

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (BFCCPS)
Board of Trustees Meeting
Approved Minutes
Thursday, May 13, 2010 7:00pm
School Library

Attendance: Trustees President Lori Clements, Vice President Rich Frongillo (8:27 pm), Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Thomas Viveiros, Nav Chander, Stephan Katinas (8:10pm), John Neas, Donald Tappin, Tim Tracy, Gail Trotin, Poh-Lin Yeoh, Head of School Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Assistant Head of School Heather Zolnowski, Cheryl O'Donnell (8:32pm), Director of School Operations and Student Activities Joe Perna,

Absent: None.

Call to Order, Comment by the Chair (7:10 pm):

Lori opens the meeting by mentioning the online ethics training that is now required to be taken by all board members. She also reminds all of the members to turn in the head-of-school evaluations and financial disclosures. She then encourages anyone interested in an officer position to express their intent. Nav is then thanked for the refreshments. Lori mentions that the June 2010 meeting is on a Wednesday (June 9th) and reminds all members to make sure the date is correctly marked on their calendars. Lori asks the board members to read the new open-meeting law insert sent in the board packets. Lori then passes around the charter renewal certificate for review.

Recognition of the Month (7:13 pm):

This month's recognition is the children who participated in the Rube Goldberg competition. Kevin Buckley, one of the coaches, introduces 5 members of the team. One of the students talks about the brainstorming sessions that the team did while deciding on the design of the machine. She mentions that their machine was made of materials from random household goods, ping-pong balls, slinkies, etc. The goal of the machine was to staple three papers together. The students ended up creating a "Bob the Builder" parody called "Ben the builder" and presented it to the judges.

The board is told that the first three (3) hours of the competition were dedicated to building and testing the machine. The BFCCPS team ended up having about 45 minutes of spare time to refine their concept. The machine ended up with about twenty (20) something steps that ended up working with no touches or intervention. The team ended up winning third place for overall points. This year is the best BFCCPS has ever done as a school.

Mr. Buckley continues by talking about the challenge of team-building. The exercise involved finding the right students by balancing different skill-sets of the students. All teams who entered the competition had the same task (stapling). Kevin then introduces the students.

Voting to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2010 Board of Trustees Meeting:

COMMENTS: None.

MOTION: Don initiates and Nav seconds a motion to approve the March 2010 minutes.

RESULT: Anna abstains and all other members approve the motion unanimously.

Open Comment Period (7:30pm):

No comments.

Head of School Report (7:31pm):

Dr. O'Malley mentions that the role of the school librarian will be augmented to that of a librarian/technologist. The school will add a course of study for libraries and technologies. We will have a benchmark curriculum which expects that all students will know certain things by the end of each grade. This is meant to enhance what is currently available at the library.

The library's new technology curriculum introduces computers to children starting in Kindergarten and it gets more advanced as they move toward eighth grade. Teachers will also be taught by the person leading this new position. They will be taught to teach things such as spreadsheets, etc.

Dr. O'Malley mentions that there are three goals of this new curriculum:

- 1) To make a new library curriculum with benchmarks
- 2) To make a technology curriculum with benchmarks
- 3) Work with teachers to help them advance their technology skills (learning mimeo as an example).

The opening for this position will be publically advertised in the newspaper. Nav asks about the benchmarks and Dr. O'Malley mentions that the state already has a framework from which to work and BFCCPS has benchmarks that are well understood. Nav mentions a concern that technology role may affect our budget (i.e., software licenses, etc.) Tim asks about the student body and the different levels of access to technology among the students. Dr. O'Malley mentions that the school will work with students to make sure they get appropriate help to get them up to the same level of competency.

Heather continues the report by mentioning that this was the last day of the MCAS math test and all of the students handled the test well. Fifth and eighth grades will be taking science MCAS next week. She mentions that we are the only charter school in the US to make the "best communities for music education" list.

The school is planning for an annual art show to be held next Thursday, May 20 at the YMCA from 4:30 pm to 7:30pm. Also, our school band is practicing with the Franklin middle schools for a performance on June 9 at the Horace Mann Middle School.

New state laws have been passes since the last meeting. There was a bullying law that was implemented last Monday and mandates that a plan is created to address bullying among several other mandates. There is also a new ethics law. All teachers and staff members are required to read the law and take an online ethics test. Thom asks if these mandates will force the teachers to take more time away from academics. Gail mentions that the school is already way ahead of the law in this area with our character education and there should be a minimal impact.

