



Annual Report 2012-2013

Submitted to
Oregon Department of Education

By Anne Gurnee, Education Director
Southwest Charter School
Portland, Oregon

November X, 2013

Table of Contents

Overview	3
General Information	7
Personnel.....	12
Board of Directors.....	16
Curriculum & Programs	18
Student Achievement	24
Survey.....	31
School Improvement	33
Parent/Community Engagement	37
Facilities.....	39
Local School District	44

Appendices sent as separate files with the SWCS 2012/2013 Annual Report

- Appendix A – SWCS Job Descriptions
- Appendix B – SWCS Staff Handbook
- Appendix C – SWCS Board Meeting Minutes
- Appendix D – SWCS Policies
- Appendix E – SWCS 2012/2013 Family Handbook
- Appendix F – ODE Parent/Staff/Student Survey - 2013
- Appendix G – Continua from Education for the Future with SWCS Rankings
- Appendix H – Continua from National Green Schools Guidelines with SWCS Rankings
- Appendix I – Goals Developed from Green Schools Continua
- Appendix J – Organization/Flow of Money In/Out of SWCS
- Appendix K – SWCS Contract with Portland Public Schools for Special Education Services
- Appendix M – SWCS Teacher Evaluation Tool

Overview

Mission of Southwest Charter School

Southwest Charter School's mission is to provide a creative learning environment where students develop a sense of place and become stewards of the natural world and active citizens within our community.

Vision of Southwest Charter School

Our vision is to look beyond classroom walls. We believe that healthy communities are created by engaged, informed & compassionate citizens. Through service, integrated curriculum and experiential learning, we provide opportunities for our students to actively build relationships locally, inspiring them to become catalysts of change in a global community.

History of Southwest Charter School

February 2005	Portland Public Schools votes to close Smith Elementary. Group of parents, concerned about the limited educational options on the west side of Portland, pursues a charter.
May 2005	Secured federal planning grant via ODE
July 2005	Applied to PPS for a charter. PPS rejects application.
November 2005	SWCS appeals PPS's initial decision.
December 2005	PPS rejects the appeal.
January 2006	At the request of PPS, SWCS meets with PPS representatives to consider opening a west side, environmental focus-option. PPS, facing a budget shortfall, tables the idea of new educational option for west Portland
April 2006	SWCS submits an appeal to ODE.
October 2006	Mediation with PPS fails. With PPS, SWCS sends a letter requesting that the ODE staff begin evaluation of the SWCS application for sponsorship by the Oregon Department of Education Board.
April 2007	State Board of Education votes to charter SWCS.
September 2007	SWCS opens its doors as a K-6 school at 5839 SW Hood Avenue (29 children, three teachers). Ends first school year with 45 students.
Summer 2008	SWCS remodels to add fourth classroom, hires a fourth teacher and has over 80 students apply for 25 available spots. Begins the 2008-2009 school year with 60 students.
2008-2009	Building search leads to viable option at 0690 SW Bancroft. Spend over \$50,000 on tests required by the City to assure its seismic safety. Assured by City Planning Dept. in August that permits are "one week away." Later, after appeals as far as to the City Council, the City ultimately rejected our occupancy of 0690 SW Bancroft.
September 2009	SWCS opens in two locations (about 2 miles apart) with approximately 120 students.
October 2009	New possible building is located at our current home, 0640 SW Bancroft.
December 2009	Signed intent to lease at 0640 SW Bancroft
May 2010	Successfully granted a three-year renewal of our charter with the State Board of Education. Signed lease on 0640 SW Bancroft.

- September 2010 Started school year with about 150 students at Congregation Neveh Shalom near Hillsdale.
- October 2010 Receive first state report card as an "Outstanding" school.
- March 2011 Move into current home at 0640 SW Bancroft.
- September 2011 Begin first school year in new home with about 175 students.
- October 2011 Receive second state report card as an "Outstanding" school.
- September 2012 Begin second full school year in new home with 195 students, almost full capacity, and nearly 250 students on wait list.
- October 2012 Receive third state report card as a "Satisfactory" school (high-end).

Introduction

The purpose of Southwest Charter School (SWCS) is to provide a small school educational option for families primarily in the Southwest quadrant of the Portland Metro area. Our mission is to provide a creative learning environment where students develop a sense of place and become stewards of the natural world and active citizens within our community. Our guiding values emphasize retaining both small class sizes and small overall school size; high levels of community involvement; and authentic, place-based learning using the arts, sciences and civics as the primary lenses for our students' exploration of the world around us.

SWCS enjoyed one of its most stable years yet due to our settling, at last, into a long-term home. At the beginning of the 2012/2013 year, we had 195 enrolled students with a waiting list of 243 students.

Some of our major accomplishments in 2012/2013 include:

- Received a renewal of our charter for five years from the Oregon Department of Education.
- Steady growth – Continued to grow our student body to near capacity.
- Significant waiting list growth – Our waiting list grew from 203 at the beginning of 2011/2012 to over 240 students at the beginning of 2012/2013.
- Implemented three new artists-in-residence.
- Continued to identify needs and implement more professional development for teachers including: full staff training in Positive Discipline as well as individual training in various areas to help support teachers' needs.
- Modifications in our testing procedure to gauge the effect on student performance.
- Third year win for our 7th/8th grade students of the statewide Project Citizen project.
- Continued with a long-term strategic planning for the organization focused on school improvement principles and practices.

This report will summarize the structure of the school, present basic facts about our student demographics in the 2012/2013 school year, and highlight some of our curricular work during this last year. It will also touch on our successes thus far, goals for the future, and challenges we face.

General Information

School Calendar for 2012/2013

Event	Date(s)
SWCS Office Reopens	Monday, August 20, 2012
Professional Development & Planning	Monday, August 27 - Friday, August 31, 2012
Labor Day - School Closed	Monday, September 3, 2012
Professional Development & Planning	Tuesday, September 4, 2012
First Day of School for Grades 1-8	Wednesday, September 5, 2012
Kindergarten Assessments & Home Visits	Wednesday, September 5 - Friday, September 7, 2012
First Day of School for Kindergarten	Monday, September 10, 2012
Statewide Inservice Day - No School for Students	Friday, October 12, 2012
Goal Setting Conferences	Thursday, November 1 & Friday, November 2, 2012
Veteran's Day Holiday - School Closed	Monday, November 12, 2012
Teacher Planning - No School for Students	Monday, November 19, 2012
Thanksgiving Holiday - School Closed	Tuesday, November 20-23, 2012
End of First Assessment Period	Friday, November 30, 2012
Teacher Visit Day - No School for Students	Monday, December 3, 2012
Student's Last Day before Winter Break	Friday, December 14, 2012
Winter Break - School Closed	December 17, 2012 - January 4, 2013
Teacher Planning - No School for Students	Friday, January 4, 2013
Student's First Day Back After Winter Break	Monday, January 7, 2013
Martin Luther King Holiday - School Closed	Monday, January 21, 2013
Conferences - No School for Students	Thursday, January 31 - Friday, February 1, 2013
President's Day Holiday - School Closed	Monday, February 18, 2013
End of Second Assessment Period	Friday, March 22, 2013
Spring Break - School Closed	Monday, March 25 - Friday, March 29, 2013
Teacher Planning Day	Monday, April 1, 2013
Memorial Day Holiday - School Closed	Friday, May 24 - Monday, May 27, 2013
Last Day of School for Students	Friday, June 14, 2013
End of Third Assessment Period	Friday, June 14, 2013
Snow Make-up Days	Monday, June 17 - Tuesday, June 18, 2013
SWCS Office Closes for Summer	Wednesday, June 26, 2013

Overall School Schedule

Morning Breaks

9:45-10am – Paul (3/4) & Susan (3/4)
10-10:15am – Lisa (5/6) & Josh (5/6)
10:15-10:30am – Mike (1/2), Monica (1/2) & Amanda (K)
10:30-10:45am – Anthony (7) & Sarah (8)

Lunch Recess – Tuesday/Thursday

11-11:30am – Paul (3/4) & Susan (3/4)
11:30-12pm – Lisa (5/6) & Josh (5/6)
12-12:30pm – Monica (1/2), Mike (1/2) & Amanda (K)
12:30-1pm – Anthony (7) & Sarah (8)

