

**Woodlands School  
Board of Trustees Meeting**

**Our Mission**

“Creating the character of the community through diverse education.”

**Our Vision**

“The best of what urban education can be.”

**Minutes**

**January 21, 2016 – Final Approved**

<b>Attending:</b>	<p><b>Officers:</b>            Chair – Loretta Cephus – Y            Vice Chair – Sue Bay – Y            Treasurer – Catherine Wittig - Y            Secretary – Matt O’Neill - Y            Ex-Officio – Maureen Sullivan, Executive Director/Principal;            Patty Rogers, Principal, Woodlands Bluemound</p> <p><b>Trustees:</b>            Acevedo, Rafael – N            Coby-Beaver, Jacqueline - Y            Caruso, Carolyn – Y            Griffin, Dennis - N            Hartwig-Rahmani, Brenda – N            Newell, Dr. Markeda - N            Richardson, Peter - Y            Schultz, Jason - N            Sheka, Lynn – Y</p> <p>Guests: Kallie Schuknecht; Mitch Hartman; Kathy Simonis; Michele Scott; PTO President Chrystal Arrington (PTO President – Bluemound Campus); Valerie Boczkiewicz and Wendy Hanson from Walkowicz, Boczkiewicz &amp; Co. (“WB”).</p>
<b>1. Audit 2014-1015</b>	<p>Prior to the meeting, Loretta circulated to the Board the Draft Audit Report prepared by Walkowicz, Boczkiewicz &amp; Co.</p> <p>Auditors from WB were present – Valerie Boczkiewicz and Wendy Hansen. Valerie distributed the completed report. She walked the Board through the report, including a few of the highlights, the Notes, and the attached schedules. Their auditor’s opinion states the Woodlands financial statements present fairly, in all material</p>

respects.

Loretta Cephus commented that as to Note 5 of the Audit Report, regarding the Park Bank note payable relating to State Street, the relatively large 2019 payment is based upon the fact that the loan includes a balloon payment, and our expectation and understanding is the note will be refinanced in 2018; Loretta explained the legal restrictions and IFF concerns that required the note to be structured in that regard.

The Report on Government Auditing Standards is set forth at pages 15-16 of the Audit Report. The standards required testing of internal controls, and WB did identify a material weakness. This means there is a situation that, if not detected, could result in the financials being misstated. The identified weakness is described at page 20, and involved failure to complete bank reconciliations on a monthly basis. Management has explained the reasons for this, which relate to the excessive turnover we experienced with our Business Manager from 2013-2015; we believe the situation has been corrected with our current Business Manager. Peter Richardson asked for any additional details about what they had discovered as a weakness, and Wendy explained that it involved the failure to complete necessary reconciliation work, as opposed to inaccuracies in the reconciliations. The problem prevented us from having accurate financials over the time period.

Regarding pages 17-18, Valerie explained that for DPI purposes, the identified weakness did not create any issues.

Pages 20-21 sets forth a Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs, including the specifics regarding the failure of monthly reconciliations.

WB issued a Management Advisory Letter, which was distributed to the Board. Wendy walked the Board through the 1/14/2016 letter. The letter addressed the following issues and included the following responses from management:

- Report Generation and Retention – regarding PowerSchool system; new procedure has been implemented.
- Credit Card Receipts – important to have all receipts and careful record-keeping, which is occurring.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales Tax Paid – Should not be paid as we are non-profit; management does provide all persons using the school’s card with the tax exemption documentation. Problem appears to have been in connection with school’s Home Depot card; it may have been their mistake and we will request that it be corrected.</li> <li>• Policy and Procedures Manual – WB recommends we create a formal manual of our accounting policies and procedures, in case of further turnover; this will be done.</li> <li>• Journal Entry Documentation – Again, there will be effort going forward to ensure this is done.</li> <li>• Timely Record-Keeping – Similar to bank reconciliation issues.</li> <li>• Centralized Filing Location – Management responded that this is an issue being worked on as we operate two schools; at the present time State Street will be the centralized location because the Executive Director’s office is located at State Street.</li> <li>• Documented Approval of Vendor Invoices- Has not been consistent; we have implemented a change to ensure consistency.</li> </ul> <p>Final WB letter to Board of Directors sets forth the Significant Audit Findings. It discusses a few items of accounting practices, and notes no problems with management during the audit.</p> <p>Next order of business will be our filing of the 990 tax return. WB is currently working on the return, and will circulate to management when the draft is completed. Filing is due Feb. 15, 2016.</p> <p><b>MOTION</b> by Matt O’Neill to approve 2014-2015 Audit Report prepared by Walkowicz, Boczkiwicz &amp; Co., motion seconded by Lynn Sheka, motion approved unanimously.</p> <p>The Board thanked Valerie and Wendy for their hard work, quality report, and the well-organized presentation to the Board.</p>
<p><b>2. Finance Committee Update</b></p>	<p>Loretta Cephus has requested that Dennis Griffin and Catherine Wittig work with an HR consultant from PAVE to tackle salary scales in attempt to work through them prior to the next budget cycle</p>

	<p>and offer a level of transparency to the staff. The current salary scale is outdated. Loretta noted the scales are not created by the Board, but we want to help make the issue transparent. Ultimately the pay is set by management.</p> <p>Finance Chair Catherine Wittig stated that the committee will be meeting in February. The committee will be meeting with Infinity to discuss ACA impacts and other benefits issues. The next major issue will be transitioning our payroll system from Empower to a new vendor. We have been meeting with new payroll firms and a decision will be made shortly to ensure a smooth transition with a potential implementation date of March 2016.</p> <p>Carolyn Caruso asked whether management has been using guidelines in setting compensation. Loretta Cephus responded that the existing schedules are so outdated that they do not provide consistent guidance. Patty Rogers explained that they have employed a market-based adjustment to the old schedules when setting compensation. However, pay has been flat for long periods of time (5 years no increase), so there has not been a great amount of change. Maureen explained the past schedule factored in years of service at Woodlands, and upon level of education of the teachers. She will be interested to see whether and how the salary scales have changed in approach. Patty recently attended a Madison conference on the issue; there have been myriad issues throughout the state since Act 10 based upon changes to school funding.</p>
<p><b>3. Fund Development &amp; Marketing Committee Update</b></p>	<p>Lynn Sheka distributed the new Woodlands brochure to the Board at the meeting. It is excellent. Copies will be available at both schools in the offices. Soft ask letters will be going out soon, and will include the brochure. A copy is attached to the minutes.</p> <p>Brenda Hartig-Rahmani is leading an effort with Helen Halbrecht to input names into donor database.</p> <p>Lynn circulated a “Message Map” to help communicate about Woodlands, internally and externally. It provides a concise summary of our mission and our best attributes for use in communications with the public and with potential funders. A copy is attached to the minutes. Our marketing consultant Lisa Attonito will be at our next meeting to discuss these issues.</p> <p>Loretta discussed the importance of having our messaging and</p>

	<p>branding remain consistent. The Committee has made a great start in this direction.</p>
<p><b>4. Workforce Development Committee</b></p>	<p>Loretta gave a report in lieu of Dennis Griffin, who could not make the meeting.</p> <p>There have been ongoing issues raised by the staff regarding the insurance transition, such as a lack of timeliness, and the insurance not being in place by January 1 due to forms not being completed and submitted. Many independent factors combined to cause unacceptable delays and problems that filtered down to individual problems for staff in trying to exercise their own coverages. Loretta apologized to staff for the inconveniences that were encountered.</p> <p>Catherine echoed that Finance Committee did not want to engender such problems, but felt it was important to move forward with the move to a new insurance program.</p> <p>Loretta gave staff a heads up that we will soon be separating from Empower as to payroll in the future, so there will be some transition issues associated with that. Mitch Hartman asked that management ensure that historical pay records remain available to employees, as paper checks are not currently issued. Loretta and Maureen said they will follow up on this issue.</p> <p>For the last few months, behavioral issues at State Street have been brought to Loretta Cephus' attention. After meeting with Maureen Sullivan, Loretta requested that Maureen reach out to Markeda Newell to assist not only State Street but Bluemound, to help with potential problem solving techniques. This is particularly within Markeda's area of expertise. In addition, Loretta requested that Dennis Griffin add this to the agenda for Workforce Development, as this can and should be a topic for both campuses.</p> <p>Maureen informed the Board that Markeda has been helping, and has already gathered data from staff at State Street and is analyzing it and will be reporting back in the future, as part of an effort to address the issues.</p>
<p><b>5. Strategic Planning</b></p>	<p>Loretta circulated information prior to the meeting regarding the ongoing strategic planning process.</p> <p>The areas of focus were identified based on previous meetings and discussions that align with UWM Charter Renewal framework that</p>

