Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: April 11, 2023

Held via The Birches Academy

Present: Chair: Christie Storniolo (CES), Secretary: Alyssa Ross (AR); Vice-Chair: Christine Miele (CM); Treasurer: Michael Gendreau (MG); Becca Allan (BA), Alexis Goldsack (AG), Pamela Sarantis (PS)
Staff: Chris Smith (CDS), Jessica Wachsman (JW), Kayla Diorio (KO), Aimye Haroutunian (AH), Alison Baldanado (AB)
Regrets: Debbie Kruzel (DK)
Public: Pamela Plourde

CES called meeting to order at 5:36pm

General

Approval of minutes from March 14 meeting. BA motions to approve, MG seconds. PS abstains. All others in favor. None opposed.

Correspondence

- Email from NPOconnect Nonprofit Platform regarding info for matching gifts; AH responded

Misc Business

- 2023-24 calendar. Reviewed dates, discussed changes in Salem's calendar process. PS motions to approve, AR seconds.. All others in favor. None opposed.
- Need to sign and approve General Assurance for Year 2024, which says we will follow guidelines in federal funds, all of which differ. CES and CDS sign. PS motions to approve, AR seconds.. All others in favor. None opposed.
- Need to sign and approve Grant Program Assurances for school year 2023-2024. CES and CDS sign. AG motions to approve, BA seconds.. All others in favor. None opposed.

Next meetings:

- Full Board
    - May 9, 5:30pm
    - June 27, 5:30pm
- Finance
    - May 2, 5:30pm (zoom)
    - June 6, 5:30pm (zoom)

Upcoming Events:

- Charter School Leaders Summit, April 20 @ Puritan Backroom
- Fundraiser concert at Rex Theater, May 21 2pm-4pm; 100% of proceeds go to Birches to support music programs
- Clothing Drive: May 16-17
- Fine Arts Night: May 18
- Battle of the Bands: May 24
- Spring music at Tupelo: May 31
- Canobie Lake Park: June 9
- 8th grade Graduation: June 13

Teacher Update: Heather Black-Ward

Picturing Writing. At least every other month, students create artwork which gives them a basis on what to write. This is not done with art class at all; all in the traditional classroom. She's done this before but got put aside some during COVID, and also got some training on this (as did a teacher in each grade level) and it's been working well in her grade 4/5 classroom.

It starts with Artists Workshop, which begins with a prompt and class discussion about the topic at hand - such as landscapes, times of day, etc. HBW would model the idea. She finds that when the students have the picture it helps them with the writing, especially for those that struggle with writing. She has them come up with the 5 nouns, descriptive language (adjectives, adverbs), details (similes) - all of which have helped them become stronger and more descriptive writers. Did these for their US state reports as well. It's a good exercise for arts integration; can bring in science, social studies, etc. to have them write about their lessons.

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 224 enrolled
- Wait list at 200
- 25 spots accepted, 35 left on the waitlist

Events and Updates

- Edies came to visit the school April 6 - announcement to be made in later April
- Talent show went well; we had a lot of students and parents show up.

- State Fair projects current in the Woods

STEM update from Alison

- BenQ board - new type of all touch smartboard; looking to purchase several, testing now with different teachers for different types of lessons - the company would train on this as well
- GlowForges - getting 2 laser cutting machines, will train staff
- Looking at ChromeBooks for grades 3-8
- In contact with two science companies; everyone is pulling science from different places and the staff wants a standardized curriculum

Personnel

- Still looking for part time Math
- Still looking for 3rd grade TA

Foundation/Friends update

Current activity: Raffle

- We have 1,172 names entered into the raffle
- After payout & prizes we raised an estimated $7500
- 59 families participated in the fundraiser

Upcoming: Birches Day of Giving

- June 6-7
- 24 hour fundraising period in conjunction with NH Gives
- Will plan an in school launch event

Committee updates

Finance

- Reviewed 2023-2024 budget. CM motions to accept as proposed. PS seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.
- Motion to approve budget through March 30. CM motions to accept as proposed. PS seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

Governance

- Potential new BOT attended tonight's meeting.
- MG is early-stage touch with 2 others
- CM, PS, MG are attending a Board Building Seminar on May 16 sponsored by Enterprise Bank.
- Goal remains to have 2 new BOT members before the end of second quarter of 2023.

Outreach

- Website revamp
    - Have V1 - Alyssa/Christine to review

Facilities, Personnel, Curriculum, Strategic Planning did not meet - but Personnel will meet to discuss launch of 2022-23 Head of School review process

Policy Reviews

April: Wellness. BA motions to accept with proposed edits. AR seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.
May: Attendance

CES motions to move into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) at 7:36pm. AR seconds. All in favor.

CES motions to move out of non-public session and into public at 8:05pm. AR seconds. All in favor.

Vote to seal the minutes of the non-public session *under RSA 91-A:3, II(a):The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.*
PS motions to approve, CM seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

BA motions to adjourn. AG seconds. All agree. 8:07 PM meeting adjourned.