

**Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public  
SchoolBoard of Trustees MeetingAPPROVED  
Minutes Thursday, January 10, 2008 7:30pmBFCCPS  
Library**

Attendance: Trustees President John Neas, Vice President Lori Clements, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Richard Frongillo, Faculty Representative Kevin Buckley, Chuck Mayo, Jennifer Moccia, Michele Pearl, Cathy Tomaso, Poh-Lin Yeoh; HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski

Absent: Cheryl O'Donnell, Tim Tracy, Tom Vivieros

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

Note that the December 13, 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees which was postponed due to a snowstorm was not rescheduled. The Board has not met since 11/8/2007.

**Recognition of the Month (7:32)**

Kevin introduces one of the Lego League coaches Michele Pearl who introduces the students in the group: Joe Bremner, Bradley Clements, Meredith Curry, Duncan Luther, Katherine Mayo, Ethan Pearl, Lyra and Jonah Piscitelli, Marina Smoske. Joe Bremner with help from his teammates describes what the league's goals were. The group shows a video that they produced on the topic of energy, the theme for this year's competition.

Not in attendance: Malik Brahimi, Devin Burns, Austin and Riley Conatser, Emily Luther (mentor), Sasha Yurgenson (junior member)

Michele thanks Leo DaCosta for his hosting the kids in the program.

**Report from the Faculty Input Team (FIT) (7:47)**

Joe Perna distributes a handout describing how the Faculty Input Team (steering the boat) and Research Action Teams (doing the rowing) operate and interact. FIT has typically met once per month for an hour. Several RATs have met many times. The process has been cooperative and participation -- 27 different faculty from all grades have been involved over 20 weeks of implementation -- has been outstanding.

In response to a question, Joe reports on the follow-on work towards implementing ideas raised by the lunch/recess RAT. The group conversed with school administration, the group decided on some steps to take, and put them into action. All are monitoring the progress.

Anna expresses satisfaction in seeing the flexible scheme. She wonders whether there will be room for parental involvement, particularly in the character education RAT. Joe responds that there is no obstacle preventing it. Kevin responded to Jennifer's question about whether Pillar Councils (recommended by the 2007 Organizational Task Force) will be instituted by saying that all leadership teams are a "work in progress" with goals for September.

Kevin observes that collegial atmosphere is much improved, in no small part, due to FIT/RAT. He highlights Joe's credibility as a key element in making the program move. Joe has been "heroic in this endeavor.". Lori also gives kudos to Joe based on her interaction with the Salary Grid RAT.

**DOE Coordinate Program Review Final Report (8:04)**

Pat Fairbanks distributes her slides and speaks to the corresponding PowerPoint summary of the lengthy report from DOE. There were some findings that have been addressed and all remaining concerns are minor and are being addressed.

Kevin notes that the DOE requirements for documentation has resulted in an exhaustive report. He gives lots of credit to Pat and her department for the preparation work and for producing the report itself which was well received by the state officials.

**Clerk's Report (8:09)**

MOTION: By Rich/Michele to approve minutes of the 10/11/07, 10/25/07, and 11/8/07 Board of Trustees meetings RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

### **Treasurer's Report (8:10)**

Anna distributes minutes of 12/05/07 and 01/09/08 Finance Committee meetings. She notes the recent resignation of Development Director Joe Chillo (took another job). Joe had looked for many programs that might apply to BFCCPS and did not find any.

In December the FinComm had met with RDC Dean Raucher to review finances. RDC happens to be the largest issuer of bonds to charter schools in nation. This may prove helpful in the future of BFCCPS.

A group met separately with MassDevelopment, a quasi-public entity available to assist in funding with a group specifically useful in helping with charter schools. Based on some analysis of the BFCCPS finances MassDevelopment thought that we could qualify for \$3-5M in financing.

MOTION: By Anna/Lori to release funds of \$80K to purchase math materials for a new math curriculum. These funds had conditionally been put in the budget for this year RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Anna discusses an interest in updating the budget to better reflect reality as some significant changes have taken place. Income is adjusted by decreasing grant money, increasing tuition rate, fixing the student count, increasing Foundation contribution, and increasing SPED allocation. Expense is adjusted by reducing cost of Development Director, adding monies spent last year (for this year) in curriculum, increasing advertising, reducing fees to consultants, and increasing commitment to Core Knowledge conference. In all, the adjustments result in a \$55K increase to the bottom line, growing the projected surplus.

