

MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
THE SOUTH CAROLINA OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL
WEST COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
OCTOBER 9, 1963

The Opportunity School Board of Trustees met on October 9, 1963, at 11 A.M. Members of the Board attending included: Dr. M. B. Webb, Chairman; Hal Kohn, Jr., Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Harriet Johnson, Secretary; Mrs. David R. Coker; Dr. James F. Miles; and R. H. Smith. Others present were Dr. Wil Lou Gray, Director Emeritus; W. T. Lander, Jr., Director; Miss Marguerite Tolbert, Assistant Director; and Miss Lessie Moore, Field Representative.

After Dr. Webb had opened the meeting, the invocation was given by Mr. Smith.

At the request of Director Lander, reports were given by Miss Tolbert and Miss Moore.

Miss Tolbert reported school activities which included Arbor Day (when gifts of dogwood trees were donated by Mr. Smith), recreation, and religious programs. Her report is attached.

Miss Tolbert also showed members a "Tribute to Dr. Wil Lou Gray," which appeared in the Congressional Record on September 13, 1963.

Miss Moore made some remarks regarding her report, which is attached. She related her report to her experiences through the years.

Mrs. Coker moved commendation of Miss Moore. Dr. Miles seconded this motion which passed unanimously.

Dr. Webb suggested that we commend the administrative staff and all those contributing to the excellence of last year's work. Mr. Kohn made the motion to this effect; Mr. Smith seconded; the motion carried.

Mr. Dan Frick, State Engineer with the State Budget and Control Board, was introduced by Mr. Lander. Dr. Webb welcomed Mr. Frick and expressed our desire for any helpful suggestions regarding a study and investigation of the physical plant as to needs. Mr. Frick suggested that we elect committees to carry through on getting opinions of experts in landscaping and architecture. He further suggested that we have sketches done by these experts.

Miss Gray made a statement concerning the ideas of the role of The Opportunity School at the time of its founding. She expressed a desire that the school continue to be a cooperative center for remedial education, general adult education, and conferences.

Director Lander expressed the need for sufficient living space for at least 200, or possibly 300 students. Students are being turned away, Mr. Lander said, even though the old "Wac Building" (renamed West Dormitory) has been turned into dormitory space for boys.

Dr. Webb stated that asking for one building at a time as necessary is possibly the most effective way of getting something done. Mr. Frick agreed.

Messrs. Kohn, Miles, and Smith briefly discussed use of the \$2500 mentioned for a study of the plant. Mrs. Coker emphasized that now is the best time for action.

Dr. Miles moved that a committee be named to carry out plans discussed during Mr. Frick's visit. Mrs. Coker seconded the motion. Mr. Kohn pointed out that need and committee knowledge of needs should be the bases for committee selection. Discussion followed concerning comparison of past and present purposes and accomplishments of the school with original purposes, for example:

What have we done?

What do we want?

What shall we ask for? (Place emphasis on being specific.)

The motion to select a committee for further study carried. The following committee was appointed: Dr. Holler, Mr. Kohn, and Mr. Smith. This committee was given authority to act. In the discussion, reference was made to duplication or master plan (the latter suggested by Mr. Frick) and fitting improvements into a master plan.

Director Lander brought to the attention of the Board a necessary amendment to the By-Laws of the Scholarship Trust Fund. Two minor amendments are required to firmly establish tax-exempt status. His suggestion on this may be seen in full report. It will be included in the Trust Fund Constitution. Dr. Miles moved adoption. Seconded by Mr. Smith, the motion carried. Dr. Webb asked Dr. Miles to examine the Constitution and By-Laws and to make any revision necessary.

Article IV under Proposed Agenda of New Business for October 9 meeting involved authorization to tear down the old theatre building which belongs jointly to The Opportunity School and The South Carolina Area Trade School. Dr. Miles moved that authority be given for this action; Mrs. Coker seconded; the motion carried.

Minutes of the October 10, 1962, meeting were read and approved.

Dr. Webb presented a list of committees appointed at the Fall 1962 meeting of Opportunity School Trustees:

Education:

J. C. Holler, Jesse T. Anderson, Mrs. D. R. Coker

Building and Grounds:

R. H. Smith, Hal Kohn, Jr., Mrs. Harriet Johnson

School Development:

J. F. Miles, Sam H. Jones, Oliver Thomas

Director Lander presented the salary schedules and requested formal approval of the following: re-election of the staff, the making of certain pay and salary adjustments, and the employment of additional or replacement personnel. (Records are available.) Mr. Smith moved adoption of Mr. Lander's request; Mrs. Coker seconded; the motion carried.

