**Hawthorn Board of Trustees**

September 14, 2015

Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls

1901 Kingshighway Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63113

**Board Members Present:** Rachana Creeth, Nikki Doughty, Edes Gilbert (via phone),

Jason Hall (via phone), Kathryn Love (Chair)

Jessica Portis, Tim Rowbottom

**Washington University Representative:** Lori Sommers

**Staff:** Mary Stillman, Quantonya Ponder & Robyn Wiens

**Others:** Paul Greenwood (via phone), Steve Langhorst

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 by Kathryn Love.

The Board unanimously approved minutes from the July 17 and August 14 meetings.

1. Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Stillman reported on the beginning of the school year. The students have acclimated remarkably naturally to their new school. The focus has been on building a strong school culture and developing routines and protocols around behaviors and expectations. The staff and faculty have worked tirelessly during these first weeks and are very committed to the students and the school.

The opening of the school generated very positive press in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, The St. Louis American, radio and television coverage. Mayor Slay visited the school during Summer Bridge which resulted in additional press. This did not seem to translate into an increase in enrollment.

Parent engagement is essential. Because parents provide transportation, we see many on a regular basis. Back to school night is September 17. There will be several parent volunteer opportunities.

After school programming is robust and well-attended: volleyball, yearbook, yoga, robotics, dance, study hall.

We are working on creating student leadership opportunities, including a Student Ambassador program to help guide tours and welcome visitors.

Founders Day is October 27 from 8 – 9:30 a.m.

Ms. Stillman requested Board approval of Selective as the provider of the school’s general liability insurance (Philadelphia has been the provider during the building renovation stage). Ms. Love moved to approve Selective and Ms. Creeth seconded. The Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Stillman requested Board approval of the proposed Special Education Compliance Plan that must be submitted to DESE. Ms. Love moved to approve and Ms. Doughty seconded. The Board unanimously approved.

Hawthorn has been selected to receive the Mayor’s Quality of Life Award and will be recognized at a luncheon on October 9. All board members are invited to attend.

Hawthorn received a $25,000 grant to hire a nurse, but we have had difficulty filling this part time position so we are currently working through a staffing agency. Any help on this would be appreciated.

In the development area, Mr. Ross recently sent a mailing to friends and colleagues soliciting support. Future planning on development will be essential to our fundraising success.

1. Principal’s Report

Dr. Wiens reported that current enrollment is at 124. Average Daily Attendance is just under 96% which is very encouraging. The Free and Reduced Lunch population is currently at approximately 75%.

We currently have 4 students on Individual Education Plans, with others we have identified for evaluation. Two students are on 504 plans (physical or mental health disability) and 22 are on health plans. Twenty students are in transitional housing. Nine are under Hawthorn’s “Care Team.”

We completed NWEA benchmark testing and the IRLA (reading level) analysis. Our students’ results were across a wide spectrum on those tests; approximately 60% are two or more grade levels behind in math and reading, while many are ready for high school math and reading levels. Teachers worked a full day to reorganize student schedules based on the data gathered from the assessments as well as teacher strengths and skills. In addition, our SPED teacher is working with students in class and outside of class as needed.

We are working on building school culture, particularly through Morning Meeting and Daily Advisory. Students are recognized for demonstrating our core values during Morning Meeting. The Girl Scout organization has been working with Advisory groups on developing positive communication skills and will be with us for 8 weeks every Tuesday and Thursday.

Dr. Wiens discussed some challenges in students’ behavior, primarily due to a lack of communication skills and the fact that students are coming from so many different school cultures and learned behaviors. We are using a restorative justice framework for conflict mediation. Several students have been placed on behavior plans and parents have been involved in those discussions. Dr. Wiens sent a letter to all parents regarding the disruptive behaviors and the school’s response to them.

The first field trip will be to the Botanical Gardens. Other field trips might occur during early release days.

Ms. Love commended Dr. Wiens for her strong leadership and effective communication skills.

1. Building and Grounds Committee Report

Mr. Rowbottom reported that renovations are close to completion with the typical end-of-project flurry. The first floor science lab floor is a concern, and will be redone. The Building and Grounds Committee will begin to formulate a plan for moving forward from a renovation focus to ongoing capital improvements and maintenance program.

1. Budget and Finance

Mr. Greenwood presented an updated budget for the 2015-16 school year, based on actual enrollment and a 75% FRL population. In addition, Hawthorn received a second round of CSP grant funds of $150,000 for the implementation year. The budget has also been amended to reflect the strong fund balance that carried over from last year due to higher than anticipated donations to the school and lower spending due to billings being received this year rather than last year. The science labs renovation expense has been added to the facilities line, the health benefits expense has been reduced to reflect the actual cost of our plan, and the afterschool program line has been increased to allow stipends for teachers/coaches.

The net result of the updates is an increased need to raise funds this year. The Foundation will bear the primary responsibility for raising funds, with outside of grants made directly to the school and gifts under the Missouri tax credit programs made to the school.

Ms. Creeth moved to approve the updated 2015-16 budget and Ms. Portis seconded. The Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Greenwood and Ms. Creeth presented the August financials with the new dashboard showing actuals v. budget, cash flow and revenue drivers. The new dashboard format will allow the Board to look forward as well as backward.

Ms. Creeth moved to approve the July and August check ledgers. Ms. Doughty seconded. The Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Love moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Doughty seconded. The Board unanimously approved.