PE Schedule – Mondays & Wednesdays

<u>Time</u>		<u>Class</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
8:30-9:10am	40min	3/4	Paul (M) & Susan (W)
9:15-9:45am	30min	1/2	Monica (M) & Mike (W)
9:50-10:30	40min	6 th	Lisa/Josh
10:35-11:15am	40min	5 th	Lisa/Josh
11:20-11:50am	30min	K	Amanda
11:50-12:05pm		Break	
12:05-12:45pm	40min	3/4	Susan (M) & Paul (W)
12:50-1:20pm	30min	1/2	Mike (M) & Monica (W)
1:25-2:05pm	40min	7/8	Sarah/Anthony
2:10-2:50pm	40min	7/8	Sarah/Anthony

Afternoon Breaks

1:15-1:30pm – Paul (3/4) & Susan (3/4)
1:30-1:45pm - Lisa (5/6) & Josh (5/6)
1:45-2:00pm - Monica (1/2), Mike (1/2) & Amanda (K)
2:00-2:15pm - Anthony (7) & Sarah (8)

Other Specials

Fridays – 8:30-8:45am - All School Meeting – All classes
Tuesdays – Reading with Mrs. R – Grades K-2 (weekly)
Fridays - Artist-in-Residence – Grades K-8 – 4-5 weeks during Spring trimester

Sample Daily Classroom Schedules

Sample from February 2012

Time	Kinder	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	5/6	5/6	7	8
	Amanda	Monica	Mike	Susan	Paul	Lisa	Josh	Anthony	Sarah
8:20-8:45	Choice (math)	Arrival	Journals, Circle	Silent Read Circle	Morning Mtg.	Morning Mtg.	Morning Mtg.	Morning Mtg.	Morning Mtg.
8:45-9	Clean-up	Writer's Workshop	Class Mtg.	Literacy	Writer's Wkshp	Math - 5	Literacy - 6	Math - 8	Hum. -7
9-9:15	Circle	Writer's Workshop	Reading w/ Ms. R	Literacy	Writer's Wkshp	Math - 5	Literacy - 6	Math - 8	Hum. -7
9:15-9:30	Journals	Writer's Workshop	Reading w/ Ms. R	Literacy	Writer's Wkshp	Math - 5	Literacy - 6	Math - 8	Hum. -7
9:30-9:45	Journals	Reading w/ Ms. R	Morning Exercise	Literacy	Writer's Wkshp	Math - 5	Literacy - 6	Math - 8	Hum. -7
9:45-10	Wash Hands	Reading w/ Ms. R	Morning Exercise	Break	Break	Math - 5	Literacy - 6	Math - 7	Hum. -8
10-10:15	Snack	Snack, Break	Snack	Math	Math	Snack, Break	Snack, Break	Math - 7	Hum. -8
10:15-10:30	Recess	Snack, Break	Recess	Math	Math	Math - 6	Literacy - 5	Math - 7	Hum. -8
10:30-10:45	Reading w/ Ms. R	Reading	Story Workshop	Math	Math	Math - 6	Literacy - 5	Math - 7	Hum. -8
10:45-11	Reading w/ Ms. R	Reading	Story Workshop	Math	Math	Math - 6	Literacy - 5	Break	Break
11-11:15	Project Work	Reading	Story Workshop	Recess	Recess	Math - 6	Literacy - 5	Word Study	Word Study
11:15-11:30	Project Work	Project	Story Workshop	Recess	Recess	Math - 6	Literacy - 5	Science - 8	Hum. 7
11:30-11:45	Project Work	Project	Story Workshop	Lunch	Lunch	Recess	Recess	Science - 8	Hum. 7
11:45-12	Project Work	Project	Story Workshop	Lunch	Lunch	Recess	Recess	Science - 8	Hum. 7
12-12:15	Recess	Recess	Recess	Read Aloud	Reading Workshop	Lunch	Lunch	Science - 8	Hum. 7
12:15-12:30	Recess	Recess	Recess	Class Mtg.	Reading Workshop	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:30-12:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Literacy	Reading Workshop	Science	Civics	Recess	Recess
12:45-1	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Literacy	Class Mtg.	Science	Civics	Recess	Recess
1-1:15	Chapter-a-day (Read Aloud)	Class Mtg.	Reading	Literacy	Class Mtg.	Science	Civics	Projects	Projects
1:15-1:30	Chapter-a-day (Read Aloud)	Math	Math	Break	Break	Science	Civics	Projects	Projects

1:30-1:45	Mask Making	Math	Math	Projects	Projects	Science	Civics	Projects	Projects
1:45-2	Mask Making	Math	Math	Projects	Projects	Art	Project	Projects	Projects
2-2:15	Mask Making	Math	Math	Projects	Projects	Art	Project	Projects	Projects
2:15-2:30	Mask Making	Choice	Reading	Projects	Projects	Art	Project	Projects	Projects
2:30-2:45	Clean-up	Choice	Reading	Project	Jobs	Art	Class Mtg.	Projects	Projects
2:45-3	Closing Circle	Jobs, Closing Cir.	Clean-up	Clean-up	Acknow, Closing	Acknow, Closing	Jobs	Jobs	Jobs

Student Demographics

From an enrollment perspective, our community and the community at large has begun to grow accustomed to our new location. Table 1 below summarizes the total students at the beginning and end of the school year.

Table 1 – Summary of student enrollment at beginning and end of 2010/2011.

Grade Level	Student Enrollment on 10/1/12	Student Enrollment at end of 2012/2013
K	22	20
1	22	20
2	22	21
3	24	23
4	24	20
5	24	24
6	24	23
7	19	19
8	18	17
Totals	199	187

Our enrollment drop between fall and spring was caused by a number of factors. Six of these students left after the first of the year. Filling spots after Winter Break is always more difficult as parents and students are reluctant to move mid-year. In some cases we exhausted our waiting lists completely, such as at 4th and 6th grade. In others, we simply ran out of time to get to all the students. To help with this problem, we instituted a new procedure to try to move through the waiting lists more quickly offering only two school days to respond to offers of enrollment.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the 2012/2013 students were residents of the Portland Public School District (PPS), an increase of 8% over last year's total. Twelve percent (12%) resided in other districts, including: Tigard/Tualatin, Parkrose, Hillsboro, North Clackamas, Columbia, David Douglas, Gresham/Barlow, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Lake Oswego.

School wide, the population was 39.5% female (a slight increase from 36% last year) and 60.5% male. Eleven percent (11%) of our students qualified for free-and-reduced lunch in 2012/2013, a slight decrease from 12% in 2011/2012. Table 2 offers a racial/ethnic breakdown of our students.

Table 2 – Summary of SWCS student racial/ethnic backgrounds, 2010/2011.

Race/Ethnicity	Percent in 2012/2013	Percent in 2011/2012	Percent in 2010/2011	Percent in Portland Metro Area*
White (Hispanic)	6.4%	4.9%	2%	10.9%
White (non-Hispanic)	88.9%	80.1%	83.6%	76.3%
African American	4.2%	2.9%	5.7%	2.7%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	4.2%	4.9%	4.3%	6%
Native American	3.2%	2.4%	2.9%	0.7%
Multi-racial	11.6%	10%	10%	3.2%

*Source: US Census Bureau Data, 2010

Personnel

Employees & Qualifications

Table 3 – Description of SWCS Staff during the 2012/2013 school year.

