

# Valley Inquiry Charter School

## July Special Meeting Minutes

July 1, 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
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
At-Large	Vacant
Non-Voting Member	Gary Etchemendy, Principal

### Meeting Agenda Minutes

**6:35pm**      **Call to Order**  
Cammi called to order.

**6:35pm**      **Reimbursement Resolution**

Cammi: Need Reimbursement resolution for financial advisor for upcoming work, such as electrical project.

Terry motioned to put approve the reimbursement resolution, Steve seconded motion.

Vote: 5 Yes / 0 No / 0 Abstain.

**6:36pm**      **Hiring Committee's Recommendations**

Rebecca Benham: Introduction to the two candidates.

Jeff Duckett has 28 years of experience teaching and administrating abroad in Africa and Asia, just returned to USA. Loves IB, students come first, like-mindedness, democratic leader. Priorities include understanding policies, mission and vision, collaborative PD plan for year. Came across as thoughtful, philosophical, and focused on procedures and policies to lay foundation.

Lacey McNay has 10 years of experience (classroom, STEAM, Teacher mentoring, TAG, dean of students). She has done curriculum and staff development, most in elementary. No IB experience, but IB aligns with her philosophy. Holds belief that every student can learn, and learning should combine academic, social etc. Strives for making rounds and being present. Top priorities building morale, staff development opportunities.

Cammi: two rounds of interviews were held: the first introductory, and the second doing a teacher evaluation. Both passed with flying colors.

**6:42pm**

**Applicant 1 Question Session (Lacey McNay)**

Cammi: Is there anything you wish to tell us about yourself?

Lacey: Asst principal in Newberg. Whitworth grad in 2023 (two year program). Admin intern for elementary for 7 years, stepped into dean of students role.

1. What are your top 3 goals as an administrator?
  1. Building community as staff, community, school and surrounding community.
  2. Creating systems/culture where IB philosophy can thrive.
  3. Creating systems for collaborative planning, meaningful and intentional PD.

Emphasis on thinking, teaching, research, social skills; horizontal and vertical implementation; PD--building conceptual understanding, learning goals and assessments students can connect with to have agency, PD on IB learner profile due to many new staff.
2. What would be your plan to build community among staff, students and families?
  1. Staff--optional one-on-ones to get to know them. Staff meetings would set groundwork for building community, making opportunities for staff to get to know each other. Figuring out existing traditions, are they ones we want to continue or add new ones to? Celebrations, sharing meals, mentorship and collaborative partnerships, pairing younger/veteran teachers, social committees can be positive ways to build relationships amongst staff, valuing babies and other celebrations.
  2. Students--regular assembly or morning meetings are an easy but cool way to build community. Takes intention and planning. Giving students leadership and service opportunities, classroom buddies, spirit days, collective shared goals, school shirts/swag for visual community building.

3. Families--welcome at school, provide opportunities like volunteering, guest speaker, guest reader, events that promote goals, opportunities, open door policy to get input.

3. What are you most excited for if you get this job?

To be at a place that closely aligns with personal values. Creating a strong community in which students feel agency, build relationships and a more peaceful world. Internationally-minded lifelong learners is something always brought into classroom even though no IB experience.

4. How would you ensure IB traits are taught and developed?

Creating systems/culture. Keep it central, keep returning to it in staff meetings and collaboration. PR through social media, announcements, teaching traits and having teachers implement them, personally help with this at assemblies. Partnering with families and giving tangible ways to promote at home. Resources within community tapped to teach traits.

5. What kind of relationship do you see with the Board?

Partnership, co-collaborators, having a shared vision we're making a reality. Structure of charter school makes board sounding board to seek counsel from and checks and balances. Pivotal to the work.

Cammi: Anything to add?

Lacey: Honored to be considered for this.

Stephen: Looking beyond your first year, how do you envision shaping and guiding VICS over the next 5-10 years? Please describe your long-term aspirations for the school, including how you plan to innovate within the IB framework, address potential challenges in the charter school landscape, and create a lasting positive impact on the school community.

