

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
APPROVED Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2009 7:00pm
School Library

Attendance: Trustees President Lori Clements, Vice President Richard Frongillo, Treasurer Anna dos Santos (7:08), Nav Chander (7:10), Stephan Katinas (7:12), John Neas, Cheryl O'Donnell (8:07), Don Tappin, Tim Tracy (7:08), Poh-Lin Yeoh; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski, Director of School Operations and Student Activities Joe Perna

Absent: Faculty Representative Gail Trotin, Clerk Thom Viveiros.

Call to order, Comments by the Chair (7:00)

Lori welcomes all. She notes that Thom and Gail are out of state and all others are expected. She thanks John for speaking at the K-4 Curriculum Night. She notes that the oil tanks have been removed from the Red Brick Schoolhouse and plans for fixing the ceiling are progressing with the hope of finalizing work in October. Lori spoke with Father Manning about the lease and he was to have people follow up with her. There is a BFCCPS Foundation meeting set for 10/13.

Recognition of the Month (7:05)

Kevin introduces Suzanne Graham who is excited to be getting started with BFCCPS bookkeeping. Her child is a student at the school.

Kevin discusses some advances in character education: new resources have been received, peer leadership is being expanded beyond the summer buddy system, and an international author on character education is coming to BFCCPS. He introduces School Psychologist Kristin Corcoran and School Counselor Rebecca Harrington who will be leading a new effort using materials from "Second Step" to help put "virtues in action".

Ms. Corcoran thanks the PCO for their funding of the materials. She notes that four BFCCPS staff went to a 2-day training and they will be teaching the teachers while teaching the children over the next several weeks. Ms. Harrington highlights that some information was brought to the faculty during summer workshops, the program is interactive.

Kevin states that there is nothing new in the goals of our character education program, except materials to support teachers in doing their job. In response to a question about assessing the strength of the program, Kevin hopes to "see it in the hallways", and Ms. Corcoran further expects evaluations to be part of the evolving program.

Parents as Primary Educators Document (7:18)

MOTION: By Anna/Stephan to approve the Parents as Primary Educators document as presented.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Finance Committee Charter (7:21)

MOTION: By Anna/Tim to approve the Finance Committee charter for the year.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Focus for Annual Appeal (7:22)

Nav will lead the Annual Appeal effort this year. He notes that he has held discussions with Kevin about potential needs of the school, and refers to a hand-out with two alternatives: (a) digital learning, and (b) classroom materials. The thought is that the appeal be tied with a specific project to help focus donors and target funds.

MOTION: By Nav/Anna to choose option 1, digital learning (Mimeos and related implementation costs) be the focus of the Annual Appeal.

Poh-Lin notes that the two options are extremely different. Lori observes that Nav was tasked

with coming up with two alternatives. Stephan wonders about the response of the staff to the new Mimeos that were purchased and is told that feedback has been very positive. In response to a question from Tim, Anna notes that the Annual Appeal was left off of the budget so that monies can be targeted, separate from the general fund.

RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Lori asks that all take time to review the Annual Appeal letter and get comments to Nav.

Open Comment (7:27)

Lori re-iterates the Board policy of not providing responses to Open Comments during the current meeting. If necessary, action will be taken in subsequent meetings. Several parents were present to offer comments in response to a recent letter sent home regarding the character education enhancements using the Second Step program. David Brennan offers observations about the program provider Committee for Children and wishes that this program would have been discussed earlier, perhaps at Curriculum Night. Luran Kearney feels that there are already positive examples of character education in the hallways and this Second Step program is inappropriate and unnecessary. She is concerned about the loss of academic time to this program. Mark Kripp expresses issues he has with the implementation of this program which seems to have been introduced without proper assessment and appropriate due process. Janine Gonya notes that the Second Step website calls itself a “violence prevention program” and is surprised that BFCCPS would need to use such tools. She quotes existing BFCCPS documentation and notes that better tools are already available. Deborah Lyons is new to BFCCPS in September and she feels that the extraordinary character education program was a main selling point. She is disappointed by the new program. Christine Gruner has similar concerns as the others. She feels that character education has been fabulous over five years. She doesn’t see the need for the program and does not want classroom time to be taken away for it.

Head of School Report (7:40)

Kevin points out that a Character Education visitor is coming soon! “Popcorn Wednesdays” are quite popular! He notes that some MCAS documentation has been distributed. He feels that MCAS gives us a tool of how our children are doing; by and large, our scores are outstanding. BFCCPS has been meeting its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) numbers, and did so again.

Faculty Representative Report (7:52)

Gail reports through Lori that all is humming along.

Treasurer’s Report (7:52)

Anna refers to budget report and notes progress and appropriate tracking. Heather and Anna met with accounting people to improve our Chart of Accounts.

Purpose of Dress Code Discussion (7:55)

Lori refers to comments about collected about the Dress Code in Board packet previously distributed. She feels the code should support the students’ “job of learning.” Anna feels that a key element is that dress should “not distract from learning”, and notes that there is a component of student identity, too. Poh-Lin agrees with an external component, “branding”. Lori wonders whether we can articulate how a dress code supports learning. Nav feels there are two purposes: internal (uniformity, remove issues), and external (school identity of BFCCPS). Stephan thinks current purpose statement is satisfactory. Tim feels “neat” does not fit in. Cheryl notes that some words like “neat” and “modest” are open to interpretation and should be avoided.

Kevin offers to the Board that “you will not win” because there is no answer except to be good stewards of the purpose. He recommends a “best effort” and feels the current dress code is difficult to enforce. Joe adds that there have been many examples of bullying related to dress issues.

John appreciates the process to address the purpose initially, but is anxious to get to the details. He feels the purpose should be about identity, and the code should help parents dress their chil-

dren and help students with peer pressure. Lori will finish drafting the dress code purpose taking in all comments.

Clerk's Report (8:35)

Thom sent minutes to Lori and they are being revised for next meeting.

Action Register (8:35)

The Strategic Planning meeting with the executive team had to be postponed and will be rescheduled.

Annual Appeal (8:40)

Nav has a donation from the Boston Bruins and is pursuing other "big ticket" items. Anna wants the name "Annual Appeal" used consistently and does not like the "raffle" aspect of the appeal.

Other (8:45)

Kevin notes a \$5K "matching" contribution from Barclays associated with the Naimie Family being sent to the BFCCPS Foundation.

Rich wonders how/when the Board will hear about the administration's response to the comments given in the Open Comment period. Kevin will be addressing comments in the short-term.

Adjournment (8:47)

MOTION: By Nav/Poh-Lin to adjourn.

RESULT: Pass (John opposes, Don abstains)