A discussion about an entertainment fund resulted in several ideas being offered; a conclusion was deferred. Following the discussion of necessary entertaining, Mr. Kohn moved that the Director be empowered to draw appropriate funds from the school treasury to cover all expenses of official entertainment. Mr. Smith seconded.

After placing a budget record before each member, Mr. Lander explained the proposed expenditures for 1963-1964 and 1964-1965, giving comparative figures for the past two years. Dr. Miles made a motion that the Board instruct the Director of The Opportunity School to request a 15% increase in salaries and wages across the board, 10% of this increase to be specified for salary increases for all employees except the Director, the Assistant Director, and the Field Representative, for whom \$1000 each is allocated; the balance of the 15% is to be distributed as merit increases above the general 10% increases specified above. The motion, seconded by Mrs. Coker, carried.

Mr. Smith made a motion that Mr. Lander be given authority to buy a school car. The motion carried.

April 29 was set as the date for the Spring Meeting.

Mr. Lander announced that Dr. Miles is the chosen speaker for Founder's Day this year.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



(Mrs.) Harriet F. Johnson
Secretary

REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES
by
Lessie Moore, Field Representative
October 9, 1963

The Opportunity School has always spelled "Magic" to me, since its small beginnings in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Through the twenties I helped "Miss" Lottie Estes fill Gossett scholarships, not knowing exactly what I was doing but realizing it was satisfying and fruitful work. After all these years of teaching, recruiting students, begging money, and "whoopin' it up" on any and all occasions, Opportunity School is still spelled "M-A-G-I-C," in my opinion.

Let us turn back the pages of Opportunity School history to the early thirties and do a bit of reminiscing. Even then the ideals of this school were not too foreign to the ideals of public schools. There was only a difference in attitudes. School authorities were afraid of Wil Lou Gray and her "education for all, young and old." They knew that if this sort of "nonsense" took hold, "with vigah," it could revolutionize the entire educational set-up. And it did just that!

In Anderson County, where I became "henchman" for The Opportunity School and night school programs, I early learned to turn a deaf ear to "slams and slurs" aimed at the "type of people we serve," as if they were not people, too, who needed a chance. And what made this unbearable, these remarks came from "top educators." The Good Lord finally took them; but the seeds for helping people had been planted!

Thirty years later, let's take a look at another side of the picture.

Last year it was my delightful privilege to visit every white, public school in the State of South Carolina--just 795 in all. I undertook this "little" project to learn a few things first-hand.

First, I wanted to know if attitudes of public school superintendents had changed for the better; I wanted to know if that wide gulf that separated public schools from Opportunity School had narrowed any; I wanted to know if we are working toward the same ideals of serving people of all ages, regardless of untoward circumstances.

What I found in practically every school was so encouraging, so enlightening, so helpful to our cause that it made me realize that this is the best piece of work I ever did for the school.

Top-flight educators--superintendents, principals, guidance counselors--received me most cordially when they learned that I represent "that wonderful Opportunity School, the best educational project in the State." I heard this repeated many, many times! My thought was, "We are progressing; we've come a long way." And, in this connection, educators have become "top-flight, progressive, interested, and forward-looking" in the same ratio that school architecture has become safe, sensible, and satisfying. I can't say too much for the wonderful growth in these areas.

They all paid tribute to Miss Gray, who dared to start a new idea in education; and they paid tribute to the young man who is so nobly and so unselfishly guiding the school in safe, progressive paths. I speak of W. T. Lander, Jr., our director, who respects the traditions of the school; but who dares to use original ideas for the betterment of the school.

A gulf does not exist between public schools and Opportunity School now; the ideals of public schools and Opportunity School are the same: Service to people in all walks of life and of all ages is the "basic ideal of us all."

I felt, in every instance, that we've all joined hands and that we mean to "lick" this problem of dropouts--all working together for a common purpose.

Opportunity School still spells "M-A-G-I-C" to me--and it's a happier sort of magic when I fully realize that all educators are with us.

The sky is the limit to what we can and must accomplish for our so-called "forgotten people."