Teacher/Administrator	Position	TSPC License/Registered	Degree	HQ to teach
Amanda McAdoo	Kindergarten	Registered, Multiple Subjects Self-contained, ECE	MA Education, specializing in early childhood education	HQ
Michael Martin	1/2	Initial I Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (ECE, ELE)	MAT	HQ
Monica Vogel	1/2	Initial II Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (ECE, ELE)	MAT	HQ
Paul Banta	3/4	Initial I Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (ECE, ELE)	MAT	HQ
Susan Hathaway	3/4	Standard Teaching, Standard Elementary	M.S.Ed.	HQ
Lisa Colombo	5/6	Initial Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (ECE, ELE); Middle School Science (ELE); Middle School Language Arts (ELE)	Bachelor's of Arts & Education, specializing in Language Arts & Science	HQ
Joshua Tabshy	5/6	Initial I Teaching, Language Arts (HS, ML), Social Studies (HS, ML), Multiple Subjects (MIDLVL)	MAT	HQ
Anthony Robinson	7	Initial I Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (MIDLVL), Advanced Mathematics (ML), Biology (HS), Basic Math (ML)	MAT	HQ
Sarah Anderson	8	Initial I Teaching, Multiple Subjects Self-contained (ECE, ELE)	MA Education, specializing in science and environmental education	HQ
Anne Gurnee	Education Director	Registered	MEd, specializing in program administration	N/A
Marlene Dorfman	Health, Information & Property Manager	N/A		N/A
Anna Wantz	Business Administrator	N/A		N/A
Karen Bennett	Accounting Administrator	N/A		N/A
Kathy Price	Aide	N/A		N/A
David Lessem	Aide	N/A	BA, Creative Writing	N/A
Jonathan Swartout	After School Enrichment Coord.	N/A	BA, English, Theater, Writing	N/A

Recruitment Plan

Prior to the 2012/2013 school year, we operated with such fast timelines and limited resources for hiring that we did not have much time to consider recruitment. Even still, with nearly every position we posted, we received more than 200 applicants.

Beginning with new hires for the 2012/2013 school year, we have begun to advertise our positions more widely and to specifically target some of the local education schools such as Portland State University, Concordia, Marylhurst and College of Lewis & Clark. We have also begun to have student teachers, both locally and from outside the Portland area, observe, intern, and train with our teachers.

Hiring Procedure

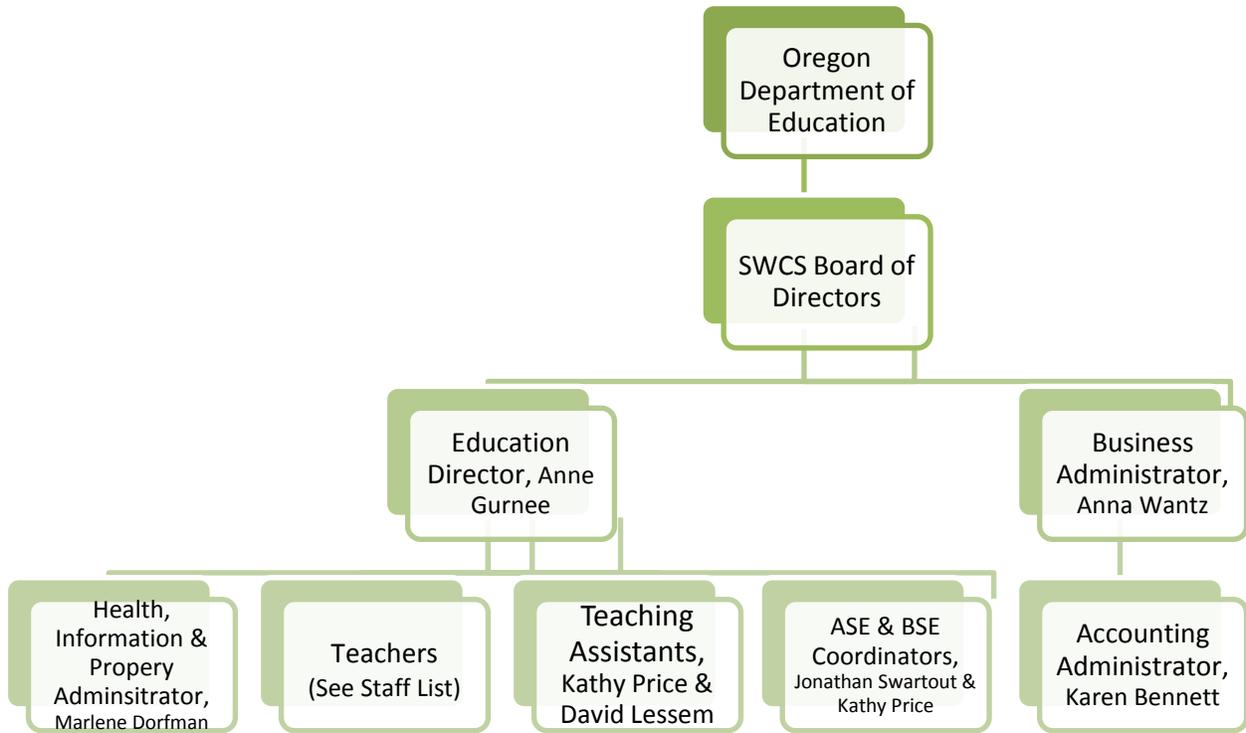
When a teacher is finishing a school year but will not return for the next school year, SWCS will first consider any interested current employees in good standing (teacher, administrative staff, and current student teachers). If a current employee is interested in the position, the Education Director will determine if a teaching sample is needed from the candidate(s). The Education Director will also convene a hiring committee to interview the candidate(s). The hiring committee can include: other staff members, parents, students, Board members. If those wanting to participate in the hiring committee exceed a reasonable number, the Education Director will hold a lottery to determine hiring committee members. If the hiring committee feels that an internal candidate is a good fit and qualified for the position, the position will be offered to the successful candidate. Throughout the process, the Education Director will keep the Board apprised of the process and decisions.

If no internal candidate is forthcoming, the Education Director will convene a hiring committee as described above, and the position will be advertised with appropriate media outlets. The hiring committee will coordinate the following steps:

- Resume screening
- Initial written question response
- Initial interviews (may be group format)
- Final interview
- Reference checks
- Teaching sample (when possible)
- Final decision and offer

When a teacher leaves mid-year requiring a quick replacement, a long-term substitute for the position will first be procured if needed, and then the above procedure will be followed as quickly as possible. In the interest of time, the Education Director may reduce the size of the hiring committee or may eliminate certain components of the normal hiring process as needed.

Staff Organizational Chart



Job descriptions for these positions along with newly described positions for 2012/2013 are located in Appendix A.

Professional Development

The Board of SWCS continued in their commitment to professional development during the 2012/2013 school year. As a result, teaching staff and others were able to take advantage of a number of professional development opportunities throughout the year. Some teachers trained at individually selected courses on various topics such as:

- National Social Science Teachers' Conference - Seattle
- Story Workshop at Opal Charter School

As a staff we also enjoyed the opportunity to work with together with Jo Sigmund, one of the founding teachers of Emerson Charter School. She worked with our full staff before the start of school to train us in Positive Discipline. She also returned to work one-on-one with specific teachers needing more support with implementation.

We also engaged in low-cost professional development opportunities such as reading and discussing articles and books together. Last year, we read, "XX" by Stephen Levy. One of our favorite low-cost methods is our creation of the "School Visit Day." We intentionally planned a day in our school schedule that is a no-student day for SWCS, but is not a typical holiday or day-off for other schools. We use this day as a chance to visit other schools to learn more about their techniques and methods and to inform them about SWCS. This year, teams from SWCS visited:

- Maplewood Elementary School
- Emerson Charter School
- Springwater Charter School
- Sunnyside Charter School
- Corbett Charter School

Staff Handbook

Our staff handbook was updated slightly this year and is included in Appendix B of this report.

Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation at SWCS continues to improve as we grow and mature as a school. This year, all teachers set goals with the Education Director at the beginning of the school year. The Education Director observed in all classrooms during the course of the school year, but one of our goals for this year includes increasing the number of observations and also orchestrating peer observations for the first time. At the end of the school year, the teachers took time for some self-reflection and met individually with the Education Director to discuss their year and to set goals for the 2013/2014 school year.

Board of Directors

Members – Position & Term

Table 4 – SWCS Board Members during the 2012/2013 school year and their terms.

