

HOFFECKER BURGESS CONSULTING
OCEAN CHARTER SCHOOL: CORE VALUES WORKSHOP
April 12, 2008
Los Angeles, CA

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based upon a review of common themes generated from the 28 initial community interviews and themes arising from the community core values workshop (CVW). **HoffeckerBurgess Consulting recommends that:**

1. New parents and parents currently involved with Ocean Charter School (OCS) need to be thoroughly orientated to key elements of the charter document relating to OCS's pedagogical approach, intended student outcomes, school culture and commonly held core values of the school community. Leading thought: ***"The essential organizational goal is to be adaptive to an ever changing environment while referencing certain immutable core principles and core values-maintain a fundamental identity while changing form."*** *M. Wheatley "Leadership and the New Science"*.
2. The "collaborative, values-based approach to making decisions" that was introduced and practiced at the CVW, (Principles, Process, Priorities/ Dialogue, Discussion, Decision), continue to be practiced by leadership teams in meetings for the rest of the school year. This approach can be applied to any decision-making procedure (consensus, consensus minus one, vote with majority rule, etc.). Some workshop participants expressed a desire to practice this model while addressing the positive topics of inquiry which were proposed by HBC (see below). We recommend that as soon as it is practical, Administration and faculty inform the whole community of their intent to practice the "values-based approach to making decisions" and its essential elements through various school communication channels such as the newsletter, parent meetings, as a focus topic for the All Community Group as well as within informal and formal conversations. In addition, orientation sessions for meeting facilitators would be very helpful. Each meeting needs to select a member of the group to facilitate the meeting in alignment with this process of decision making (see "Role of Facilitator" in the attached document, "Practicing a Collaborative Values-Based Approach to Decision Making"). Leading thought: ***...to be successful, an adaptive organization is always making decisions with high levels of self awareness, plentiful sensing devices, and a strong capacity for reflection"***. *Wheatley*
3. An active, ongoing mentoring program for teachers be established which could include elements of peer coaching and peer observations. Upper and lower grades teachers need continuing opportunities to share with one another their "best methods" in meeting both Waldorf and California State Standards as well as to establish clear goals for Middle School science and math curriculum. This essential faculty activity will provide powerful leadership on the part of the faculty toward sharing core elements of the **school's pedagogical identity**. Within this on-site professional development and curricular training approach, "apprenticeship" models could also be explored, including aides, teacher trainees and parents. Leading thought: ***"A human system moves in the direction of the images it holds"***. *D.Cooperrider*
4. As soon as the budget will allow, fund a staff position responsible for providing teacher pedagogical support, (Pedagogical Director, Program Coordinator, Mentor Teacher etc.). Leading thought: ***"...we have to consider not only the individuality of every single child, but the individuality of every single teacher as well...what matters is the capacities of individual teachers and the development of their capacities"***. *R. Steiner, "Roots of Education," lecture #4.*

5. In the current leadership search, hire an Administrator who also has Waldorf training or, at absolute minimum, is familiar with Waldorf education and strongly supports it in its public school applications as demonstrated at OCS. Currently, there are several charter schools using a Waldorf educational approach that are led very successfully by administrators with no formal Waldorf training but who have experience as parents of Waldorf students or who have experienced and embraced the efficacy of the Waldorf approach in some other way. (For example, Woodland Star Charter School in Sonoma; Live Oak Charter School in Petaluma, Sun Ridge Charter School in Sebastopol, Stone Bridge School in Napa).

6. The leadership of OCS, including administration, faculty, board, parent group and committee chairs, strongly re-enliven their commitment to “pro-active” communication protocols based on direct, transparent and mutually respectful interpersonal dynamics. We have discovered the immense benefit to a school community when even just a few of their members get formal training in resolving conflicts creatively, (e.g. Rosenberg’s “Non-Violent Communication” [NVC], Lantieri’s “Resolving Conflicts Creatively Project” [RCCP], “Second Step Program” for students and adults) . Leading thought: ***“Be tough on the issues and tender on the people.”***

7. Make the physical unification of the two campuses a top school community priority. Until such unification is possible, schedule regular, meaningful interactions between the students who attend the South Campus and those who attend the North Campus (and the parents of those students as well). HBC also recommends continuing to develop joint campus projects like the “Beach Clean-Up Day.”

8. Make use of the diversity within the school community to strategically reach out to the diversity within the broader community. Leading thought: ***“OCS....welcomes diversity of philosophical beliefs and values.”*** (from the OCS charter renewal document.)

9. OCS create a **bold collaboration** with its local teachers’ bargaining unit as promoted by AFT and NEA Locals (see *Education Week* vol.27, no.32, April 9, 2008). OCS can be a leader in the L.A. area for “progressive unionism” which champions **unions’ “responsibility to articulate the professional expertise of teachers and to speak to the social justice implications of the work teachers do”**. **Mark Simon, Tom Mooney Institute for Teacher and Union Leadership**. Waldorf trained teachers are well aware of the social justice and reform impulse embedded in the founding of the first Waldorf school in Germany and seen in Waldorf communities throughout the world today. They could lead the way in a constructive, progressive approach to school reform through union-administrative collaboration on key school reform issues such as governance, decision making and professional development. Interest Based Negotiation (IBN) is HBC’s recommended process for collective bargaining protocol. We would urge that Non-Violent Communication (NVC) be the guiding communication paradigm within the IBN process.

POSITIVE TOPICS OF INQUIRY IDENTIFIED BY HBC FROM PRE-WORKSHOP AND WORKSHOP INTERVIEWS AND REVIEW OF CHARTER RENEWAL APPLICATION:

1. Helping the whole community to understand what is the common educational vision of OCS.
2. Unifying the community around a common vision of how we work together collaboratively.
3. Committing to using best practices from the Waldorf approach and to meeting the needs of the middle school student
4. Identifying qualities of leadership most needed by OCS now and for the immediate future.