MOTION: MOTION By Anna/Lori to approve the adjusted budget as shown in Projection column of 1/5/08 FinComm minutes RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Regarding Fiscal Policies, Business Manager Kara Geraci had taken DOE documentation and modified it for BFCCPS purposes. Anna made further adjustments and highlighted those differences from the DOE version to the BFCCPS version.

Jennifer and Rich suggest changing the wording in section 3 to generalize the language to not refer to "current" practices. Anna points out that the DOE suggests putting in actual names of institutions (i.e. Benjamin Franklin Bank) into the document.

MOTION: By Anna/Cathy to approve the fiscal policies as presented with the suggested amendment to section 3 (page 11). RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

### **Action Register (8:48)**

Lori reviewed the Action Register. Progress is being made on all fronts and an updated version will be distributed.

### **Head of School Report (8:50)**

- Math Curriculum Kevin points out that math project (i.e. choosing the new curriculum) is "a big to do". He credits Heather for her leadership as well as Dr. Looney and the staff that have participated and evaluated in a most constructive manner. Heather discusses the math curriculum selection process. The group looked at four series and had one clear winner in the end: Holt Think Math and Holt Middle School. Due to there being a clear choice, faculty supports moving forward. Professional development will begin 1/17.

Additionally, the school is looking at potential, separate "pre-AP" program (same material, updated teacher methodology)

- State visit in December Kevin is pleased with initial draft report. He looks at a particular observation: DOE wants to see more "differentiated instruction" (to reach all members of spectrum of students). As BFCCPS becomes more and more diverse, this challenge will continue to grow.

The report notes the lacking facility. Kevin credits Tim for noting that "Facility only matters the first time you see us."

- Accountability Plan One of DOE visitors asked about the school's Accountability Plan. When told of the school's challenge in getting clear direction from the state, this visitor went and found out what state wants and provided information. BFCCPS produced a revised Accountability Plan that we

could approve. Given where the school is in the 5-year cycle, the plan speaks to things we already have done, and will have a short life going forward.

There was considerable discussion about the document with questions from many trustees. Topics addressed included measuring satisfaction, emphasis of Family Pledge to get more useful data, and appropriateness of documented percentages attempting to be achieved. Jennifer notes marked differences between "existing" plan versus "new" plan; "new" plan is more "loose". Kevin observes that the "existing" plan was rejected by the state. Heather adds that the advice was to remove descriptive passages to leave behind measurable goals. The program is not changing, just the means to measure.

After many minutes John closes discussion and asks for a motion.

MOTION: By Chuck/Lori to approve the Accountability Plan as presented.

RESULT: Pass 8-1-1 (Rich opposes, Jennifer abstains) Kevin welcomes additional feedback for future consideration to be sent to him. John congratulates group on successful site visit.

- Other State  
Activity: Kevin notes some things happening on the state level that may have implications on charter schools:

DOE searching for new commissioner -- Mass Superintendents Association continues its opposition of charter schools, looking to break the charter school funding formula The Governor has appointed a task force for "education for future" including programs for 3-4 year olds and "grades 13 & 14"; also he is facing a billion dollar shortfall; BFCCPS should "be aware"

Rich recommends reading Kenen reports for Charter Schools

Early charter renewal -- Kevin states that he was approached by Mary Street of DOE and BFCCPS has an opportunity to go for its charter renewal one year early (in 2008-09 rather than 2009-10). Kevin sees a few advantages in moving it early. The Charter School office is looking to get going early to ease burden of so many renewals coming up. All in attendance seem to agree that BFCCPS is very well positioned to pursue the renewal; there is an open question about whether it would be 5 more years or 6 years

MOTION: By Michele/Poh-Lin to seek an application for charter renewal one year early. RESULT: Pass (unanimous)

Kevin concludes very positively; faculty is humming on all cylinders; BFCCPS is a great school John observes that there appears to be more applications for enrollment in year over year comparison to this time last year. He notes that some trustees and staff welcomed approximately 80 parents to 1/8/08 enrollment night. Kevin notes that John did a great presentation at enrollment night.

