

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (BFCCPS)
Board of Trustees Meeting
DRAFT Minutes
Thursday, June 6, 2011 7:00pm
School Library

Attendance:

President: Lori Clements, Vice President: Anna dos Santos, Treasurer: Jerry Cimmino, Clerk: Don Tappin, Rich Frongillo, Lax Iyer, Poh-Lin Yeoh, Ed Callahan, Head of School Dr. Kevin O'Malley, Assistant Head of School Heather Zolnowski and Director of School Operations and Student Activities Joe Perna, Nav (7:12pm), Stephan Katinas (8:43pm)

Absent: Tom Viveiros

Call to Order, Comment by the Chair (7:02pm):

Lori opens. Tom not able to make meeting and Stephan will be late. Board will be entering Executive Session at 9:30 and not reconvening in open session. Gail Trotin running late so FIT presentation moved to 8:30. BOT annual retreat is scheduled for July 16th, more details to come. Lori needs to collect BOT binders and building keys from Nav, Stephan and Rich.

Clerks Report (7:04pm):

Don reviews minutes from May meeting. Changes are requested; under "Call to Order" change "faulty" to "faculty and "completion" to "competition". Under "Head of School Report" remove Dr. O'Malley from beginning of the second sentence and replace Rich's name with Lori at the beginning of the 4th sentence. Correct typo in "Treasurer's Report" heading.

MOTION: Rich initiates and Jerry seconds a motion to approve minutes of May 12, 2011 BOT Meeting with discussed changes.

COMMENTS: Don to make changes and have posted to website.

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously.

Recognition of the Month (7:06pm):

Coach Burke and Coach Simpson are present to be recognized. Dr. O'Malley speaks to the quality of the job they both do. Mentions specifically their organizing/running of Field Day and that is how they run it that makes it different. Dr. O'Malley goes on to state that the Physical Education program is "not an add on to what we do, they are integral to what we do" and that both coach Burke and Simpson are "much regarded and appreciated in the school community". Coach Burke and Simpson talk about their activity in the school and express their appreciation at being recognized. They speak about Field Day and the involvement of the older students who they have run stations. In their role as educators they try to reinforce things parents teach at home i.e. "healthy habits".

Media Statement (7:14pm):

Review of mission statement included in BOT packet.

MOTION: Rich initiates and Nav seconds a motion to approve the media statement.

COMMENTS: Lori asks if "Charter" in the second line should be lower case. There is agreement that it should be changed.

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

OPEN COMMENT PERIOD (7:17pm):

Jackson Montgomery, 6th grade student: states the benefits and merits of B FCCPS. Asks to be judged by the “content of our character” and not by appearance.

Jennifer Mochia, parent at BFCCPS: States that she has been a member of the BFCCPS community since 2003, served on the BOT previously and was surprised that the dress code was on the agenda. She does not know what is being voted on but request the BOT to consider three things. First, the process appears to have a lack of transparency, last discussion of any policy was at a Governance Committee meeting. Communication very important to the community, the outcome certainly hasn’t been revealed; prior task force determined that more work needed to be done. Second, how does the dress code effect retention, especially at the middle school level, asks BOT to consider effect on retention. Says what the school accomplished has nothing to do with what the school is wearing. Third, does the policy teach our children how to make good decision? Ask BOT to look to the future when making this decision. Believes parents and children would face a “punitive action” but “don’t know what you’re voting on”. Asks if the change necessary? Asks that BOT please consider her points.

Michael Katinas 6th grade student: Says he was absent the day the student body was addressed by the administration about the dress code. States that dressing in more formal clothing will not make us look any better. We are public school. Not sure why school wants to keep changing the dress code. Please take opinion into consideration.

Kristie O’Rourke: Already addressed BOT via email but for the record wants it known she is personally opposed to uniformity. Believes the biggest problem was lack of understanding by the community.

Anne Gilberti: Has three children at BFCCPS and states she does support more uniform dress code and that she is willing to work with task force, to learn where to purchase clothes. Asks BOT “to make a decision once and for all” and once a decision is made to “make sure that it is enforced”.

Diana Stately: Has three students in BFCCPS. When she sat on task force three years ago not given the opportunity to eliminate the dress code and is not sure how jeans and a logo is reflective of the quality of the individual. She asks the BOT to consider elimination of the dress code entirely.

Katie Lepsevich: Okay to pay a dollar to wear jeans on Friday but not ok on other days? Asks what message that sends.

Head of School Report (7:31pm):

“News flash! The building is hot.” Snow days have been a double edged sword, we enjoy them when they occur but are paying for them now. Nine days of school left, last two days are half days. Building remains an issue. It has been an incredible week. The 8th grade banquet was held recently. Approximately 23-24 teachers gave up their night to be present to say something nice about the students they’ve had over the years. Final concerts occurred. French and Latin awards given out this week. For the school wide service project this year we did Heifer’s “read and feed”. There were 15,820 book chapters read which raised \$7,904. Best thing about the project was the reading of the books but having the money raised for a good cause was another benefit. The monies were used to purchase 67 animals including two water buffalos.

There are more changes coming in the education landscape regarding the new educational standards which will be discussed at more length during the retreat. The changes will affect some schools immediately and others in two years. Part of the changes coming judge teachers based on student achievement.

Poh-Lin asked if it will be based on MCAS scores. Dr' O'Malley says that in part it will be.

Dr' O'Malley says that Elizabeth Englander, a nationally known expert on bullying, coming to visit us at Horace Mann. Franklin Public Schools and BFCCPS are sharing the costs. Bullying is not an issue at BFCCPS but thinks it a good thing.

Rich asks about the "Tuesday Meetings" and the "Overarching School Goals" document in the BOT packet. Why were we given that. Nav asks if the session for the Tuesday meetings are optional. They are not, Dr. O'Malley described the Tuesday Meetings as mix and match. Lori reminds Nav that technology is a focus of the board and that the sessions should not be optional. Format of meetings varies.

HOS Performance Evaluation (7:45pm):

Lori reads contents of HOS Performance Evaluation document.

Rich asks if it appropriate to ask about the faculty feedback. Lori says no, question should go to her as the HR rep, Anna sat in the meeting.

Lori reads offer letter to Dr. O'Malley for the following year.

MOTION: Jerry initiates Don second a motion to approve the offer letter to Dr. O'Malley

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Governance (7:56pm):

Policy 32 Bullying: Rich asks about where the document that the policy references lives, who owns it. Reference to location of the bullying policy document. Also ask about reference to MGL Chapter 71, Section 370.

MOTION: Rich initiates Lax seconds motion to approve Policy 32.

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Decision is made to hold off on additional Governance items until time posted in meeting agenda.

Treasurer's Report (8:11pm):

Jerry reviews P&L spreadsheet in BOT packet.

Action register (8:12pm):

Anna reviews action register in BOT packet.

Facilities (8:17pm):

Don reviews progress with Bob Baldwin and lease review.

Governance (8:22pm):

Policy 15 (Logo): Don reviews suggested changes to policy. Fields questions about the usage on some of the terminology in the policy.

MOION: Poh-Lin initiates and Anna seconds a motion to approve changes to Policy 15.

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Policy 29 (Safety Plan): Joe reviews this new policy.

Rich mentions that perhaps we should call the policy and the document different things to differentiate them. The idea of changing the policy name to “Safety” is suggested and agreed upon.

MOTION: Jerry initiates and Lax seconds a motion to approve the changes to Policy 29, with the name change of “Safety Plan” to “Safety”

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Policy 30 (Media Contact) (8:32pm): Joe reviews suggested changes to policy.

Rich asks if the word “their” in 5.3 is appropriate.

Nav speaks to specific personal situation where he had contact with the media and where was unsure if he would have been in violation of this policy and if his specific scenario was within the intended scope of the policy.

MOTION: Nav initiates and Anna seconds motion to approve the changes to Policy 30

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Policy 33 (Travel Reimbursement) (8:43pm): Anna reviews this new policy

MOTION: Ed initiates and Jerry seconds a motion to approve Policy 33

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Policy 9 (Dress Code) (8:10pm): Lori reviews history of dress code policy and how it came to be on tonight's agenda. A task force was previously created, turned results over, board made modifications that would hopefully make it easier to enforce. Changes were made and did not provide clarity but instead more confusion. Board had many conversations at workshops and meetings and came to a decision that they wanted uniformity. Next step was to draft policy that allowed for uniformity. That got put on back burner. Lori regrets and takes responsibility for that. Policy as presented was reviewed by the Governance Committee three or four times. Lori/BOT received statements of concern from BFCCPS community. Specific concerns include role of parents as primary educator, separation between our students and larger Franklin community, retention at middle school level, erosion of personal expression, legality, elimination of dress code, cost. Lori notes that each of these concerns has been previously considered by the BOT.

Policy 9 as presented has been reviewed and approved by legal counsel.

Ed asks about go live date of 2012-2013 school year.

Jerry asks about what would be governing policy until new policy, if adopted, goes into effect. The existing policy would remain in effect.

Anna mentions that we have had a dress code since day one. Mentions that the purpose is that we have a policy in place that can be easily understood and enforced. Purpose of suggest policy changes are to remove confusion, purpose not to be rigid but to be simple

Rich mentioned that transparency and communication should be addressed.

Po-Lin speaks to the benefit of students graduating from BFCCPS and comments people make about expressing themselves, or that they will leave BFCCPS because of the dress code. Sees a lack of consistency given the large number of BFCCPS students going to private schools with a much stricter dress code than we will have.

Lori comments that crafting a policy that meets everyone's expectations is impossible.

Nav thinks the board has had a lot of conversations, but we need to communicate to the community the benefit of the dress code changes. Asks if special events fall under proposed dress code changes. Feels that BFCCPS students should be proud of their school and that the dress code is essier economically and easier on students and parents once they get used to it.