Lacey: Making jump into MYP is important goal to have. Entire PYP to MYP would be important. Having a school that lasts that many years creates deeper opportunities for community and service, able to serve community where you were educated. Was STEAM teacher for two years, in collaboration would say we are developing students who have skills that transcend basic education, and jobs they will have may not even exist now. Staying current on legislation, tapping into board resources.

BJ: What do you see as the value or distraction of extracurricular learning, PE and recess?

Lacey: As STEAM was extracurricular, see lots of value in it. Every student had opportunity to attend. Don't like to pit against, but there is a lot of value in those

opportunities. Many of the skills are developed within those classrooms. Lots of research about learning through play and social interactions without an adult standing over them to negotiate problems. Pro, but keeping within alignment of overall goals to keep balance.

**7:00pm**

**Applicant 2 Question Session (Jeff Duckett)**

Cammi: Is there anything you wish to tell us about yourself?

Jeff: Been in education for 28 years, most in international private schools (not for profit, board run schools). Started in 1994 in Cairo, then Dubai for 13 years where he met wife and had son. Then Khartoum, Sudan IB school for 7 years. Last post was in Niger in West Africa. IB common core education for the whole time. Just moved back to the US where had a house since 2009, son wanted to attend in US and see what it's like. Want to see where he can be of service in a school that philosophically aligns with what he believes.

1. What are your top 3 goals as an administrator?
  1. School has gone through a change, the staffing is relatively new. Work with the board (finance component) for PD program that encompasses medium to long term to see where people are in their understanding of what inquiry-based learning is about. IB is a philosophical methodology of inquiry, and getting your head around it takes thinking and questions. PD up front, figure out where people are, if they understand how it works/how it differs from standard facilities.
  2. Have a good team, make sure they're spending time together and communicating. Making sure people understand it's a safe environment to express thoughts regardless of what they are, within the lens of an IB school. Asking how you think you'll do it, and why? Goal to work together and support each other, all staff need to step up in a small school where there are not huge resources. Last school was director, principal, gardener, electrician, plumber...
  3. Time allocation. Making sure teachers have enough time, professional learning communities, interdisciplinary. IB not only expands to your classroom but to specials as well. Do teachers have time to sit with art teacher and other specialists to make sure on same page? Important for both curriculum and teambuilding. People need to feel they have time to do what they need to do.
  4. Clarity of expectations. What are teachers expected to do? Might be different than what they're used to. Policies and procedures? Making sure conversations are happening, not just sitting at PD and then going back to what you're doing.

2. What would be your plan to build community among staff, students and families?

Teachers need supported professionally, looked at as professionals. Making sure we're all in it together, having those discussions about what bothers you, if you see something say something. Feeling like you're part of the program through conversations. Weaving in the inquiry lens and IB. IB is fun, but not always intuitive for all teachers depending on their experience. Getting to know each other--we're all different with different backgrounds. Need opportunities to get together, but honor separation of work and being able to de-stress at home. Social gatherings with families, field days, sports days, etc. Don't know how board would feel about houses--have had a lot of success with them in British schools and competitions based on that (academic and nonacademic). Families--really being open to feedback, giving ways for those who want to come in and support the school to do so in the classroom or at events, anything they feel they can contribute. Making sure they feel welcome. Keeping parents informed with classroom/home/school communication in place, making sure teachers know the importance of it. Not just student areas of improvement, but celebration of successes. Nothing is better as a parent than getting a "your child did something great" phone call.

3. What are you most excited for if you get this job?

Coming back to the US, looking for a position that feels like not just a place to work, but a home. Have felt that way about past schools so far. Have gathered enough to see this as a place to grow and contribute, very much in wheelhouse, background and philosophy. Working with a new staff is exciting. Developing an IB program and both sharing experience and gaining new perspective on inquiry would give a chance to grow personally as a lifelong learner.