**Open Comment (9:50)**

Nav Chander asks whether a math consultant will be used or will we just be relying on the math curriculum vendor. Heather responds that both Dr. Looney and vendor will be used. Nav encourages after-school addendums to math program (e.g. mathmovesyou.com).

MOTION: By Lori/Kevin B. to suspend rules to allow the meeting to continue past ten o'clock.

RESULT: Pass 9-1 (Cathy opposes)

### **Discussion and Motion to Amend the Language in the Bylaws to a Majority Vote in Each Section that now calls for a 2/3 Vote (9:54)**

John introduces the topic by noting the "embarrassment" at last year's election in which 18 votes were taken to fill the Board of Trustees. Had we used a majority vote rather than a 2/3 vote, we would have gotten 4 of 5 new trustees within two votes. He is in favor of changing all 2/3 votes to majority.

Rich states and most agree that the threshold for removal should remain at the higher standard. Anna adds that changing the By-Laws should also have the higher standard. References should be "majority of sitting trustees" (i.e. not just quorum). Nearly all agree. Kevin B. likes the 2/3 vote for adding positions (i.e. status quo) to help maintain stability.

MOTION: By Anna/Lori to approve changes to bylaws: 2.1.3 changes "majority of sitting", 4.2 changes "majority of sitting", 4.9 changes "majority of sitting" subject to board review prior to sending to DOE.

RESULT: Pass 9-1 (Kevin B. opposes)

### **Committee Reports (10:14)**

John announces that new trustee Tom Viveiros has agreed to be the legislative liaison for the board. John has asked if school can look at grant opportunities given Joe Chillo's departure. There may be some small grants available on a per-teacher basis.

John states that the Annual Appeal is underway with decent response seen so

<sup>far</sup>  
Elections: nothing to report Enrollment: progress, but nothing to report. John wants faculty to know they are welcome. Faculty Representative: Kevin B. notes that people are generally happy;

FIT has been great; this has been a good year, but all are REALLY busy with meetings; he hopes that after initial push, the level of commitment will decrease somewhat.

Governance: Tim

<sup>absent</sup>  
Human Resources: Lori notes that the group is getting started in looking at teacher/staff retention. Lori notes that the Salary Grid sub-committee is going very well; had workshop on 1/5/08 (Saturday). Lori acknowledges the faculty who attended on a weekend day. She expects the subcommittee to be presenting to the FinComm very soon and more will be reported next month.

Mission: nothing to report Nominating: John reports that trustees in the final year of their term (Jen/Rich/John/Michele)

need to declare their intention to remain on the board in-writing (e-mail is okay) by 1/31/08.

Notes should be sent to Lori. Public Relations: Jennifer and Poh-Lin reference the new

BFCCPS brochure (all were very pleased with it) noting that it is meant to be for those who have expressed interest in the school. The committee is looking for contacts "around town" (e.g. Chamber, real estate offices, etc.) to place the brochures. Separately, the Chamber of Commerce has invited a trustee to an "after-hours" networking event on 1/16/08 (5-7pm) at the Franklin Senior Center. Anyone interested an notify Jennifer. The next PR Committee meeting will be on 1/15/08 at 7pm.

Facilities: John (speaking quickly to try to get as much noted at the late hour) states that the school has exercised its first one-year lease option (to 6/2009, we have another 1-year) and has

communicated with the church and archdiocese. Next, a discussion with Michael Egan of Franklin Performing Arts was held (more next meeting). Next, the school's attorney has stated "we can own property as a school" (more next meeting).

An attorney has been hired by the Foundation to understand the pass/re-pass issue on existing land; things are moving forward; the school has made it clear to the Foundation that we want to get an answer soon. Lastly, some met with MassDevelopment on 1/8/08. John distributes handouts about MassDevelopment programs.

**Adjournment (10:31)**

MOTION: By Lori/Cathy to adjourn. RESULT: Pass (unanimous)