Board Member	Position	Term Ends
Aaron Britton	President	December 2014
Kenny Weiner	Treasurer	December 2013
Ryan Wist	Secretary	December 2014
Seth Litwin		December 2013
Anna Wantz		December 2013
Stacey Goldstein		December 2013
Steven Piazza		December 2013
Al Mattison		(Only served for 4 months)

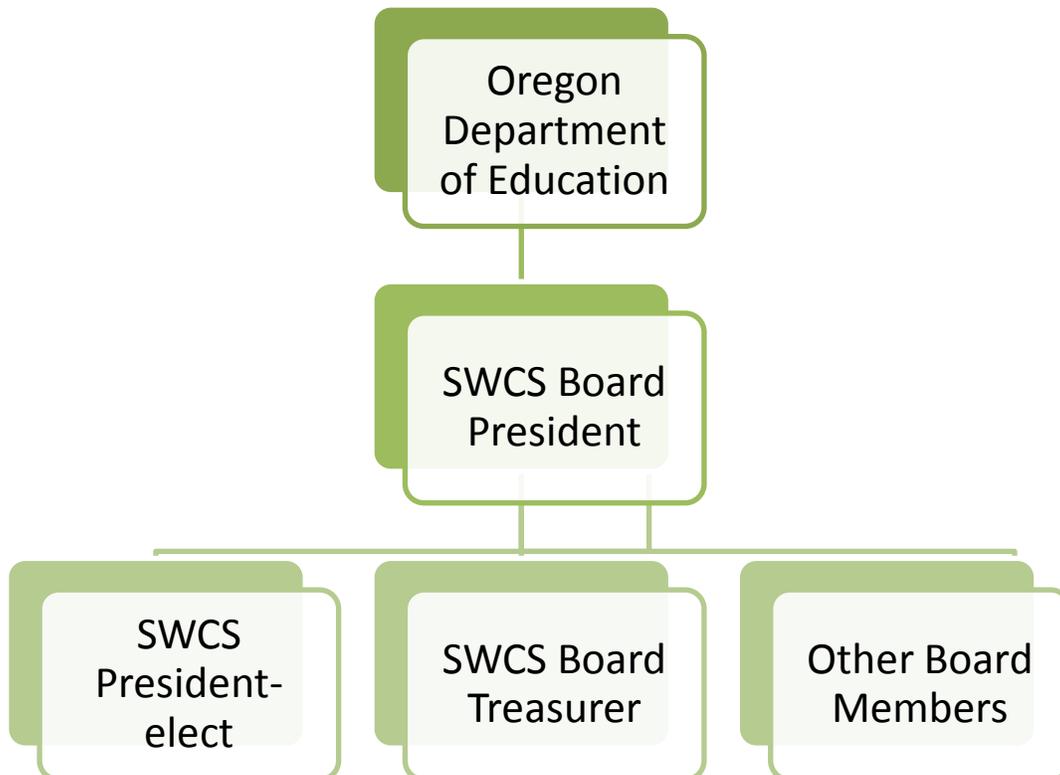
Board Meeting Minutes

See Appendix C.

Policies

See Appendix D.

Board Organization Chart



Professional Development

The Board engaged in no formal professional development in the 2012/2013 school year. However, they recognize their need for it and are currently seeking ways to improve their knowledge and function as a Board. They have already sought out two possible organizations to provide some needed Board training (Charter Starters and OSBA). Our incoming Board president, Aaron Britton, also attended a Board information session sponsored by ODE in August, 2012.

During the 2012/2013 school year, the Board did work with OSBA to develop comprehensive school policies for the school. A subset of Board members participated in this process which served as a good introduction to OSBA. The new full school policies are included in Appendix D.

Curriculum & Programs

Overview

Because SWCS is dedicated to place-based education, much of the curriculum is developed by the teachers. Place-based education strives to connect students to the natural, physical, and social community in which they live. Further, we use science, art and civics as the primary lenses to investigate that community. We strive for an integrated approach. "Sky" was the overall curricular theme during the 2012/2013 school year. We still have purchased only two commercial curricula packages thus far, Math Learning Center's *Bridges in Mathematics* for grades K-5 and Math Learning Center's *Visual Math* for grades 6-8. All other curricula is developed by our teachers and tightly connected to our community and natural world. More teachers are beginning to use commercial curricula for core content though, and we are considering purchasing more in coming years.

The remainder of this section will offer one or two select experiences our students engaged in during the 2012/2013 school year in each grade level. In addition to the experiences described below, the students in each class worked on math, writing and reading daily, and enjoyed physical education two times per week. With monies raised through Run for the Arts, we brought in ceramic artist, Jean Chapin, for a week-long artist-in-residence during the month of April to work with grades K-4. All students enjoyed a week-long Artist-in-Residence with Chip Jasmin, a singer/songwriter who taught music and folk dancing. In spring, we also enjoyed having musician, Matt Ruddy, as an Artist-in-Residence who worked with all students.

Evaluation of Curriculum Impact

We evaluate our curriculum impact in a number of ways including the state assessments (OAKS), the Methods of Academic Progress tests from Northwest Evaluation Association, and classroom-based assessments (pre/post-tests, quizzes, writing samples, speaking opportunities, rubric-based project work, etc.) and through the portfolios built by our students. For more on the formal assessment results, please see the later section on Assessment.

Special Education

Over the course of the 2012/2013 school year, 30 students (15.4%) received special education services, and/or speech/language support from Portland Public Schools. Of those 30 students, SWCS worked to identify seven of them during the 2011/2012 school year. Eight students had 504 plans. Four of these students were identified this year.

Portland Public Schools had five personnel assigned to Southwest Charter:

- Learning Specialist – 0.5 FTE
- Speech Pathologist – 0.2 FTE
- Psychologist – 0.1 FTE
- Occupational Therapist – 0.05 FTE
- Paraeducator (assigned to one student only) – 0.8 FTE

The learning specialist and speech pathologist, while both hard-working and dedicated to service, struggled to meet the stated IEP service minutes with the time allotted to them by the district.

English Language Learners

We had no English Language Learners at SWCS during the 2012/2013 school year.

Other Special Populations

Although not typically defined as a special population, we consistently have a higher proportion of students who are male at Southwest Charter. In the 2012/2013 school year, 61% of our students were male compared with 51% in the PPS district. Much has been written of late in the academic literature about conventional classrooms being unfriendly to boys and their style of learning. Classrooms that require lots of “seatwork” are typically more difficult for boys. We know that some of our parents are actively choosing our school because our model is more hands-on, project-based and includes ample field work which can appeal to active boys.

Sample Units

Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten students studied a local wetland, Oaks Bottom, during the spring trimester. As part of the study, they learned about common pond life and created art work depicting pond life. The hallmark of the study was their weekly trips to Oaks Bottom to see the flora and fauna up close. Students practiced informal science-based inquiry in and around the ponds at Oaks Bottom, asking questions, making connections and finding answers. They observed the life cycle of frogs, dragonflies and salamanders and learned the names of many native plants, animals, and birds that live in Oaks Bottom. Back in the classroom, the students demonstrated their knowledge and furthered their learning through the building of a wetland frieze that captured all the elements they believed a healthy wetland park should have.

Grade 1/2

Space was a common theme in several classrooms during the year, and the two 1/2 classroom were no exception. One classroom worked diligently from January until the end of the year to study the solar system and then to create an engaging movie about their trip. The movie was written by the students who also acted all the parts and made all the costumes and props. The premier screening in June was a celebratory culmination of an engaging unit of study.

The other 1/2 class studied space as well and students created penny arcade games to depict their learning. Students learned about how the sun and moon affect Earth. They also learned that the earth rotates and orbits around the sun, the moon rotates and orbits around the earth. They also covered topics such as seasons, phases of the moon, and importance of the sun. Using what they learned, students went through the design process and created their own educational arcade game. Along with their game students went through the writing process (plan, rough draft, revise, edit, final draft) and wrote a How To book explaining how to play their game. During writer’s workshop students used their imagination and wrote their own stories about what images they see in the moon. Throughout the unit students practiced a variety of art forms: pastel, chalk, mapping, and puppet/mask making. Students ended the unit with the grand opening of the Rainbow Speed Space Arcade. Each game had to teach as well as be fun. When complete, they opened the arcade to all classrooms to share and learn.

Grade 3/4

Diverging from the sky theme to cover an important standard, students in grades 3/4 launched into an in-depth study of Native Americans. The scope of this place-based unit was very focused on the study of Native Americans of the Willamette Valley, the Kalapuya people. Students contrasted them with our way of life by thinking about how they might have used the land to provide for their needs if they were living here two hundred years ago. Students were broken into groups to answer some questions, wonderings, or misconceptions we had as a class about how these people lived. Stepping into this role, students worked on creating cordage with synthetic and natural materials. Students also took what they learned and used drama or further writing to imagine what life was like for the Kalapuyans.