4. How would you ensure IB traits are taught and developed?

IB is not just a curriculum, but is philosophy and framework. Has to be woven into planning, modeled. Even the way we run meetings should be celebrating the inquiry model. Really has to be a daily thing. Doesn't have to be over the top, but way you approach how you're going to create your learning environment, spread information, introduce new topics, all through that lens of the IB learner profile. When son at school in Khartoum, kids would identify a trait they exemplified that day to keep reinforcing that ethos.

5. What kind of relationship do you see with the Board?

A close relationship. Important board is supportive. Can be times where people don't agree, but his role is to keep board informed, make sure there are no surprises, but will also need advice at times and ability to call and talk about what just happened and have a sounding board. Inside board meeting all should have a voice, but outside have one voice. Assuming would be a non-voting member. Making sure we support decisions of the board.

Stephen: Looking beyond your first year, how do you envision shaping and guiding VICs over the next 5-10 years? Please describe your long-term aspirations for the school, including how you plan to innovate within the IB framework, address potential challenges in the charter school landscape, and create a lasting positive impact on the school community.

Jeff: More than a place, it's a home. Requires constant strategic planning. The board will have a medium and long-term plan, but could change if not working. Beyond first year, want to see a thriving school, one that is focused on student learning, looking constantly for ways to improve. Long-term, developing school and putting it on the IB map, looking at ways of continually honing our craft as educators. PD is an ongoing thing because we're lifelong learners. How can we continue to develop support for the school and becoming the best school possible.

Does school do MAP testing (Measure of Academic Progress)? (Board unaware of doing so.) We teach students, not subjects. E.g., I'm not a teacher of math and English--I'm a teacher of students who learn math and English.

Wants school recognized as a school that gets it right. Students cared about and valued. Requires continuous ongoing work, can't just finish that step. The challenge is to get there, which requires a lot of strategic work and staying true to values. Comes through understanding of what those things are and buy-in to that.

BJ: What do you see as the value or distraction of extracurricular learning, PE and recess?

Jeff: PE, art, after school clubs, are a valuable part of school. PE teacher should be viewing it as a valuable part of school. For young kids, developmentally, recess is super important for social development. Play with peers develops a lot of social awareness and social skills. Brain breaks are needed--you can only study academic work for so long before you need a break. Like shorter breaks dispersed throughout day. Prolonged anything isn't developmentally conducive to an effective learning environment. Experiential learning is very important to weave in. Hands-on learning experiences. Encouraging teachers to look at how they can get kids to build something.

**7:27pm**

**Public Comment**

Cammi: Please limit to 2 minutes. After this will go into executive session. Any questions or thoughts?

Garrick Williams: Thanks for bringing in two great candidates, both very different, but neither sounded poor. Takes a lot of time and effort to recruit, excited to see where this goes. Don't feel we could go wrong with either. One probably more open to new ideas, the other more established in methodology, but both seem capable.

Krystal Peterson: Do we have info or knowledge on how they relate to children? Some admins good at admin part but not good at handling children. Any knowledge of that, or is that something that will be explored after?

Cammi: Asked about teaching role. Lacey has had more student interaction more recently in her career as she is earlier in that career. Excited to bring STEAM component into daily or weekly schedule. Jeff has lots of experience in the teaching role, but was a little higher level in the older years, which may be more oriented toward MYP. Coming year will be more focused on admin functions, but in either case wouldn't be in core classroom.

Gary Etchemendy: Want to speak to reference checks?

Cammi: Playing phone tag in midst of that process. Recruiter doing reference checks for Jeff.

Terry: Neither struck as someone who wouldn't relate well to students. Both seemed to care considerably about how students interact with each other and didn't seem standoffish. Both spoke to being present.

**7:36pm**

**Executive Session**

Cammi: Per ORS 192.660(2)(A) to consider hiring of executive; media welcome to join but can only state general subject, not particulars.

**8:05pm**

**General Session Resumes**

**8:05pm**

**General Session Resumes**

Cammi: Any board comments?

Terry: Both have many positives. Jeff has lots of overseas, admin and teaching experience in middle school to upper grades. Lacey brings freshness, admits mistakes, good K-5 experience, seems like good team builder. Feels Lacey would relate better to students, has good teambuilding ideas which are crucial.