we discussed during the August 2015 meeting, and during conversations we have had with PAVE. The areas of focus are:

- Communication
- Long-Term Sustainability
- Academic Performance
- Organizational Leadership

These topics are open ended enough to encompass various aspects while allowing parameters for future strategic growth within the organization for the next three years.

The strategic planning Steering Committee has been identified:

#### Board Members

Sue Bay - suembay@gmail.com

Peter Richardson - peterrichardson@northwesternmutual.com

Jason Schultz - jasonjschultz@gmail.com

Loretta Cephus - drinkardi@aol.com

#### Staff Members

Shirley Hubbard - shirley.hubbard@woodlands-school.org

Cindy Zielinski - cynthia.zielinski@woodlands-school.org

Amy Chandler - amy.chandler@woodlands-school.org

#### Community Members

Paul Haubrich - UWM

Max Schuette -TNTP - max.schuette@tntp.org

Paul Sackmann - Park Bank - PaulS@parkbankonline.com

Sister M. Joan - srjoan@schrsmary.org

The potential community members have not all confirmed, but are likely.

Joan Fieiresen from PAVE has sent an initial email out to the participants to identify potential meeting dates with the key focus areas of focus being:

Loretta briefly discussed each broad category, and noted that they will encompass a large variety of topics for the planning. This will

	set a framework for our future renewals of our charter.
<b>6. Succession Planning</b>	<p>We are in the process of searching for a new Executive Director/Principal to replace Maureen Sullivan, who will be retiring at the end of this school year. The new E.D. Principal will work at either the State Street campus or the Bluemound campus; final details will be determined as we finalize the hiring process.</p> <p>Chair Loretta Cephus has engaged with three executive search firms in the Milwaukee area to determine pricing, firm capabilities, experience, and ability to assist in our search for a replacement for Maureen Sullivan, based on the recommendation of PAVE, and other organizations. The three firms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spano Pratt - <a href="http://www.spanopratt.com">www.spanopratt.com</a></li> <li>• Lawler Group - <a href="http://www.lawlergroup.com">www.lawlergroup.com</a></li> <li>• Jonas, Walters &amp; Associates – <a href="http://www.jonaswalters.com">www.jonaswalters.com</a></li> </ul> <p>Loretta is waiting to receive proposals from all three firms. Ordinarily the compensation is a percentage of the salary of the position being filled, paid in installments.</p> <p>Once we have selected a firm, Loretta will draft a letter to PAVE and request that they assist with the cost of the search firm up to 90% of the cost, with the school being responsible for 10%.</p> <p>Kathy Simonis asked whether the firms will gather information regarding the views of staff. <b><u>Staff believes it is important that their views are considered in the process.</u></b> Loretta confirmed that each firm will come in and talk to stakeholders to gather information. Will use as a starting point the position description; discussion confirmed this will be a Principal/Executive Director position, not multiple positions. The Board decided this in prior meetings.</p> <p>Sue Bay asked whether we, as a Board, will get additional information from the firm regarding what their fee covers. Loretta said yes. Lynn asked if there will be a Board search committee to be involved in the process; Loretta said she envisions the Executive Committee will act in this fashion; Lynn suggests the committee should actively involve stakeholders to improve the process and help with buy-in on the final hiring decision.</p> <p>Crystal Arrington, PTO President of Bluemound Campus, stressed the importance of full involvement of parent stakeholders. The</p>

