



Hawthorn Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, January 8, 2018 5:00 p.m.
1901 N. Kingshighway Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63113

***Our Mission Statement:** Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls provides a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment that enables young women from diverse backgrounds to achieve academic success in a college preparatory program and to become leaders in their communities and professions.*

Board Members Present: Kathryn Love (Chair), Jason Hall, Jessica Portis, Arvetta Powell

By phone: Edes Gilbert, Nikki Doughty, John Ross

Board Members Excused: Chris Motley, Sara Goellner, Tim Rowbottom

School Staff: Mary Stillman, Meg Bliss, Raquel Evans, Ronda Smith-Branch, Adrienne Watkins, Laura Sparks-Boyce

Guests: Lori Sommers, Steve Langhorst

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 PM.

Motion to approve the attached consent agenda was seconded and followed by a unanimous approval.

Jess Portis presented the financial update as of Dec. 31, 2017. Revenues are behind projections due to the school not receiving transfers of donated funds from the Hawthorn Leadership School Foundation as such transfers have not been required to meet cash flow needs. Expenses are also behind budget due primarily to reduced spending on salary and benefits. Ms. Portis reiterated the importance of having accurate enrollment projections as we head into the budgeting process for next year. This process will begin in January. We anticipate that some of the increases in spending incurred to open the high school will not be present as we move from this year's budget into next year's.

There was no discussion of the Executive Director's report or the Development report, both of which were submitted with the board materials. The Principal's report noted continued strong attendance numbers and a "per capita" reduction in suspensions. An update on internal standardized testing will be available at the February board meeting.

A discussion of recruitment and enrollment followed. The challenge of marketing some of Hawthorn's programs without yet having data to show the success of those programs was noted, particularly our academic program and our college admission and matriculation rates. It is our unique position as a small, student-focused, single-sex public school with a focus on STEM and a myriad of opportunities that will continue to attract students and families.

We discussed the challenge of student retention, primarily for middle into high school. Some of our middle school students desire a more traditional high school experience and choose to leave Hawthorn primarily to attend larger schools with more options for activities. As Hawthorn grows, we will add more activities which will likely mitigate this issue. In addition, we can strengthen the message that Hawthorn is a 6th – 12th grade school, not a middle school, as we continue to add grades. We can also strengthen our message that Hawthorn students will go on to post-secondary educational opportunities; Hawthorn is not the end point. Hawthorn can learn from other YWLN schools about some of their student retention issues when their schools were at Hawthorn's current stage. Student retention needs to remain a priority with much effort spent to keep students in our program for the entire middle and high school experience.

The question was raised – who are the decision-makers when it comes to enrolling in school? Is it the parents for middle school students and the students themselves for high school? How do the answers to these questions help us shape effective messaging?

A review of Hawthorn's current enrollment policies provided a jumping off point for a conversation about whether to continue to enroll students throughout the school year. The consensus was to keep our policy in place that once enrollment for the following school year opens, enrollment for the current school year is closed – this is so regardless of whether a family has moved into the district or any other circumstances.

We need to track all inquiries we receive regarding enrollment, including grade level, home school and reason for the inquiry so we can acquire better data over time as to why students/families are interested in Hawthorn and so we can follow up with them.

As we continue to grow, we need to continue to think about possible modifications to space and/or expansion. Several possibilities such as renovating the gym and basement, expanding to acquire nearby property, or embark on new construction should be assessed at a very basic level at this point. Of course, much of the determination of need hinges on future enrollment. The concept of older grades having more independence as they move through their school days was touched on as another consideration.

Hawthorn administration intends to enter into a partnership with Teach For America to take on two corps members as classroom teachers in 2018-19. The Board was very much in favor of this.

The Board conducted a roll call vote to go into closed session: Doughty, Hall, Love, Gilbert, Hall, Portis, Powell, Ross each voted "Aye." Following a discussion of personnel matters, none of which required action on behalf of the Board, a roll call vote to come out of closed session recorded each of the above listed members voting "Aye."

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.



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Consent Agenda (Applicable documentation distributed to the Board)

1. Approval of the Minutes of the prior meetings of the Board of Directors
 2. Check Ledger
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