Cammi: Lacey came with homework done and had a lot of questions, while Jeff seemed to come with a set view. Lacey asked about how we came to this decision, and seemed prepared every time.

Stephen: Both bring unique strengths and different paths. Lacey had impressive energy, fresh perspective, demonstrated knowledge of our school, had concrete ideas for community building and IB implementation, developing charter school leadership network, had recent classroom experience. Jeff had impressive 28 years with strong IB credentials, extensive knowledge, strategic big picture approach with strong emphasis on PD and bringing international perspective. Lacey offers a bit more adaptability and vision along with recent experience. Jeff provides proven leadership and stability. Question is how strengths align with our needs, energy vs. experience, having a leader learning alongside staff vs. already having experience, and how leader complements existing school culture. Lacey's growth-minded enthusiasm aligns with existing needs for dynamic leadership.

BJ: Lean toward Jeff due to IB experience. Could support either and can see either being successful, but like the international-mindedness that Jeff embodies and feel that his demonstrated experience would provide critical stability through this transition.

Ed: Comfortable with both, lean toward Lacey. Building community important to her, seems to already have a plan. Mentioned open-door policy, values alignment.

Cammi: Feels Jeff might make MYP expansion easier.

Terry: Everywhere Jeff went things were in place, didn't seem to have to build programs. All that experience has to bring something, but thinks the principal needs to take a backseat to this and the board needs to be the driver for making the expansion happen. Need to allow the principal to be administering what we have.

Stephen: Expanding requires construction, staffing, etc. Major lift. Need someone very adaptable, can build community, have energy and enthusiasm. See that more in Lacey than in Jeff.

Stephen: Motion to select Lacey as the preferred candidate, subject to successful completion of background check and reference checks, etc. and authorize offering position to Jeff if hiring process with Lacey is not able to be successfully completed. Ed seconds motion.

Vote: 5 Yes / 0 No / 0 Abstain.

Cammi: Thanks to Gary Etchemendy for all your help through this transition.

Terry: Thank you also to parents on hiring committee.

Gary: SKSD authorized 10 hours for leadership transition.



Next meeting July 8, 2024

**8:26pm Meeting Adjourn**

Next Board Meeting: Monday, July 8, 2024, at 6:30pm. This meeting will be held virtually, link to be provided on VICS website.

**Addenda Virtual Meeting Chat Log**

18:53:52 From Steve Staten to Everyone:

Looking beyond your first year, how do you envision shaping and guiding VICS over the next 5-10 years? Please describe your long-term aspirations for the school, including how you plan to innovate within the IB framework, address potential challenges in the charter school landscape, and create a lasting positive impact on the school community.

19:18:57 From Steve Staten to Everyone:

Looking beyond your first year, how do you envision shaping and guiding VICS over the next 5-10 years? Please describe your long-term aspirations for the school, including how you plan to innovate within the IB framework, address potential challenges in the charter school landscape, and create a lasting positive impact on the school community.

19:37:28 From Steve Staten to Everyone:

brb

20:23:11 From Krystal Peterson to Everyone:

Lacey has my vote, even though I can't vote

20:23:28 From Rebekah Benham to Everyone:

Reacted to "Lacey has my vote, e..." with 👍 👍

20:23:55 From Steve Staten to Everyone:

I move that the Board of Directors of VICS Charter School approve the following actions:

20:23:57 From Steve Staten to Everyone:

3. Empower the Board Chair, in consultation with the school's legal counsel, to negotiate and finalize the terms of employment, including but not limited to salary, benefits, start date, within the parameters previously established by the Board.nd-choice candidate as previously discussed by the Board, following the same process outlined above.

20:25:16 From Krystal Peterson to Everyone:

Reacted to "Lacey has my vote, e..." with 🍷 🍷

20:25:17 From Krystal Peterson to Everyone:

Removed a 🍷 🍷 reaction from "Lacey has my vote, e..."

20:25:50 From Krystal Peterson to Everyone:

Thanks, Mr. E!