Faculty Representative report (7:52pm):

Gail mentions that there is not much to report except the normal concerns among the faculty about finances given the state of our economy.

Treasurer's Report (7:53pm):

Anna refers to this year's budget which was distributed in the packet. She describes the budget in more detail and asks if anyone has any questions. There are no questions either from the board or anyone present.

Anna then refers to the fiscal year 2011 budget and mentions that there is a slight increase in the tuition rates and that we will also have more students. Tuition rates are generally much more definitive in December, so there is a slight risk that the number will go down but the risk is very low.

One of the highlights of the FY2011 budget is that the health insurance premiums are increasing by about 19%. Although we switched from Blue Cross to Tufts last year, it is not clear that the increase would have been any different under our previous plan. There has been no dental plan rate increase.

The school did not budget for an increase in rent because we are expecting rates to stay the same (although this isn't guaranteed). We reduced the amount budgeted for gas heating. Since many other charter schools have been contracting with an organization called "HR Knowledge", we decided to use them to help us comply with HR laws, etc. We spent \$9,500 for our free and reduced lunch program.

Anna continues with more details while highlighting several line items within the budget. For example, we added some money to the Board expense line for charter school conferences. With this years salary increases, all of the teachers will now be at least at 85% of the Franklin Public School teacher salary range. Everyone who didn't get a raise ended up getting a \$1,000 bonus which was prorated in some cases to reflect the number of hours worked. The school added two new aides; one for Special Education (SPED) and one for MCAS support at a cost of \$20,000 each.

John Neas asks about the potential tuition rate adjustments. Anna mentions that the best information we have gotten so far is that we will have our tuition rates increase by about 1.1%. John then wonders if the \$92,000 that we saved by switching to the Tufts plan was offset by the 19% rate increase. He then asks about teachers' salaries and wonders how the school is doing on our three year plan. Anna mentions that since we have already achieved the goal of the three year plan by getting the school's teachers to 85% equalization of the Franklin Public Schools, then the actual percentage increases over the three (3) year plan are not as important.

Voting to approve the fiscal 2011 budget as it was presented to the board (8:48pm):

COMMENTS: None.

MOTION: Anna initiates and Stephan seconds a motion to approve the fiscal 2011 budget.

RESULT: Rich abstains and all other members approve the motion unanimously.

Governance update vote on policy # 25 (8:50pm):

Voting to approve the changes to governance policy number 25:

COMMENTS: None.

MOTION: Rich initiates and Tim seconds a motion to approve the changes to governance policy number 25.

RESULT: All members approve the motion unanimously.

Mission Committee Discussion (8:52pm):

- **Parent Enrichment Council document discussion:** Dr. O'Malley will come back and discuss this more next month but this may not be the role of the board.
- **The Pillars at BFCCPS: Classical Education:** A discussion breaks out about whether or not this should be a policy and where it should be controlled as a document. Should it be put on the website as "endorsed by the board of trustees"? Should it be made into a policy?

Voting to approve the defining principles of Classical Education as defined in the “The Pillars at BFCCPS: Classical Education” document:

COMMENTS: Lori asks the governance committee to encapsulate the classical education document into a policy.

MOTION: Gail initiates and Anna seconds a motion to approve the defining principles of Classical Education as defined in the “The Pillars at BFCCPS: Classical Education” document.

RESULT: All members approve the motion unanimously.

- **The Pillars at BFCCPS: Parents as Primary Educator:**

Voting to approve the defining principles of Parents as Primary Educators as defined in the “The Pillars at BFCCPS: Parents as Primary Educators” document:

COMMENTS: None.

MOTION: Gail initiates and Anna seconds a motion to approve the defining principles of Parents as Primary Educators as defined in the “The Pillars at BFCCPS: Parents as Primary Educators” document.

RESULT: All members approve the motion unanimously.

Action Register (9:17pm):

- Rich reminds the board members to submit their Head of School performance reviews.
- It is mentioned that the school is looking for volunteers for the Kindergarten Ice Cream social on May 27 @ 3:30pm at the school for families of new children.
- Rich reminds the Board members to sign and submit their financial disclosure forms

Strategy workshop next steps Discussion (9:23 pm):

Lori mentions that there is more information in the packet and that there may be a follow up discussion during the board retreat this summer.

Annual Fund Update (9:25pm):

The fund now has over \$16,000 and has a participation rate of about 70 families.

Voting to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting at 9:26pm:

COMMENTS: None.

MOTION: Nav initiates and Anna seconds a motion to adjourn at 9:26pm.

RESULT: All members approve the motion unanimously.