

**Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Approved Minutes
Thursday, February 11, 2010 7:00pm
School Library**

Attendance: Trustees President Lori Clements, Vice President Rich Frongillo, Treasurer Anna dos Santos, Clerk Thomas Viveiros, John Neas, Donald Tappin, Gail Trostin, Poh-Lin Yeoh, Stephan Katinas, Cheryl O'Donnell, Tim Tracy (7:27pm), HOS Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Asst. HOS Heather Zolnowski, Director of School Operations and Student Activities Joe Perna

Absent: Nav Chander

Call to Order, Comment by the Chair (7:04pm):

Lori opens the discussion by thanking board members Rich and Anna for attending the Parent Enrichment Evening "Pillars in Action" and serving on pillar committees. She also thanks board members John and Thom for attending the "Enrollment Information Evening" for new families. Lori reminds the board that there will be an offsite strategy workshop on Saturday, February 27 at 9 am in the school library. She continues to ask that all Trustees contribute to the annual fund this year to set an example. She also thanks Thom for the refreshments this evening.

Voting on minutes from December 2009 meeting:

Lori had sent Rich additional names of 8th grade room parents who were involved in the talent show and were inadvertently not noted in the draft minutes

MOTION: Rich initiates and Gail seconds a motion to approve the December 2009 minutes.

RESULT: Motion passes unanimously.

Voting on minutes from January 2010 meeting:

Gail has correction from the January minutes: Page 2 should read Heifer International in place of Hewlett Packard.

MOTION: Don initiates and Gail seconds a motion to approve the January 2010 minutes.

RESULT: Rich abstains and all other present board members vote to approve. Motion passes.

Recognition of month (7:06pm):

Students who participated in the National Spelling Bee Preliminaries were recognized. They challenged the board members to correctly spell the following words (which the students managed to get correct):

- Adieu, Aggrandizement, Byzantine, Dimension, Epoxy, Hallucination, Ichthyosaur, Impeccable

The board members were pleased to not have their spellings graded. The regional spelling bee will be held on March 13.

Open Comment Period (7:21 pm):

There were no comments during this period.

Head of School Report (7:23 pm):

Dr. O'Malley reports on our recruitment efforts. The school's recruitment is up 30% from last year. We have 340 applicants and only 187 of them are from the town of Franklin. There were 46 open slots for Kindergarten and 35 are currently filled by siblings. The applicants were from a diverse geographical area. For example, we had forty (40) applicants from Bellingham, twenty-six (26) from neighboring towns, and one (1) from as far away as Tewksbury.

Dr. O'Malley talks about the "Pillars in Action" night. His staff put together a program to show parents how pillars are still implemented at school. By all accounts, the program has been a success.

Dr. O'Malley mentions that "Fiddler on the Roof" is coming to BFCCPS on March 5 and 6. Because of the tremendous demand, the staff is having problems with satisfying the number of people that want to see it. We are talking to Dean College for next year, but this year the event will again be held in our basement.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to spend \$80,000 on Pearson's "Reading Street" English Language Arts (ELA) program. Dr. O'Malley thanks the Board of Trustees for approving the funding for this ELA component to the curriculum. One of the features of the program is that parents can be more interactive in understanding what their kids are learning by reviewing lessons over the Internet. We should have the order placed by March 2nd or 3rd. The books should be in hand by mid-March; at which time we will have a "state of the art" ELA curriculum.

Dr. O'Malley briefs the board to be ready for the Student Growth Percentile (SGP). The SGP is a method to be used by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to measure individual student progress on statewide assessments such as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Although the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) metric will remain, SGP will be a more Massachusetts specific metric. SGP has the ability of using data to judge how well a particular student grows from one MCAS exam to the next. Currently the state keeps track of fifty-five (55) information items that are associated with each student. The state will use this information to compare students with children of equal socio-economic backgrounds to measure the effectiveness of their individual educational experience. Dr. O'Malley feels that this will change the landscape of education in Massachusetts. This initiative was just rolled out by the state in September.

Also, the state of Massachusetts has been shooting for some of the Federal "race to the top" funds. They recently passed an education reform law so that the state could have a better chance of getting some of the money. The new legislation will call upon charter schools to be even more innovative. The new law asks schools to perform a recruitment and retention plan. He notes that the district schools did very well under this law: they get reimbursed for students that they "lose" to charter schools. In general, cities will benefit under the new charter school law.

Poh-Lin brings up the issue of cyber-bullying and asks if we have a policy which addresses this issue. Dr. O'Malley says that we don't have a policy; we have a practice. We don't consider bullying that occurs outside

of the school to be off limits. Students are taught to never bully under any circumstance; either on or off school grounds since they need to represent our school's values at all times.

