

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
APPROVED Minutes
Thursday, November 13, 2008 7:30pm
Red Brick School

Attendance: Trustees President John Neas, Vice President Lori Clements, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Richard Frongillo, Faculty Representative Gail Trotin (7:35), Lisa Buchholz, Nav Chander, Chuck Mayo, Cheryl O'Donnell (8:45), Cathy Tomaso, Thom Viveiros, Poh-Lin Yeoh; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski, Asst. HOS (acting) Joe Perna

Absent: Tim Tracy;

Call to order, Comments by the Chair (7:30)

John welcomes all to the Red Brick School (RBS). Congratulations to Tim and Robin Tracy on the recent adoption of a baby girl Nicole! John notes that several BFCCPS administrators and trustees attended the fall Charter School meeting in Shrewsbury. He points out that our school is noted on page 313 of the Town of Franklin annual report (and is shown in the presentation of the Senior Center). He invites volunteers to join him on 11/15, 10am to help clean up the yard at the RBS.

Recognition of the Month (7:34)

Heather recognizes 8th grader Njeri Grevious who earned a distinguished honor as a 2008 award winner of a Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship. She highlights Njeri as an amazing child with well-rounded skills. The well-spoken student expresses pride in herself and her school.

Joe recognizes the superior achievements of our Math team at a recent region-wide Middle School Math Invitational and specifically three team members: Susruthi Rajanala, Sahana Nazeer, and Ruchira Parikh. with their instructor Beth Sharistianian. Beth thanks Deb and other staff for their support of the Math Team effort.

Intermission (7:42)

The group shared cake made for the occasion of a meeting at the RBS. Award-winning students had their picture taken with administrators and trustees.

Open Comment (7:45)

No comments offered.

Neighborly Visit (7:46)

Orchard Street resident Laura Cerier offers some suggestions to the group on "how to be a good neighbor" when using the RBS with thoughts on side-street parking. She advises crossing Lincoln Street from the school, not Maple Street for safety reasons

Clerk's Report (7:52)

MOTION: By Thom/Cathy to approve minutes of the 10/2 Board meetings.

RESULT: Pass (Lori abstains)

Action Register (7:53)

Lori reviews the Action Register handout. Progress is being made on all fronts

Treasurer's Report (7:56)

Anna distributes and reviews the minutes of the 11/5 Finance Committee meeting: capital expenditures exceeded the budget by \$2,700 which will be noted and looked at later. Anna highlights the need for additional professional development money for math consulting, critical to support the advanced math program.

MOTION: By Anna/Nav to re-allocate \$10K on the English/Language Arts (ELA) line item to the

Professional Development line item.

Rich wonders whether a need for support dollars will be an ongoing expense and whether there will be a need for support dollars for the anticipated ELA program. Kevin expects there will be ongoing support expenses, not as much for the ELA program. Anna reports that it is unknown how much the ELA program will cost and believes this action is an effort to borrow against time. Gail wants to be sure that the allocated monies for the ELA program are still intended to be spent. All agree that this is so.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Anna notes that accounting firms are being considered to review business processes and to close books on a monthly basis in response to recommendations by auditors. She shows a summary of two proposals received from AMS and BWA.

MOTION: By Anna/Nav to allocate up to \$16K to be taken out of budget surplus and added to Outside Professional Services line item.

John believes that business review is to be a one-time expenditure. Closing books costs are \$9600 for eight months. Anna notes that the business review steps are beyond what a typical business manager would do as it will consider more strategic steps and best practices. In future, closing of books could be done by the business manager. Gail wonders whether it would be less expensive to extend the current business manager position. Anna offers that part of the auditor's comments included the need for "oversight" so having another person review is better. Rich expresses a desire to get as much "bang for our buck" with this consulting service expenditure and hopes that we get a good deal of education in the process. Lori observes that this money is necessary in exchange for us not having needed systems in place in previous years.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Discussion and Vote to Add an Administrative Position

Anna reports on meetings of HOS Kevin, HR Committee Chair Lori, and Treasurer Anna which yielded a proposal to add a new administrative role in the school. She feels the proposal has two main advantages: utilizing Joe Perna in an administrative capacity with his demonstrated skills and interest in such a role, and providing a succession plan in anticipation of Kevin's (not-yet-planned) retirement in coming years. Lori adds that the intent was to help ensure stability as we look forward.

Much discussion was had on the topic: Cathy expresses a concern about the lack of process that precluded all staff having an opportunity to be considered for the position. Lisa observes that the current staff is working well and agrees that it is important to look forward. She wonders whether other alternatives of administration were considered. She hopes that there is no complication in having parents learning who is the "go to" person on different issues. Gail is delighted with the proposal. She received some feedback from colleagues wondering about the prudence in taking on the cost of an additional administrator and she heard some concern about "pre-naming" of roles and assignments. Several other supportive comments made by other trustees expressing support for consideration of future, organizational maturation, and flexibility. All are pleased with Kevin, Heather, and Joe.

