

Questions from the Public Comment Time WCS Board Meeting 6/15/09

How was the school board formed? How can/did the board decide this?

In December of 2008, it became clear to the elders at LPC that the church, and therefore the school, was facing financial struggles. They began to explore the possibility of separating the church and school desiring to have both entities prosper and succeed. The elders chose people to form two “teams” to explore the possibility and feasibility of such a plan. One team was charged with exploring the financial feasibility while the other team, the “transition team”, was charged with putting together the organization, structure and bylaws of the independent Christian school. The transition team relied heavily on the ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) recommendations for an independent Christian school when forming the bylaws and structure. The results of their collective work were put before the entire church for a vote to determine whether they wanted the separation to occur. In March, the church body overwhelmingly supported this idea with over 95% of the members voting to allow the separation.

With the exception of Bob Neumann, members from the financial and the transition teams formed the core of the new school board moving forward. Bob was added as the treasurer because of his years of expertise in the banking industry as well as his history at the school, having had two children who attended through 9th grade. At that time the school board was comprised of: Dave Hargadon, President; Dan King, Vice President; Bob Neumann, Treasurer; Debbie Simpson, Secretary and Jim Morrow, Member-at-Large. In accordance with the bylaws, no more than half the members belonged to any one church. One attends LPC, two attend FBC Davis, one attends Calvary Baptist and one attends Bayside Woodland.

The board, recognizing it was not formed to administrate the school, immediately began searching for an administrator. After much prayer, Jack Hamlin graciously declined the administrator position, noting he fully supported the school moving forward by accepting a position on the board. Very quickly, the board received two unsolicited resumes for the administrator position. Since one of these unsolicited resumes was from a WCS staff member, the board decided to be fair it needed to notify the rest of the staff of the search. One more staff member submitted a resume after that staff meeting. One other person was solicited because of his vast experience and his participation in a prior search for an administrator at WCS. He subsequently submitted his resume. No other resumes were received which indicated an interest in the administrator position. Ultimately two of the applicants were from within WCS and three were from outside.

The board initially began pursuing one of the applicants from the outside. At the same time, the board began identifying leaders within the school staff who would be able to work with the new administrator should that happen. Once the doors closed to having that candidate join WCS, the board formed the administrative team, comprised of Doug Brown, Justin Smith, Lila Lemenager, Michelle Booth, Sue Kowes and Cathy Geiser; those who had been identified as leaders at WCS. This team was tasked with administrating the school in lieu of having one administrator. Each member is a valued part of the administrative team and covers areas that are suited to their gifts and strengths.

Once the administrative team was put into place, the hiring process for teaching staff began. While listening to recommendations of the administrative staff, the final hiring authority rests with the board. Doug Brown, Justin Smith and Lila Lemenager did not make any decisions on their own regarding

staffing. The board and administrative team members spent several meetings prayerfully considering and discussing each member of the staff. While Jack Hamlin was not been able to attend these board meetings, he was consulted and informed through this process as well. The decisions made were extremely difficult and not taken lightly. At this time roughly 90% of the teaching/administrative staff has been notified of the intent to hire. One teacher at the high school and two teachers at the elementary level were not offered positions.

With regards to the authority of the school board, please refer to our school's bylaws online.

What is next?

The board hopes to make announcements regarding teaching staff soon. The administrative team is already working together to develop the best possible educational opportunities and programs for our students moving forward. The board is very pleased with their commitment and dedication to the future of WCS.

What are Mr. Smith's qualifications?

Mr. Smith has a degree in Political Science and Communications from UC Davis. He has passed both the Multiple Subject CSET and the CBEST exams. In addition, Mr. Smith has the distinction of being accepted to McGeorge School of Law with honors at entrance, but chose not to attend in order to serve at WCS. In January will begin a Masters program in Educational Leadership and Policy Study through CSU-Northridge.

During his tenure at WCS, Mr. Smith has had a wide range of duties. He has taught 15 different subjects at the MS and HS levels. He has coached basketball, softball, football, golf and track. He has served as the Athletic Director at the MS for four years and at the HS level for three, becoming the youngest AD in the Sac Joaquin Section. Through Mr. Smith's leadership and vision, he has formed new programs and clubs to enhance the school, including MS flag football, HS football and a Fellowship of Christian Athletes club on campus. In addition, he was instrumental in the formation of the first Boosters Club at WCS, which supports the entire school in areas including athletics, robotics and the arts. Mr. Smith has shown his dedication to WCS in his willingness to go beyond his job descriptions, whether it was to install goalposts, bleachers and a scoreboard, chalking lines or showing up to help on the weekends and after hours. All of his enthusiasm for the school is not lost on the students, as evidenced by the senior class choosing Mr. Smith as the keynote speaker at the 2009 graduation ceremony.