Grade 5/6

The 5/6 students tackled civics and government this year, a topic that dove-tailed nicely with statewide and national elections. Students hosted a school-wide vote on major candidates and issues, and all students (K-8) participated in grade-appropriate ways. Later in the year, 5/6 students furthered their government unit by participating in the Classroom Law Project's "We the People." As a culminating project, students traveled to Salem to "compete" with their knowledge of how the government works. Through a mix-up on the part of the judges, our students were asked questions usually reserved for high school students. Maintaining their poise, they proceeded to answer the questions with an amazing degree of insight and knowledge!

Another large scale project of the 5/6 classes last year involved a study of light and optics, a loose connection to our sky theme and a good follow-up to their study of weather and the atmosphere. First, students explored their own thinking by creating a KWWL chart and exploring the idea of optics in the media. They also explored the idea of scale by tracing their bodies and other objects and "shrinking" themselves down by a power of 10. Next, students explored lenses by dissecting a cow eye and looking through concave and convex lenses. Following that, students explored mirrors and discovered the angle of reflection and incidence using protractors. They also experienced the warping of images through flexible mirrors and creating multiple images with mirrors. Next students engaged in a study of color where they created collages exploring the emotions evoked by different colors and the color wheel. They also studied the electromagnetic spectrum at learning stations with diffraction gratings. Finally, students studied shadows- the absence of light. They studied their own shadows and their classmates, learned about opaque, translucent, and transparent materials, and learned how to manipulate shadows. This culminated with student groups creating and performing their own shadow puppet plays. After research into the history of shadow puppets, the groups wrote their own scripts, built the puppets and props and scenery, and performed at the Spring Showcase. They demonstrated mastery by including three types of shadows and by building puppets that had a variety of opaqueness and translucency.

Grade 7/8

After starting the year with a unit on ornithology, students in grades 7/8 spent much of their winter trimester on an in-depth study of the first amendment. They started off by learning about some of the documents that pre-dated the Bill of Rights: the Code of Hammurabi and the Magna Carta. They then learned about our Bill of Rights and students were tested on their knowledge. We began our examination of freedom of speech by looking at different court cases: *Tinker v. Des Moines*, *Abrams v. United States*, *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire*, and *Johnson v. Texas* to name a few. Students became experts on one of the cases and taught the rest of the class. Through these cases, they learned how the Supreme Court has identified when freedom of speech is both protected and restricted. In addition to learning from the court cases, they also learned from two local attorneys who came to talk with us about freedom of speech, and specifically hate speech.

While they were gathering this information, they began working with Andy Blubaugh from the Northwest Film Center to learn how to make movies. He taught them how to work a camera, film different angles, and the different roles of people making a movie. They then applied their knowledge from the court cases to write scripts and interview questions. The last several weeks of the trimester were spent shooting footage for the film.

A large part of the 7/8 students' spring trimester was devoted to Project Citizen. Project Citizen asks middle and high school students to identify and study a local problem and to propose a policy-based solution. This year, because our class sizes have continued to grow, we sent two teams, one seventh and one eighth. For the third year in a row, our eighth grade team won the statewide award for their project on unpaved streets in Portland.

Field Work in 2012/2013

Field work is a hallmark of the curriculum at SWCS. Below is a list of the field work experiences our students engaged in during the 2012/2013 school year:

Kindergarten

Art a la Carte

Oaks Bottom (multiple trips)

Tryon Creek (multiple trips)

Lee Farms

Tears of Joy Theater (2 trips)

Northwest Children's Theater (2 trips)

Oregon Children's Theater (2 trips)

Local walking trips to Willamette River, Cottonwood Bay, Community Garden, Carruthers Park

Grades 1/2

Oaks Bottom

Audubon

Scrap

Nickel Arcade

Central Library (multiple trips)

Tears of Joy Theater

Northwest Children's Theater

Local walking trips to Willamette River, Cottonwood Bay, Community Garden, Carruthers Park

Grades 3/4

Downtown Portland - Bridge walk – 4 trips

Portland Art Museum

Oregon Historical Society

OMSI

Central Library (multiple trips)

Sky High

Willamette Jet Boats

Tryon Creek

Washington Park

Local walking trips to Willamette River, Cottonwood Bay, Community Garden, Carruthers Park and Willamette Park

Grades 5/6

Adidas/Timbers Practice Facility

Evergreen Aviation Museum

Portland City Hall

State Capitol

Oregon Food Bank (multiple trips)

Northwest Children's Theater (multiple trips)

OMSI's Camp Hancock (two-night overnight)

Central Library (multiple trips)

Local walking trips to Willamette River, Cottonwood Bay, Community Garden, Carruthers Park and Willamette Park

Grades 7/8

Ropes Course @ Oregon Episcopal School

Oregon Zoo

Oaks Bottom

Sauvie Island

Oregon Statehouse – Project Citizen

7/8 Internships (individual internships for each 7/8 students at a number of local nonprofits)

8th Grade Career internships (multi-day internships for 8th grade students)

Oregon Coast – Coastal Trip (three-night overnight)

Local walking trips to Willamette River, Cottonwood Bay, Community Garden, Carruthers Park and Willamette Park

Student Achievement

State Assessment Scores

Our students tested on the OAKS test primarily during the week of April 22-26, 2013. We set up a temporary computer lab in our great room (multi-purpose room) for the week of testing. Any students not finishing, or those needing to test in small groups or one-on-one, worked on their tests during the following weeks (April 29-May 22) in our smaller computer lab which houses just seven computers.

One hundred percent of our students participated in the OAKS test this school year. Table 5 below summarizes the results.

Table 5 – Summary of SWCS student performance on 2012/2013 and 2011/2012 Oregon State Assessments compared with the averages of PPS and the State.

Test	% of SWCS Students on IEP (12/13)*	SWCS % Exceeds or Meets (12/13)	PPS % Meets or Exceeds (12/13)	Statewide % Meets or Exceeds (12/13)	% of Students on IEP (11/12)*	SWCS % Exceeds or Meets (11/12)	PPS Average % Meets or Exceeds (11/12)	Statewide Average % Meets or Exceeds (11/12)
3 rd Grade (24)	12.5				13.6			
Reading		67	74	66		81	75	70
Math		29	69	61		67	67	64
4 th Grade (20)	30				17.4			
Reading		65	78	73		65	77	74
Math		60	72	64		44	72	66
Writing *		n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
5 th Grade (24)	8.3				17.4			
Reading		63	73	68		>95	71	69
Math		50	66	58		>95	64	60
Science		83	72	67		>95	n/a	69
6 th Grade (23)	8.6				19			
Reading		78	67	57		67	68	65
Math		74	62	59		62	62	59
7 th Grade (19)	21				17.6			
Reading		90	75	73		88	76	75
Math		63	64	61		44	65	63
Writing		n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
8 th Grade (17)	24				30			
Reading		77	69	67		80	71	68
Math		59	63	63		60	66	65
Science		71	63	66		70	n/a	66
Total (127)	16							
Reading		72	83	69		79	74	70
Math		55	67	61		63	66	63
Science		78	64	66		91	66	68

*Data from SWCS. All others from Oregon Department of Education.

National Assessment Scores

For the second year in 2012/2013, SWCS also tested our students using Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Methods of Academic Progress (MAP). These tests were administered twice during the year during two, one-week testing windows: September 24-28, 2012 and February 25-March 1, 2013. All students in grades K-8 tested. The younger students, grades K-2, tested only on reading and math. Students in grades 3-8 tested on reading, math and language skills. The computer lab set-up was similar to the one used for the OAKS test in April 2013. Kindergarten results are very specific to early learning skills and are not reported here along with grades 1-8. Tables 6 through 8 below summarize the results from the MAP tests for SWCS.

Table 6 – Summary of SWCS student performance (grades 1-8) on Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 Methods of Academic Progress Reading Test compared with NWEA normed averages from 2011.