Kevin speaks passionately in favor of the proposal stating that this is "as important a proposal as I have ever made." He felt that it would have been disingenuous to announce the position and NOT saying that he had someone in mind for the position.

MOTION: By Lori/Poh-Lin to approve role of new director

Rich observes that it is not the role of the Board to approve the position. Kevin suggests alternative language.

RESULT: Withdrawn

MOTION: By Anna/Cathy to support the reorganization of the administrative as proposed by the Head of School.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Head of School Report (9:01)

Bonjour, it is French Week! Kevin repeats that Mme Malouf is spectacular with great energy that turns into learning and fun!

News items:

- October 1 report highlights how money is appropriated with students and how it has changed in the last three years. Kevin expects more changes in the coming three years;
- Reviewing BFCCPS population: 86.5% of students come from Franklin which results in a healthy need to compete against a well-performing school district); BFCCPS has grown by 30 students in three years. Some of the growth is in Asian students (32 to 53);
- Kevin notes the 11/14 event at Barnes & Noble which will highlight the music department with Mr. Benjamin, 15 students, and lots of artwork presented. The event is a fundraiser and demonstration.
- Kevin states that the transfer to BFCCPS of the RBS from the town has been good; first meeting was Destination Imagination and this meeting is the second event held at RBS. Access (i.e. keys) will be limited by the school.
- Kevin is hoping to present the final, formal re-chartering proposal at the December Board meeting with a vote prior to mailing the proposal to the state. Meeting is to be somewhere in January-March time.
- Finally, Kevin observes the changing of the guard in Franklin with Superintendent Dr. Ogden being replaced by Maureen Sabolinski, a long-time advocate of children.

Heather announces the return of former teacher Jennifer Fairbanks on 11/14 to share her thoughts as a user of Think Math to BFCCPS staff. On 11/17 Ms. Wallace from Think Math will have individual meetings with teachers.

Heather, Joe, and Kevin all spoke of “Ben’s Promise” that no student who works at it will fail. Joe had identified 51 students, evenly spread among grades, who are in “warning” status levels (i.e. not “proficient” in MCAS terms) to make plan for improvement. Cathy expressed concerns that some being offered “help” may perceive that help to be more of an unwanted focus on them.

Joe highlights other projects and events: “Flash”, a student newsletter, includes students from all levels and is going well. Deb Kris visited and spoke about character education to parents and then to staff. The staff focus was on how teachers are touching on character education topics in the classroom. Deb’s visit was well-received and a return visit in the spring is anticipated.

Presentation by Public Relations Committee (9:26)

Lisa distributes copies of agendas and minutes of recent PR Committee meetings. The team is working from objectives in goal 5 of the Strategic Plan. Anna feels that the Board should be voting on PR’s action plan steps. Lisa talks about “accomplishments” in a slide show presentation. She displays mock-ups of logo re-designs and potential tag lines

MOTION: By Anna/Rich to extend the meeting past 10pm.

RESULT: Pass (Cathy, Cheryl, Thom against)

Committee Reports (9:57)

John: new trustees need to talk with Ben Benjamin about how @bfccps.org e-mail should be processed for the individual.

Annual Appeal: Thom has agreed to take the lead.

Enrollment Task Force: No formal task force will be formed this year.

Facilities: John had sent notes about Calpers and from Foundation President Matt Ginnetty; John points to a Wall Street Journal article discussing the financial difficulties of Calpers. Foundation is still intending to pursue legal action if they do not come to the negotiating table. LPA was selected to do the Pond Street feasibility study (\$9750). There may be a special meeting in December if the study is complete.

Faculty Representative: No report.

Governance: Next meeting is 11/18.

Human Resources: No report.

MOTION: By Anna/Cathy to approve list of Board goals previously distributed.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Lease Negotiation: Meeting with church officials on 11/19 in HOS office at 6:30pm.

Legislative Liaison: Thom had ad in pink sheet with limited response.

Mission Committee: Meeting on 12/1.

Nominating: No report.

Public Relations: Is it okay to proceed with external focus groups on logo? Yes.

Special Education Liaison: Chuck participated in first meeting.

Strategic Plan: Anna working on condensed version to see what Board is to be working on. She will look at "status" updates.

Adjournment (10:11)

Next meeting, 12/4, 7pm in BFCCPS Library.

MOTION: By Anna/Cathy to adjourn

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)