Mr. Smith is not only dedicated to the school, but he is active in his church at FBC Davis, where he attends a weekly small-group Bible study in addition to another weekly men's Bible study. He has been involved in several missions trips; one as a group/project leader to the Navajo reservation in Shonto, AZ where he helped build and repair housing for the community members, and another in a five-week evangelism mission trip to Italy where he distributed materials to Muslims from Northern Africa in the port city of Genoa. He has been a guest speaker for Athletes in Action Christian Fellowship on the UC Davis and UC Berkeley campuses as well as a consistent speaker at WCS chapels and the Calvary Baptist Church Winter Camp.

Mr. Smith has come highly recommended to his position, including Doug Brown, Lila Lemenager and Jack Hamlin. We encourage you to take the time to become acquainted with him. He is very enthusiastic and completely dedicated to WCS. We are confident you will find him to be an outstanding addition to our administrative team.

What credentials do the incoming teachers have?

Is it true Mr. Smith's wife is hired to teach 5th grade? Is it true the 1st grade teachers are being replaced by a new graduate?

The board and administrative team are in the process of making hiring decisions for the next school year. As soon as contracts are signed we will begin notifying parents. We will address qualifications and experience at that time.

What is this "new vision" for the school?

Please refer to our bylaws regarding the mission of WCS.

Why were the teachers let go?

Why was Mrs. Hernandez let go?

Due to issues of privacy we cannot discuss the specific reasons teachers were not hired for the new school. We understand this can be disconcerting and frustrating, but we ask for your trust and grace during this process. We know close relationships have been formed with some or all of these teachers and we encourage you to continue supporting them in prayer during this time.

What assurance do we have of the continuity and security as we move forward?

The members of the board are either parents or grandparents of current students attending WCS. We are very aware the decisions and policies we make affect not only your children, but our own children/grandchildren as well. Please be assured it is our desire to have each and every child feel not only safe and secure, but loved by every member of the staff.

Was Mrs. McBurney let go or not?

Mrs. McBurney has not been let go or fired. At the time of the initial meeting, Mrs. McBurney was notified while she would not be teaching first grade, the board was dedicated to pursuing another position for her. She has been on vacation until this week. On Tuesday a member of the administrative team had the opportunity to present a possible new position to her, which she accepted with excitement. Since that time Mr. Smith and Mrs. McBurney have had the opportunity to sit down and further discuss the position. She has expressed her excitement at the possibilities afforded her in this new teaching position and we look forward to many more years of her service at WCS.

Mrs. McBurney is probably one of the highest paid teachers. Is this why she was removed – to replace her with a lower-paid teacher?

The budget was never a concern when discussing Mrs. McBurney's position.

Why don't you send out a survey to parents to see if they would be willing to do something or pay more?

Before the board was formed, LPC sent a survey to parents. Although this might have been a good question to include, we were not consulted regarding the questions that were in this survey. We will have a survey next year and we thank you for your suggestion.

With regards to the budget, because LPC had already formed the tuition structure for the next school year, we elected to honor that decision. If you feel the Lord is leading you to give additional financial support to WCS, please contact a board member.

What will the class size be for 1st grade?

The current enrollment for 1st grade is 27. While we would love to be able to split this class, this is too few students to justify another teacher's salary. However, we plan to hire a full-time qualified aide in order to have a ratio of 1:15, well below the public school setting. This classroom structure has been successful in the past and we are confident you will find it to be as well.

Will there be a second kindergarten?

We are planning on offering two morning kindergarten classes and one afternoon class for those who desire full day kindergarten. Mrs. Crouch will teach one morning class and the other teachers will be announced when the staffing decisions and contracts are finalized.

What is the overall plan for the band program? Will we have one?

The board recognizes the importance of having a band program at WCS and is currently working with the administrative staff to that end.

Moving forward, the board has full confidence in the gifts and abilities of each of the administrative team members. Doug Brown will administrate the high school. Lila Lemenager will administrate the preschool and support Justin Smith in early elementary administrative duties. Sue Kowes will be overseeing and adding to the programs from K-12 to enhance your child's experience here at WCS. Michelle Booth will continue as a guidance counselor, but also will be overseeing curriculum development and as the lead instructor, setting up a mentoring and evaluating process for our teachers. Cathy Geiser will not only be teaching 2nd grade but will be a lead instructor K-5 and support Justin Smith in his administrative duties at the elementary level. Justin Smith is going administrate our K-8 program as well as continue to coach at the MS/HS levels.

With regards to Mr. Smith the board desires to be perfectly clear in expressing our complete support of his abilities to administrate K-8. In speaking with our long term leaders on the administrative team, they believe bringing Justin in at this time is giving WCS a wonderful future that will go beyond their own terms of leadership. We collectively are extremely excited and hopeful for what WCS has in store for your children moving forward.

The board wishes to express its appreciation to those who attended Monday night's meeting. Your loyalty and dedication to the school are part of what makes WCS such a wonderful place for all of our children.