	<p>process needs to be open and there must be a full opportunity for parent involvement. Crystal stressed <b><u>it is critical to the Board to take into account the views of the parents</u></b>. Mitch Hartman asked for further clarification of when the search firm will come in to gather stakeholder input – before or after the candidates are selected. Loretta responded that yes, this due diligence will take place before the hard searching occurs. Loretta explained an overall perspective of the process, and noted that when we do reach the point of interviews, that will not be an “open” process, as we will not have 20 persons involved in the interviews. Lynn Sheka also noted it is standard practice in such searches that the names of the potential candidates are not made public, as this could inhibit qualified candidates from applying for the position.</p> <p>Kallie Schuknecht asked whether the goal is to eventually have an Executive Director that is not also acting as a principal. Loretta explained that this is dependent upon the school’s financial standing in the future. Matt O’Neill stated from his perspective as a Board member that this is indeed the ultimate goal.</p> <p>Kathy Simonis stated that staff is very excited about the process and is looking forward to being involved in the process and finding a new Executive Director.</p> <p><b>MOTION</b> to allow Executive Committee to select the final search firm, by Lynn Sheka, second by Carolyn, motion carries unanimously.</p>
<p><b>5. Adjourn</b></p>	<p>Motion to adjourn by Peter Richardson, second by Sue Bay, motion passed unanimously.</p>

Prepared by: Matt O’Neill

## Woodlands School At-A-Glance

- Public charter school authorized through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Two Milwaukee campuses - State Street and Bluemound
- 1:12 teacher-to-student ratio
- K4 to 8th grade
- 80 years of academic excellence
- One of only three charter schools nationwide named a National School of Character by character.org in 2014
- Diverse student body representing 33 local ZIP codes
- Parents volunteer hundreds of hours annually
- PAVE partner school since 1991
- More than 20 years of ACE (Arts in Community Education) with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
- National leader in character education providing subject matter consulting for educators in multiple states
- Offers a nationally recognized curriculum for French language acquisition



**Woodlands School - Bluemound Campus**  
5510 West Bluemound Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53208  
414.475.1600

**Woodlands School - State Street Campus**  
3121 West State Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208  
414.937.2000

[www.woodlands-school.org](http://www.woodlands-school.org)



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**WOODLANDS  
SCHOOL**

the best of what urban education can be  
Bluemound Campus | State Street Campus

**Character-based  
K4-8 Education**

## About Woodlands School, Inc.

Founded in 1936, Woodlands School is now a public charter school authorized by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Comprised of two campuses - Bluemound Campus and State Street Campus - Woodlands School uses character-based curriculum to prepare children for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

## The Woodlands Way

The Woodlands Way is a character-based education approach founded on the concept of Time For Living, or the idea that strong character education creates happy, sensitive, creative children who grow into adults who are morally and socially responsible.

Using a multi-aged classroom experience along with differentiated academic plans, students grow as learners and reflective practitioners. Each staff member leads a "Little Family" - a diverse group of students who meet once each month to learn about values and mentor each other.

## Extension Services

Woodlands School offers an Extension Program at both campuses that is designed as a service for parents who need additional before- and after-school care for children enrolled at Woodlands.



## Enroll Today!

We understand that choosing a school for your child (children) is an important decision, and we are here to help. We offer tours and one-on-one meetings with interested families. Call today!

### Bluemound Campus

Registrar/Manager of Student Services  
Phone 414-475-1600

### State Street Campus

Registrar/Manager of Student Services  
Phone 414-937-2000



## Academic Achievement

Woodlands School is consistently ranked as a school that "exceeds expectations" by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Over the past five years, our students have outperformed the state averages for reading and mathematics. In our nearly 80 years of operation, Woodlands has promoted over 1,600 eighth graders who thrive in area public and private high schools.

