



SCOTTSDALE COUNTRY
DAY SCHOOL

SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

February 11, 2014

- 1) Call to Order – Kathy Prahcharov called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Members in Attendance

Steve Prahcharov

Katherine Prahcharov

Robert Hill by phone

Mary Alpaugh by phone

Members Not in Attendance

Dr. Heidi Ungar

Members of the Public in Attendance

Judy Hudek

Lori Markowitz

Lori Siminetta

Rich Solar

Nicole Solar

Claire Campbell

Shannon Coolidge

Brittany Abbate

Roll Call – Katherine Prahcharov, Steve Prahcharov, Robert Hill, and Mary Alpaugh all present.

Approvals of Minutes – Minutes from December 17, 2013 meeting distributed to members via email.

Kathy Prahcharov made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Robert Hill. A vote was taken with Steve Prahcharov voting “Aye”, Katherine Prahcharov voting “Aye”, Mary Alpaugh voting “Aye”, and Robert Hill voting “Aye”, Motion approved unanimously.

- 2) Limited Call to Public –

Lori Markowitz addressed the Board regarding the policy of not allowing students to enter KG if they were born after 9/1/2014. Lori read a letter about KG concerns for enrollment for 2014/15. The letter is attached.



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Dear SCDS Board Members:

I'm speaking on behalf of some of the pre-k parents, some of whom have been turned away from kindergarten and others whose children have been accepted into kindergarten who are disappointed their children are losing some of their friends and community.

We're here and speaking to you because we love the school and want to stay.

We're disappointed that many of our kids have been turned away for next year and we feel the communication from the school hasn't been clear. Most of us sent our kids to pre-k with the intention of continuing beyond that year, so when we found out our kids were not allowed spots for kindergarten, we were surprised and disappointed. Some of these parents have been very involved with the school, one of whom is on the PTO board and has invested time and effort to raise funds, etc, to benefit the school and ultimately her child, who is now waitlisted for kindergarten.

So, we are asking the school to consider some creative solutions to offer our children spots for kindergarten. Some ideas include extending the birthday cutoff to 12/31 (currently listed as such for kids with siblings) instead of 9/1, testing pre-k kids who miss the 9/1 cutoff for academic readiness to kindergarten, adding a second kindergarten class or a 1st/ kindergarten combined class, allowing more than 20 kids into a kindergarten class, and/or grandfathering our children in because the communication wasn't clear.

Why have our kids been turned away? Some were wait listed and now I'll explain my daughter, Eva's unique situation in that her birthday is in September, so she misses the kindergarten cutoff but we were only recently told in January that testing for her is not an option unless she has an older sibling in the school. The policy seems to be more of an exclusionary policy excluding those children who don't have siblings rather than putting them as 'second priority' for acceptance into the program after kids who do have siblings. Academic readiness is a non-issue for Eva; she is ready for kindergarten and the school has made that clear to us. Having an older child with a September birthday and having dealt with this issue in the past, I specifically asked the school about the policy prior to pre-k enrollment and was told it would be a board decision, so I'm here asking the board to allow her in! I was not told at that time that her entrance hinged on having a sibling in the school and was only provided this information in January after I had already spent time filling out kindergarten enrollment paperwork. Once we were given this update, we attempted to enroll our first grader, currently at another school, in the January lottery for second grade at SCDS in the fall but was told she is waitlisted. Ultimately, if Eva was an only child, this policy would not make sense and still, it seems unfair that my 4 year old's education choice hinges on a sibling's education choice and lottery chances. Many charter and public schools have the policy that they either allow kids into kindergarten if they pass a test, or they do not make any exceptions to the cut off. SCDS seems to have a unique policy in that it is grey and doesn't allow kids in who miss the cutoff unless they have a sibling. We recognize you're a charter and you are allowed to make your own rules, but that rule was not clear upon enrollment, and it just seems unfair to penalize a child without an older sibling at the school, regardless of academic readiness.

In conclusion, I ask that you reconsider your cutoff policy and allow Eva into kindergarten in the fall. In addition, I ask that you look at the waitlisted kids and consider how they can continue to be a part of the community if they wish. Again, I want to reiterate that we are here because we are happy with the school and want to stay, yet we're being told we cannot or have to wait. Let's find a way to make this a win-win for everyone!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lori Markowitz on behalf of some Pre-K parents

Rich Solar addressed the Board regarding the same and supported the letter read by Lori Markowitz. Mr. Solar asked if we can look at keeping PK open next year, rather than closing it. Nicole Solar also supported the letter and was concerned at the open enrollment process. Reece, her son, does have an offer of acceptance for KG but expressed a lot of stress involved during the process. It was expressed that process could be streamlined and notice to parents pushed up.



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3) Consent Agenda – NONE

4) President's Report –

- a) Steve Prahcharov explained how SCDS had just been awarded a grant for approximately \$9,000 to help students in K-3 with reading. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.
- a) Steve Prahcharov explained that SCDS is continuing to work on the 7th/8th grade addition for the 2014/15 school year and will submit it February 17. The Charter Board would make a decision in May. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.

5) Principal's Report

- b) Steve Prahcharov explained that the enrollment on the 100th day was 101 students in elementary which was a great achievement having opened with 83 students. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.
- c) Steve Prahcharov explained that the enrollment for next year was at approximately 120 with KG, 1st, 2nd, and 4th grades all full and on wait lists with enrollment on 3rd grade at 14, 5th grade at 12, and 6th grade at 11. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.
- d) Steve Prahcharov explained that current enrollment deadlines for families submitting paperwork is Friday, February 14th. This will help confirm students and open up spaces for the wait lists should parents decide not to be enrolled for the 2014/15 school year. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.

6) Financial Report

- a) Katherine Prahcharov explained equalization moneys for the 100th day count had not yet been ratified which should see an increased revenue through equalization in the coming months. With no objections, the report stood with no vote necessary.

7) Executive Session

The Board moves to enter Executive Session to discuss staff contracts.

- b) Steve Prahcharov explained that SCDS was looking at retaining 100% of its staff based on performance and proposed a 3% pay increase. Robert Hill made a motion to approve this motion and was seconded by Mary Alpaugh. A vote was taken with Steve Prahcharov voting "Aye", Katherine Prahcharov voting "Aye", Mary Alpaugh voting "Aye", and Robert Hill voting "Aye", Motion approved unanimously.

8) Announcements/Adjournments – Katherine Prahcharov explained the next scheduled board meeting is on Tuesday, April 8 at 4:00PM.



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- a) Steve Prahcharov moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m. Mary Alpaugh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Steve Prahcharov seconded. A vote was taken with Steve Prahcharov voting “Aye”, Katherine Prahcharov voting “Aye”, Robert Hill voting “Aye”, and Mary Alpaugh voting “Aye” Motion approved unanimously.