

BFCCPS Mission Committee Minutes November 17, 2009

In attendance: Lori Clements, Anna dos Santos, Sandy Frongillo, Janine Gonya, Christine Gruner, Lauran Kearney, Michael Kearney, John Neas, Kevin O'Malley, Kim Pradko, William Schmitt, Gail Trotin (chair), David Vise

Meeting began at 7:05pm

Participants were welcomed. Gail introduced Dr. William Schmitt, headmaster of the Trivium School, in Lancaster, MA., who did a presentation on classical education for the group. An electronic copy of Dr. Schmitt's notes is available on the BFCCPS website, along side these minutes. The following are some of the points presented:

- There are often 2 definitions of classical education:
 - Learning from the culture of the Greeks and Romans. Learn Latin & Greek languages; study the cultures; read the classics.
 - Learning from the education process used by Greeks and Romans. Use their methods of teaching and learning. The 7 liberal arts are the foundation of all education. The arts can be divided into 2 groups – the Trivium (grammar, dialectic/logic, and rhetoric) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). The arts are the instruments for learning. Not topics. Liberal = free. Learn to think.
- Both definitions include the importance of reason, man's search for truth, man's unchanging nature, and the objective and universal nature of truth.
- Dorothy Sayers, in "The Lost Tools of Learning", discusses classical education extensively. Emphasis is on learning to think, not just the accumulation of facts.
- The trivium is applied to all subjects: 1) learn the words in a language 2) learn to use a language 3) learn to express yourself in the language.
- Another example, in history: 1) memorize all presidents 2) understand causality of events in history 3) present a position and be able to argue it.
- Socratic discussions are exercises in reasoning that use the 3 tools.
- Mortimer Adler – **The Paideia Program** – a classical education program that believes that a classical education must be for every student. Students must be active learners & teachers are facilitators that use lecturing, coaching and mentoring.

Dr. Schmitt answered questions from the group.

Gail distributed "What is Classical Education" by Susan Wise Bauer and asked the group to read it and identify elements that exist at BFCCPS.

Anna distributed copies of 2 pages from BFCCPS's original charter that describe the classical pillar. Minutes from the 10/31 meeting were distributed.

Agenda item 4 – discussion about the Parent Newsletter will be postponed to the next meeting on January 20, 2010. Anna will send out a proposal for a Parent Enrichment Committee, developed during last year's Mission Committee work, to the group.

Gail suggested that we go back to the various pillar documents and extract the defining principles of each pillar in order to complete one of the Mission Committee's Strategic Plan activities.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.