John thinks that when our water gets tested later this month, we should test ALL water sources (all faucets) instead of a certain bubbler. His concern is that since the building is so old, we may have certain water sources that pass the contaminants test whereas other sources could have difficulty passing.

Faculty Representative Report (Gail Trotin) (7:53pm):

Gail mentions that the 2nd grade immigration night went well. She notes that the room was packed and the older siblings were engaged with their younger participants. The parents also appeared to enjoy being there. This year, both of the second grade classrooms were combined.

Gail finished her grant application and she should hear by mid march from Heifer International as to whether she won.

Dr. O'Malley mentions that we collected \$2,700 in one week for Haitian earthquake victims. Gail mentions that those in Kindergarten through fourth grade are anxious to see the new ELA materials.

Treasurer's Report (Anna dos Santos) (7:57pm):

Anna mentions that tuition reimbursement rate is a little higher than the amount for which we budgeted. We currently have a surplus that we don't expect to last, but it is a good position in which to be. Anna mentions that she has a detailed breakout for those who want more information.

Action Register (7:58pm):

Rich brings up the topic of the nominating committee and Lori mentions that we will discuss this later in our agenda.

Rich asks all board members to think and be prepared for the upcoming workshop. The time we spend together is precious. Gail asks if there is a framework for the discussion. Lori mentions that we will be taking votes and we should be prepared to discuss them.

Annual Fund Update (Lori Clements for Nav Chander) (8:05pm)

As of today, the total is at \$8,410.

Lease Negotiations (8:07pm):

Anna talks about the meeting with Father Brian Manning. Anna mentioned that the building needs repair and asked if the building was for sale. She mentioned that we cannot afford more than current cash rent of \$195,000. She explored other options including a shorter lease until the economy improves. Father Manning mentioned that a sale of the building is a remote possibility. However, he and his finance committee have discussed putting money into school. The Archdiocese will have an independent company evaluate work that needs to be done on building. They will pay for assessment themselves and expect it to run from \$8,000 to \$10,000. The concern is that nonprofit buildings tend to be assessed low. John asked about the timeframe. Father Manning said that he wanted the assessment done in two weeks. The next meeting with him has been scheduled for March 15.

Nominating (8:23pm):

The bylaws say that we need to establish a Nominating Committee. Lori reminds us that we voted at the annual retreat to eliminate the Nominating Committee. John mentions that we cannot change the bylaws without department of education approval. We need to submit changes to bylaws to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Lori asks if the Governance Committee can have bylaw changes ready for board approval by our next meeting. We will assume that we will not have a Nominating Committee.

Dean College is interested in having someone on our board. We should solicit people to be on our board. John mentions that we have a list of characteristics of what we are looking for in a board meeting.

John mentions that it has been difficult to get people who are willing to serve particularly in these relatively stable times for the Charter School. Gail thinks that we should write a job description to mention what a board member should be doing so that it sounds less intimidating to those considering the role. Rich is ambivalent about searching for skill-sets as requirements. Rich thinks that we should mention certain characteristics that we are going to consider, but that limiting the field too narrowly may cast aside members of the community who would serve the school well. However, John mentions that if we had someone with a fundraising background, it may be helpful for our future plans. Anna mentions that we could pose the question “have you thought about what you could do in your family to contribute to community service??”

Lori asks Cheryl if the bank has a method for choosing board members. Cheryl said that she will find out and report back. Don mentions that before he volunteered for the board, he was not aware that there was a need. Stephan mentions that we need to get the word out. John mentions that before he was a board member, he went on a field trip to Worcester and was approached by a parent that was asking him as to what he thought about being in the board. He mentions that the parents may not understand the importance of being on the board.

Rich thinks that people are busy and that the personal touch is what works more than ever. John shares his concern about trying to get too many people interested in the board. He worries that if we get more interested, then we will have to turn away some of the volunteers because there aren't enough slots. This may cause feelings of rejection and turn the unselected members away.

Poh-Lin mentions that you need to start with educating the parents even before you close the deal with the personal touch. John mentions that we need to talk about how much the board is needed. For example, we wouldn't have a new math or ELA program if it wasn't for the board.

Lori tries to refocus us on what we are going to do this year. Poh-Lin will be collecting names of potential nominees. Gail suggests that we report to the parents annually about the year's board activities. She thinks this is important to help raise awareness within our community.

At some point in time we need to vote to set the size of the board. Dress code is on the docket. Rich asks that if a Dean College person offers up a candidate, are we required to elect them? Lori mentions that we choose individuals and that we hope that we don't offend anyone if someone from Dean is not chosen.

Gail asks whether to approach New England Chapel leadership about sharing facilities. They mentioned that they would be open to a discussion and have not yet decided what they want to do.

Meeting Adjournment (9:17pm):

MOTION: Rich initiates and Anna seconds a motion to adjourn at 9:17pm.

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously.