor, beginning due diligence processes and talking with architect.

Stephen: District clear they're not looking to sell building out from under us, but they are in some financial straights and building is just outside growth boundary, so could be in a position where they may need to sell in the next several years. Wants to see us be proactive about that rather than waiting for it to manifest. Feels like things are aligning well with mutual interests, portables look like good option for middle school expansion. Physical constraints were very difficult with our prior attempt, so any attempt to move forward needs physical expansion. If pieces come together, we would legally own our building and control our destiny. From a financial perspective, talks with financial advisor positive that we could secure a loan to finance a purchase and expansion. Still much work to be done, but looks very promising.

BJ: If moving portables goes through, what is expected ETA?

Stephen: Mid August, due to nature of property they are on, they need to be moved before the rains come.

Cammi: Will let board know when we get inspection results back and will be talking with Blake with architectural firm. Blake may want to meet with the Board to determine long-term goals for campus layout.

7:46pm

Meeting Technology

Terry: Associate does conferences using Zoom and Logitech webcam with wide-angle lens, talked about bare-bones setup that could work. Another option is a camera that can rotate itself to follow where the speaker is. Likely need to set up a board table at in-person meetings that allows for putting a mic that can hear. We could do individual mics at \$39 each but would require a control board. Could easily spend up to \$1000 depending on how deep we want to go with the option. Zoom can both record and live-stream. Would be good to use a SM-38 mic which are about \$50 plus a mic stand for the audience to talk into. Can record on a laptop, could probably get it all for around \$700 plus a laptop, and will need someone to set it up every time. Biggest problem is the streaming aspect. Will send details to the Board for consideration. Will likely need to spend a little to get the equipment we need to continue.

Cammi: SK moving towards using Teams, thus trying it tonight.

Terry: If we do Zoom, has to be pro subscription or we're limited to 45 minutes. Would like a budget of around \$1000 and hoping to come in lower.

Kassy: Does PTC stuff, talking about hybrid meetings and audio equipment, curious if Board would like to go in together on equipment instead of purchasing duplicate equipment? Wouldn't be able to bring to a vote until September.

Terry: Interested in doing that, will send specs for potential purchase.

JG: Feels like it makes more sense to aim low and achieve rather than aiming high and missing.

Terry: Interested in feedback, but doesn't want to buy cheap equipment that we have to replace all the time.

Stephen: Video is often the easy part, but audio in a large room can be tricky. Audio is the core component of understanding the meeting, so we need to get that part right.

Terry: Should be able to get clear audio if the Board has a mic right in front of them and we have a public comment mic stand.

8:00pm

Curriculum

Lacey: Article from EdWeek with review of new curriculum, emailed to Board, they have removed cueing system, but don't want to wait until September to get something in place.

8:02pm

Next Meeting info

Next regular meeting September 9 in person, will likely have a special meeting before then to discuss curriculum order.

8:03pm

Meeting Adjourn

Next Board Meeting: Monday, September 9, 2024, at 6:30pm. This meeting will be held at Valley Inquiry Charter School.