## Special Services

- Art
- Music
- French
- Library Services
- Physical Education

## Extracurricular Activities

Students are able to participate in soccer, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country, forensics, student council, scouts and many other opportunities throughout the school year.

## Support Woodlands

Your financial contribution gives Woodlands School the capacity to expand our educational programs, provide much needed educational supplies and to pay teachers at a competitive rate.

You can donate via **credit card** or **PayPal** on our website, [www.woodlands-school.org](http://www.woodlands-school.org), or **mail a check** to:

Woodlands School  
3121 W. State Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

*Financial contributions to Woodlands School are tax deductible. Many companies match donations to non-profit organizations. Please check with your employer to see if they have a matching program.*

# MESSAGE MAP: Woodlands School

As of November 29, 2015 - FINAL

## PROOF POINTS

- **Embraces the uniqueness of students and families.**  
Launched in 2015, Cultural Fest is designed to celebrate traditions, song, music and stories of our student body. The inaugural event showcased Ojibwe Native Americans, Bolivia, and Jamaica.
- **Vibrant Learning Environment**  
Using a variety of techniques, media and research, students explore art forms and develop with expressive, thoughtful, and active involvement in music throughout their Woodlands career.
- **Proven Track Record**  
In its nearly 80 years of operation, Woodlands has promoted over 1,600 eighth graders that thrive in area public and private high schools, continuing to and through college/universities in Wisconsin and beyond.

## THE WOODLANDS WAY

The Woodlands Way is a character-based education approach that helps students recognize and develop positive values. Time For Living, the foundation of *The Woodlands Way*, is based on the idea that strong character education creates happy, sensitive, creative children who grow into adults who are morally and socially responsible.

## Woodlands Quick Facts

- K4 - 8th grade
- Two Milwaukee campuses
- 80 years of Academic Excellence
- Almost 600 students
- Diverse student body; 33 local ZIP codes represented
- PAVE Partner School since 1981
- More than 20 years of ACE (Arts in Community Education) with MSO
- National Leader in Character Education providing subject matter consulting in multiple states.

## CORE MESSAGE

Woodlands School uses character-based curriculum to prepare children, kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world. This innovative approach ensures a safe and nurturing environment and includes visual arts, physical education, music, French, multimedia services and 21<sup>st</sup> century technology.

Woodlands School provides students with the tools, skills, and confidence they need to succeed. Using a multi-aged classroom experience along with differentiated academic plans, students grow as learners and reflective practitioners. Their work is reflected in a personal portfolio and demonstrated as they lead the parent conferences while the educator facilitates the session. Additionally "School Families" are created to support the development of the whole child.

Founded in 1936, Woodlands School is now a public charter school authorized by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. In 2014, Woodlands School was one of only three charter schools in the US to be honored as a National School of Character by character.org. Woodlands was also honored by Wisconsin Character Education Partnership and is a National model for French language acquisition.

## RAVING RESULTS

### A Parent

"From the diverse and welcoming community, to the array of enriching classes, to the quality of the invested teachers and staff . . . we are confident in our choice of Woodlands for our daughters' education."

Jennifer L.

### A Teacher

"Woodlands community is filled with parents, teachers and students who truly care for each other while holding our standards extremely high."

### An Alum

"Woodlands gave me a love for learning and math, which has led to me going into engineering."

Andy W., Woodlands Class of 2006

## Executive Director/Principals

Maureen Sullivan and Patricia Rogers

As Executive Director, Maureen Sullivan oversees the Woodlands School operation. Additionally, she uses her more than 30 years of education experience as the Principal of the Woodlands State Street Campus. Sullivan has a BS in Elementary Education and MS in Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Reading from University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. Sullivan believes engaged families support student success and is committed to ensuring each child has the tools needed for lifelong learning.

Patricia Rogers leads the Woodlands Bluemound Campus as Principal leading by example. She has a BS in Marketing from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, a MA in Teaching from National-Louis University, Milwaukee with focus on Social Studies. Rogers has shared her experiences nationally and is energized by the curiosity and creativity of children.