Anna mentions conversations in Governance Committee about circulating policy to larger community for comment/feedback. States that BFCCPS is special and we are different and that, in the new polity, we are looking for something that is easy to understand and implement.

Lori mentions that uniformity was agreed on by the board and this is the result.

Lax confirming communication from the BOT comes after we have made a decision.

Stephan asks Lori for a review of the timeline. She states that a task force was formed 2007-2008 school year, BOT looked at input, wanted to make changes right away, current policy was a "quick fix" while BOT considered larger issue, 2009-2010 investigated uniform cost, other related costs, at that point the

board decided on uniformity, next step was to draft policy which got delayed. Past spring there were enforcement issue that got things rolling again to get a policy before the BOT meeting. Been through three of four iterations and been reviewed by legal counsel.

Nav asks if there is any way we can handle differently.

Lori restates that the BOT made the decision after the task force concluded to close the dress code to input.

Rich concerned that we would not put information out there for fear of what we would get back. In favor of the dress code but can not jeopardize trust of larger BFCCPS community. We deserve full disclosure and it offends Rich, respectfully. Feels that the delay in a year plus amplifies the feeling of disrespect. Do we put it aside policy changes or do we vote in favor of them and rebuild bridges. Process of communication is not for our benefit but for the benefit of the community.

Lori restates that there is no fear of what we would get back; rather there is nothing new to get back that the BOT has not already considered, and that the delay of a year did not change any of the information.

Anna, advises BOT that this version was only finalized last week and it is as though anything were intentionally withheld from the community.

MOTION: Don initiates and Poh-Lin seconds motion to approve changes to Policy 9

COMMENT: none

RESULT: There are five votes for the changes (Lax, Don, Lori, Anna, Poh-Lin) and five votes against the changes (Ed, Rich, Jerry, Nav, and Stephan). Motion is tabled.

FIT Presentation (9:30pm):

Gail Trotin hands out five sets of documents. The documents cover different areas of focus by FIT's "Research Action Teams". Those areas were "Heifer Read-to-Feed, K-8 Comm. Service Project", "Examine the impact of class size on student achievement at BFCCPS", "Professional Development", "Calendar Snow Days" and "Merit Pay". Gail reviews each.

Mission Committee (9:50pm):

Review of the "BFCCPS Vision Statement" included in the BOT packet.

Poh-Lin comments that the first time she read the statement she felt as if she were being hit by all of the powerful words in the statement. She might suggest replacing the word adaptability.

Discussion about the word adaptability and if a stronger word could be used.

Nav suggests "resourceful" as a possible replacement word which is agreed upon.

MOTION: Ed initiates and Lax seconds motion to approve vision statement with the change of "adaptability" to "resourcefulness".

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Nomination Coordinator Report (9:56pm):

Poh-Lin comments on various applicants.

MOTION : Rich initiates and Anna seconds motion to extend meeting past 10:00pm

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: The motion passes unanimously

Continuation of Nomination Coordinator Report (10:02pm):

Disappointment expressed that some of the candidates did not make the effort to appear at the meeting and did not reach out to any current BOT members. Santhi Marusamy is present at meeting.

Santhi Marusamy speaks about her interest in serving on the BOT and talks about her professional background.

BOT will be voting to fill three 3-year terms.

Lax Iyer, Santhi Marusamy and Mary Barton-Rau are each elected to a three-year term on the first ballot. Terms begin July 1, 2011.

Faculty Representative Report (10:15pm)

Ed reports that at last faculty meeting he was re-elected as the faculty representative to the BOT for 2011-2012.

VOTE: To elect Ed as faculty rep.

COMMENTS: none

RESULT: Ed elected as the Faculty representative to the BOT for 2011-2012 unanimously.

Election of Board of Trustee Officers (10:17pm):

Nominees are as follows: President: Lori Clements
 Vice President: Anna dos Santos
 Treasurer: Jerry Cimmino
 Clerk: Don Tappin

Nominees are elected unanimously with one abstention, Rich. Officer elections are effective as of the close of tonight's meeting.

Ed reviews communication from student council to BOT; report handed out at meeting (not included in the BOT packet).

Lori recognizes BOT members (Rich, Nav and Stephan) whose terms are ending. Lori present plaques made by Joe Perna.

Rich speaks about his experience as a BOT member. Recognizes Anna for the work that she has done during his tenure on the BOT. Raises the issue of the purchase of computers by BFCCPS and states he will sign an affidavit that he is not benefiting from the sale.

Executive Session: (10:26pm):

VOTE: To move to Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the ongoing lease negotiations.
Board will not reconvene in open session.

COMMENTS: none

RESULTS: Stephan: yes, Nav: yes, Poh-Lin: yes, Anna: yes, Lori: yes, Jerry: yes, Don: yes, Lax: yes, Rich: yes, Ed: yes