Test	% of Students on IEP	SWCS Average	Norm Group Average
1st Grade			
Reading - Fall	0	160.4	160.3
Reading - Spring	0	168.3	177
Growth		7.9	16.7
2nd Grade			
Reading - Fall	11	176.6	175.9
Reading Survey w/Goals- Spring	18	176.9	190
Reading for Primary - Spring	0	182.4	190
Growth		0.3/5.8	14.1
3rd Grade			
Reading - Fall	8.7	190	189.9
Reading - Spring	8.3	197.4	199
Growth		7.4	9.1
4th Grade			
Reading - Fall	26	206.1	199.8
Reading - Spring	33	206.2	207
Growth		0.1	7.2
5th Grade			
Reading - Fall	9.5	211.3	207.1
Reading - Spring	8.3	217.4	212
Growth		6.1	4.9
6th Grade			
Reading - Fall	9.0	225.1	212.3
Reading - Spring	9.1	228.5	216
Growth		3.4	3.7
7th Grade			
Reading - Fall	15.8	223.8	216.3
Reading - Spring	21.1	228.3	220
Growth		4.5	3.7
8th Grade			
Reading - Fall	16.7	230.2	219.3
Reading - Spring	23.5	233.8	222
Growth		3.6	2.7

Table 7 – Summary of SWCS student performance (grades 1-8) on 2012/2013 Methods of Academic Progress Mathematics Test compared with NWEA normed averages from 2011.

Test	% of Students on IEP	SWCS Average	Norm Group Average
1st Grade			
Math - Fall	0	159.9	162.8
Math - Spring	0	179.4	179
Growth		19.5	16.2
2nd Grade			
Math - Fall	11	182.4	178.2
Math Survey w/Goals- Spring	18	183	191
Math for Primary - Spring	0	184.7	191
Growth		0.6/2.3	12.8
3rd Grade			
Math - Fall	8.7	187.1	192.1
Math - Spring	8.3	192.8	203
Growth		5.7	10.9
4th Grade			
Math - Fall	26	200.8	203.8
Math - Spring	33	208.4	212
Growth		7.6	8.2
5th Grade			
Math - Fall	9.5	207.2	212.9
Math - Spring	8.3	215.4	221
Growth		8.2	8.1
6th Grade			
Math - Fall	9.0	229.3	219.6
Math - Spring	9.1	235.1	226
Growth		5.8	6.4
7th Grade			
Math - Fall	15.8	227.2	225.6
Math - Spring	21.1	234.3	230
Growth		7.1	4.4
8th Grade			
Math - Fall	16.7	228.4	230.2
Math - Spring	23.5	240.1	234
Growth		11.7	3.8

Table 8 – Summary of SWCS student performance (grades 3-8) on 2012/2013 Methods of Academic Progress Language Test compared with NWEA normed averages from 2011.

Test	% of Students on IEP	SWCS Average	Norm Group Average
3rd Grade			
Language - Fall	8.7	189.1	191.1
Language - Spring	8.3	195.9	200
Growth		6.8	8.9
4th Grade			
Language - Fall	26	201.8	200.9
Language - Spring	33	205.4	207
Growth		3.6	6.1
5th Grade (10)			
Language - Fall	9.5	205.6	208
Language - Spring	8.3	214.7	213
Growth		9.1	5
6th Grade (10)			
Language - Fall	9.0	221.4	212.3
Language - Spring	9.1	222.4	216
Growth		1.0	3.7
7th Grade (10)			
Language - Fall	15.8	219.8	215.8
Language - Spring	21.1	225.1	219
Growth		5.3	3.2
8th Grade (10)			
Language - Fall	16.7	224.3	218.7
Language - Spring	23.5	229.8	221
Growth		5.5	2.3

Assessment Results Analysis

Overall, we saw mixed results in our assessment scores in 2012/2013. While we saw growth on the OAKS scores in some areas such as 4th, 6th and 7th grade math, we also saw decreases in math at grades 3rd, 5th and 8th. In reading we saw increases in grades 6 and 7, but decreases in grades 5 and 8. (Table 9 below summarizes our students' areas of increase and decrease in scores.)

Table 9 – Areas of SWCS 2012/2013 score increase and decrease compared with scores from 2011/2012.

Areas of Increase in 2012/2013	Areas of Decrease in 2012/2013
4 th math	3 rd reading
6 th reading	3 rd math
6 th math	5 th reading
7 th reading	5 th math
7 th math	5 th science
8 th science	8 th reading
	8 th math

When compared with other PPS schools and the state overall, SWCS again performed well. Our percentage meeting or exceeding in reading was higher than PPS in 6th through 8th grades. Our math scores were higher in 6th only which underscores our need to improve our math instruction. Compared with the state overall, our students meeting or exceeding in reading was higher than the state in 6th and 8th and the overall average reading score. More of our students met or exceeded benchmark in math compared with the state in 6th and 7th. As in years past, science continues to be an area of strength with our students’ scores exceeding both PPS and the state in both 5th and 8th grade. Table 10 below summarizes these findings.

Table 10 – Areas where SWCS 2012/2013 scores were higher compared with scores from Portland Public Schools.

Areas Where SWCS Scores Higher than PPS	Areas where SWCS Scores Higher than State
5 th science	5 th science
6 th reading	6 th reading
6 th math	6 th math
7 th reading	7 th reading
8 th reading	7 th math
8 th science	8 th reading
Overall science	8 th science
	Overall reading
	Overall science

NWEA’s MAP test is designed specifically to measure individual student growth and we were pleased to see that, on average, 100% of our students grew in their knowledge between Fall and Spring of 2012/2013. Comparing our students to NWEA’s norm group from 2011 allows us a comparison to students taking MAP tests nationwide. Table 11 below identifies the areas where our students’ average scores were higher than the norm group average. In every grade, there were areas where our students exceeded the norm group performance. In some cases, they were within 2 point of the average, and in a few cases, they exceeded the norm group average by large margins.

Table 11 – Areas where SWCS students’ average 2012/2013 scores were above NWEA’s 2011 norm group scores.

Grade Level	Reading - Fall	Reading - Spring	Math - Fall	Math - Spring	Language - Fall	Language - Spring
1 st Grade		Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a
2 nd Grade	Yes		Yes		n/a	n/a
3 rd Grade	Yes					
4 th Grade	Yes				Yes	
5 th Grade	Yes	Yes				Yes
6 th Grade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 th Grade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8 th Grade	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes

Family Handbook

The SWCS Family Handbook for 2012/2013 is located in Appendix E.

Survey

ODE Survey Results

The results from the ODE 2012/2013 student/parent/staff survey are located in Appendix F.

Analysis & Plan of Action

ODE Staff Results Analysis

On the ODE staff survey, the top scoring comments were:

- I believe student achievement can increase through:
 - Close personal relationships between students and teachers
 - Addressing student learning styles
 - Providing a threat-free environment
 - Effective professional development related to our vision
- I felt that learning can be fun
- My administrator treats me with respect
- I have the opportunity to think for myself, not just carry out instructions

The lowest scoring comments on the staff survey were:

Note: None of these fell below 3 on the 5-point scale

- I believe student achievement can increase through:
 - Teaching to the state standards
 - The use of computers
 - The use of varied technologies
- My administrator is an effective instructional leader
- I feel that others are clear about what my job is at this school
- I feel recognized for good work

Standards & Technology

We feel strongly as a staff that while it is our obligation as a staff to follow the standards of the state of Oregon, they are not the driving force behind our teaching, mission or philosophy. As such, it is not surprising that we do not collectively see how they are tied to student achievement. We also have few technological options for our students, some by choice and some due to budget constraints. For a school dedicated to involving students heavily in their community, it is not surprising that technology would play a backseat role to other kinds of learning.

Instructional Leaders

We have just begun to look into how to improve the structure our administrative team at SWCS. We agree that instructional leadership is not as strong as it could be, and we are looking for ways to find it both within our ranks and from the broader community.

Recognition

The Board has been steadily working toward improving staff compensation over the years, and recently approved the most comprehensive salary increase in our short history. They also

approved a new Emergency Medical Leave policy allowing more flexibility for staff in the event of an emergency medical need. However, compensation is just part of the recognition picture, and we have more work to do to recognize our staff for their good work.

ODE Student Results Analysis

Surprisingly, our K-5 students responding to the survey (n=67) almost universally agreed or strongly agreed with all the survey statements. Only three responses dipped below the 4-point line:

- When I am at school:
 - I feel I have choices in what I learn
 - I am challenged by the work my teacher asks me to do
 - Students at my school treat me with respect

These concerns, coupled with the parents' concerns, largely drove our goals for increased attention to respect and rigor this year.

ODE Parent Results Analysis (n=125)

Only the following comments dropped below the 4-point level:

- I know what my child's teacher expects of my child
- Students show respect for other students
- The school meets the academic needs of the students
- I know how my child is progressing in school
- Overall the school performs well academically
- The school succeeds in preparing children for future work
- My child's teacher helps me to help my child learn at home

For more information on plans to address these concerns, see the section on Goals for 2013/2014.

School Improvement

Evaluation of Prior Year's Improvement Plan

Below are our goals for 2012/2013 and the progress made thus far:

1) *Improve new South Waterfront location for SWCS.*

We continue to make additional improvements to the current facility to improve the environment for our school community. This year, with funds primarily raised from the auction, we made the following improvements:

- Installed a fantastical cob structure with a cover in our play area to serve as a protected seating area for small groups of students
- Video monitoring for doors and front area
- Document cameras and projectors for every classroom
- Improved IT systems for school and purchased needed computers for teachers
- Improved storage in common areas and some classrooms and facility maintenance areas

2) *Increase enrollment for 2012/2013 to fill the new facility.*

We are not yet quite at capacity as our seventh and eighth grades continue to fill slowly to capacity. This year we also have lower enrollment at grades 2 and 5. Last year's grade 4 was also not fill which seems to imply a demographical dip, but we will have to watch this trend to see if remedies are needed to boost enrollment at certain grades.

3) *Improve overall assessment strategies.*

The Education Director and teachers continue to work collectively to find ways to improve our students' OAKS test results. This year we made changes to our testing procedure and also their test preparation. We saw minimal improvements from these changes. Please see our goals for 2013/2014 for more information on plans for this school year.

4) *Improve our math curriculum and align it to Common Core standards.*

We continued to work to align our teaching to the new CCSS. We made step-wise progress in 2012/2013, but 2013/2014 will take us even further in alignment.

5) *Improve school fundraising efforts.*

We would love to see our fundraising efforts continue to grow, but additionally, we would like to see them diversify as well. Our FOSWCS group continues to work well and effectively at getting support for the school, but we would also like to be writing and receiving more grants. We still are struggling to find the right infrastructure to support grant writing and grant program management. Our Run for the Arts funding has grown dramatically over the past three years, from approximately \$7,000 in 2011/2012 to over \$15,000 in 2012/2013. This funding has allowed us to significantly expand our art offerings for students.

6) *Perform a comprehensive review of SWCS policies to bring them up-to-date with changes in Oregon law and in a useful reference format for our community.*

Working with OSBA, we completed the task of updating our school policies this year using their charter school package and support.

7) Increase and strengthen community ties including ties with other schools.

We had another student teacher this year in our 7/8 language arts classroom. We would like to continue recruiting student teachers for next year as well. We are continuing to seek ways to form more informal partnerships with others schools, perhaps through future funding opportunities.

8) Increase public awareness and community visibility of Southwest Charter School, particularly with diverse groups.

This remains a perennial goal for our school. We have begun to form closer ties with our new local neighborhood association, the local media and with other community groups. We would also like to work more diligently to reach out to more diverse community groups. We made a deliberate effort this year to advertise our Open House and tours in lower-income neighborhoods and service providers.

9) Continue a strategic planning process that guides SWCS's growth and development in the coming years.

We continued this year to use Education for the Future and the National Green Schools Guidelines to guide our strategic planning process. In 2011/2012, our teachers tackled the task of ranking SWCS on seven Education for the Future continua and five Green Schools continua. (The continua and our rankings are located in Appendix G and H. We have developed several goals guided by these objectives. They are located in Appendix I.

10) Improve our teacher evaluation system to improve instruction and to help develop SWCS into master teachers.

We continued to improve teacher evaluation this year by increasing the number of observations, setting goals, peer-to-peer observations and making time for individual reflection. This year, we have developed a new framework for Teacher Evaluation included in Appendix M.

11) Improve staff and teacher morale.

The implementation of the Positive Discipline system at our school seemed to have a marked effect on our school. While challenging to implement (especially at first), we all noted the benefits of being "on the same page" with discipline issues. Many felt that the year ended strongly. That said, the workload at a school such as SWCS is challenging, and despite the dedication of our staff, morale at the beginning of 2013/2014 was low. The Board moved quickly to offer pay increases promised if education funding increased. While not solving all problems, it was appreciated by staff as a recognition of their hard work on behalf of the school.

Goals & Plans

The following are our goals and plans for 2013/2014:

1) *Increased academic rigor.*

This goal stems from the survey responses from both parents and students and from our desire to help our students perform better on standardized tests. Math is an area of primary concern here, but we are working on increasing the academic rigor in other areas as well. This goal also ties well to the implementation of the new Common Cores State Standards.

2) *Increased communication with parents about student performance and ways to support student work.*

This goal also came directly from the parent surveys. We are working this year to increase the accountability of students and also the communication of that accountability with parents. For instance, 7th and 8th graders will, for the first time this year, have letter grades because our experiment with it last year proved successful in motivating both students and parents support academic growth.

3) *Increased respect between students.*

This goal also arises directly from the parent and student surveys and from our own observations. The implementation of Positive Discipline school-wide last year gave us a good platform to build on for 2013/2014. Positive Discipline is founded on mutual respect. However, as we have found, respect is something that must be both taught and earned.

4) *Improved recognition of staff.*

As mentioned earlier, the Board has begun this work with improvements to the compensation package, but more work needs to be done to determine how best to recognize teachers and staff for their dedication and work on behalf of our students.

5) *Increased partnerships with community partners to further our Place-based mission.*

As much as we would like to see our standardized test scores increase, we recognize that this alone will not make us a successful school. If our mission falls to the wayside, we will have failed. To accomplish this, we are working to increase our work with and our recognition of the community partners who make SWCS a successful school. These are organizations that our students partner with directly to further their learning and to improve their community in tangible ways.

6) *Continue a strategic planning process that guides SWCS's growth and development in the coming years.*

We have begun a strategic planning process using the systems and materials from Education for the Future from California State University at Chico. Our director received additional training this summer to help further the work, and we expect to make progress this year toward a more comprehensive plan.

7) Increase public awareness and community visibility of Southwest Charter School, particularly with diverse groups.

As in years past, we will make renewed investments toward increasing our visibility with diverse groups. We hope to both improve enrollment figures but also to increase our students' exposure to diverse communities.

8) Increase enrollment for 2012/2013 to fill the new facility.

We would like to see our school completely filled at all grade levels with significant waiting lists to be sure that we can fill any vacancies that might arise.

Parent/Community Engagement

Friends of SWCS

Last year, our support group, Friends of Southwest Charter School (FOSWCS), continued to provide much needed support for the school. They are primarily tasked with developing and implementing community building events and some of our bigger fundraising events during the year. They also play an increasingly important role in communication as well. Each class has a FOSWCS parent liaison that helps to support the teachers with their communication needs as well as get the word out on events and updates on a class-by-class basis.

FOSWCS meets monthly ahead of the regular Board meetings and reports on their activities at each Board meeting. Participation at FOSWCS meetings is typically about fifteen parents.

Volunteers

School wide, volunteers offered over 4,000 hours of service at SWCS. Volunteers helped by chaperoning field work, helping out in classrooms, running school fundraisers, supporting our computer needs, serving on our Board, etc. SWCS would truly not be the same without our volunteers.

Family Handbook

The SWCS Family Handbook is located in Appendix E.

Community/Business Partners

SWCS works closely with a host of community partners. Here's a sampling of those we worked with last year.

- The Dog House – hosted 7/8 interns
- Free Geek – hosted 7/8 interns
- Macadam Starbucks – donated food/coffee (multiple times) and donated school supplies
- Mirabella Portland – hosted 7/8 interns and welcomed our Kindergarteners for a singing event
- Oregon Food Bank – hosted 5/6 students for 4 community service projects
- Portland Parks & Recreation – SWCS has a stewardship agreement with PPR with regard to Cottonwood Bay, a nearby natural area owned by the Parks.
- Portland Streetcar – allowed our students to use the streetcar free of charge for the year for field work
- REACH Housing – hosted 7/8 interns
- South Portland Business Association – SWCS is a member, and we sent a group of children to sing at their holiday festival
- Subway – donated food and allowed our children to use their restrooms during the Run for the Arts event
- Umpqua Bank – donated support for our school garden
- Waterfront Foursquare Church – rents our facility during weekends and some evenings and joins us in community service projects

- Zenger Farms – hosted several classes for service learning opportunities
- Additionally, over 280 vendors, businesses or organizations donated to our school auction last year.

Facilities

Details/Overview

The 2012/2013 school year was marked continued work to make our building more comfortable and functional as a school building. We worked with our landlord to make some improvements to the school facility over the course of the year. Over the course of the year, we added the following:

- More storage in common areas and some classrooms
- Purchased new furniture for some classrooms
- Improved the IT system school wide
- Purchased new computers for nearly half the staff
- Built a roof over our outdoor cob structure to provide a small area of protected seating outside
- Installed security cameras to allow more visibility of people entering the building for office staff

Our students continue to take advantage of our neighboring community resources for learning including:

- The Willamette River
- Carruthers Park
- Portland Streetcar
- Willamette Park
- Cottonwood Bay
- Willamette Greenway Trail
- South Waterfront Community Garden

Much of the year was also dominated by the construction of the new Federal Building for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The building is located directly to the west of the school. It was completed and personnel began using the building in late September 2013.

Financial Management

Checks & Balance

Funding

State School Funding (SSF) represents the largest amount of SWCS's operating basis.

- Immediately following the completion of the monthly Cumulative ADM Collection Report the data is reviewed and enrollment and attendance information is entered into a spreadsheet that calculates the value due for the month reported. From this data SWCS creates an invoice and the expected value is incorporated into the accounting system.
- Meanwhile, the ADM report is submitted both ODE and PPS. After PPS's review a spreadsheet, much like SWCS's internal spreadsheet, is generated and transmitted electronically to SWCS reflecting the amount that will be transmitted to SWCS's account on or before the 25th of the month. SWCS staff compares the internal spreadsheet with the one received from PPS to verify the numbers agree. Any fraction of cents adjustments are made by creating an invoice or credit memo as necessary.
- These funds are received via direct deposit. The electronic notification from the banking institution is checked against the invoice and the amount is received into the accounting system. At the end of each fiscal year funds expected and funds received are reconciled.

The remainder of funding for SWCS is comprised of program fees for Full Day Kindergarten, Before and After Care Enrichment Programs (ASE/BSE), donations and fundraising. SWCS staff creates invoices for program fees and receipts for donations and monies received for fundraising.

Control of Cash and Convertible Assets

- While SSF is directly deposited, the remainder of funds receipt transactions are completed by check, cash, credit card, and PayPal.
- The school provides drop box locations for payments by check or cash. These boxes are emptied daily. Checks and cash are logged in and kept secure in locations requiring a combination or key for access.
- Lagging, ie holding funds for a period of over a few days after receipt, is highly discouraged. One week is the maximum that regular funds can be held.
- Special fundraising events may have funds held during the active period of the specific fundraiser but funds & supporting documents are required to be placed in a secure location for evenings and weekends. Only authorized event individuals may retrieve the funds.
- Receipts are written for cash received. A three (3) part form is used for this purpose providing a copy for payee, copy to accompany payment, final copy remains in the receipt book.
- Payments and receipts are processed in a manner designed to minimize the amount of time between receipt and depositing. Procedures, such as a double count for cash, are in place to safeguard not only the individual presenting the cash to be held but also the individual accepting the cash.
- Deposit slips are generated from the accounting system. Individual items on each deposit are traceable back to their entry into the accounting system and are required to have supporting documentation. The individual making the physical deposit to the bank provides the deposit receipt received from the bank supporting documentation to another accounting staff member for review.

- Credit cards are utilized for some payments. While most card processing is done in person some are done over the phone. A limited number of key individuals are authorized to process credit card payments. Card information gathered for one time payments is destroyed immediately after processing the payment to prevent unauthorized use of the card. Card information for re-occurring payments is held in a secured location.
- Petty cash is limited to \$100 and is used mainly for making change.
- Transfers between accounts are made in most instances by check but may be made by electronic transfer if necessary. SWCS utilizes transfers at month end to move funds into the main account to cover expenses. Calculation of the amount needed made by Treasurer or Business Officer and shared with Education Director for oversight.
- Signing authority is limited to a few key individuals. Signing authority is approved by the Board yearly at the July meeting.

Security Access

- Access to locations where checks or cash are held is limited to a few key employees to safeguard assets. Keys and combinations are kept secure and issued to key individuals. Blank checks and deposit slips are kept in these locations.

Monitoring Activities

- Prior to monthly closure SWCS's accounting staff complete the entry of all data to the accounting system.
- SWCS maintains a monthly closure and review process guided by a printed list. This process involves an external accountant who is retained to reconcile bank balances and review monthly financial statements. Bank statements are reviewed internally prior to the month end process and approved and signed off by the Treasurer or Business Officer after the reconciliation process is complete.
- The external accountant and SWCS designated staff perform a thorough review of entries is completed during the month, comparing current to previous months by account and even by class. This external oversight provides a monthly monitoring of accounts and assists the audit process by identifying and performing any required adjustments close to the period being reviewed – minimizing year-end adjustments.
- AJE's created at month end are supported by documentation. AJE's are approved by either the external accountant or SWCS accounting staff member, someone other than the individual creating the journal entry.
- Included in this month end process is the creation of a report submitted to our Education Director which includes detailed banking/checking account activity, payroll activity, accounts payable and receivable. This report brings yet another individual into financial oversight.
- SWCS Treasurer or CFO reviews documents and records after monthly review. On a monthly basis the CFO or Treasurer presents a specialized financial report along with a profit & loss and balance sheets at the Board meeting.
- Additionally, SWCS, as a publically funded entity, is subject to an annual municipal audit. During the audit records and procedures are reviewed resulting in a report stating the financial condition of the school.

Expenditures

SWCS has differing types of expenditures. In each case there is a segregation of duties designed to provide checks and balances.

Accounts Payable

- An item received to be considered for payment is reviewed and categorized by one individual and entered into the system by another.
- When an item is presented for payment that is not part of a standard/expected budgeted expense or one that has not been previously approved by other process the SWCS accounting staff actively engage the Education Director to ensure the item is due and payable by the school.
- The Education Director reviews and approves all reimbursement requests received from staff, volunteers and community members.
- On a weekly basis the accounting administrator prints the current Accounts Payable list and presents it to the Treasurer or Business Officer for review and approval of items to be paid. The list is returned to the accounting administrator for check printing.
- The checks are presented for signature with the backup documents supporting the payment attached below the check. All checks must have original supporting documentation to be considered for payment.
- A copy of the check stub is attached over the backup documents and filed by check number. The duplicate check copy is also filed in a separate location by check number.

Payroll, Payroll Reporting and Taxes

- Payroll duties are split between entering timesheets, reviewing final checks, and printing direct deposit receipts or live checks.
- SWCS uses an assisted payroll program which automates much of the process. The internal payroll procedure incorporates both the selected payroll program and task specific excel spreadsheets utilized to transform payroll data into information required to process PERS and payroll taxes.
- Monthly and quarterly payroll taxes are paid online.
- Quarterly reports are created in conjunction with the payroll program which either creates the report or provides data for creation of the report.
- Year-end tax forms are created using the automated payroll program and released only after verification against yearly records.

Credit Cards

- The Education Director and Business Officer carry credit cards for purchase of supplies and materials for the school.
- SWCS has provided credit cards to selected teaching staff to carry on overnight/out of state field trips. The card is required to be returned to the office when the trip is complete.
- An agreement is held on file stating that personal purchases are not to be made on the cards.
- Original documentation for each purchase is submitted to the accounting department.

- Expenditures are categorized by one individual and entered into the accounting system by another.
- Award points gained from the use of the cards are redeemed in the form of checks written to SWCS. Funds received are used for the benefit of the school.

Organization/Flow of Money In/Out

Please see Appendix J.

Audit

The audit is delayed this due to changes in personnel at our accounting firm. It will be submitted to Oregon Department of Education as soon as it is completed.

Local School District

Connections/Contacts

We work most closely with our resident district, Portland Public Schools, on matters relating to Special Education. Laretta Manning served as the Program Administrator over our school last year. We also work occasionally with Kristin Miles, the Senior Manager for Charter Schools at Portland Public Schools, and Katherine Hu in Research, Evaluation and Assessment, who acts as our District Test Coordinator.

Federal Funds

SWCS received no Federal funds in 2012/2013.

Contracts

Please see Appendix K for a copy of the contract with Portland Public Schools.