Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: January 24, 2023

Held at The Birches Academy

Present: Chair: Christie Storniolo (CES), Vice-Chair: Christine Miele (CM), Secretary: Alyssa Ross (AR); Treasurer: Michael Gendreau (MG); Becca Allan (BA), Debbie Kruzel (DK), Alexis Goldsack (AG (via phone), Pamela Sarantis (PS)
Staff: Jessica Wachsman (JW), Aimye Haroutunian (AH), Erin Balfe (EB)
Regrets: Chris Smith

CES called meeting to order at 5:34pm

General

Approval of minutes from December 13 regular meeting. PS motions to approve, MG seconds. All others in favor. None opposed.

Correspondence

- none

Next meetings

- Full Board
    - February 21
    - March 14
    - April 11
- Finance
    - February 7
- Outreach
    - February 4

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 225 enrolled
- Wait list at 178
- Kindergarten Lottery for 2023-2024
    - 62 total applications to date (includes 14 siblings and 1 staff)
    - Lottery to be held February 1 (next Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.)
    - Senator Abbas to pull the numbers

Events and Updates

- Designated volunteer program has been a great help in covering staff who have been out with illnesses and family issues; Mrs. Cole has been very helpful in keeping this program running and growing.
- Mrs. Baldonado, Mrs. Madden and CDS attending a technology conference the week of January 23rd; plan to bring back useful training, materials and ideas for the teachers for integrating STEAM into their classrooms.
- Student portfolios: January 20 (elementary) and January 27 (middle school)
- Clubs
    - Ski club is halfway through; reports are that it's going really well
    - After school karate club is a huge success
    - Lego club forthcoming
- The "A STEM garden" (imaginarium) is beginning to take shape; Mrs. Baldonado has been arranging it and planning out the area
- Middle school dance scheduled for February 3
- School-wide Spelling Bee Monday January 30 at 1:00pm
- Concord-related activity
    - Bills
        - One bill would require breakfast/lunch in all schools, including charter schools - we supplied the information on how we handle this and a legislator reached back out thanking us for the information since they did not know how much we were doing in this area
        - HB272 - increase to charter school funding; these bills have traditionally been put aside with budget for charter schools going into HB1 - school administration and families have sent information about the funding model, why we need more, etc. as well as refuted what NEA sent about charter schools getting double
        - Bill considering adding charter schools into building aid
        - Bill about changing language about non-academic surveys (social survey) to direct programs; mostly high schools so not likely to impact our community
    - Charter School Alliance
        - Charter School Leader breakfast March 15 to share best practices
        - Heads of School/Charter Board members invited to another event to learn about communications April 20

Personnel

- Still looking for part time Math
- Interviewed a substitute for 3rd grade TA

Foundation/Friends update

Recent activity

- Scholastic Book Fair

Upcoming activity

- Teddy Grams for Valentines Day
- Blue Ribbon Celebration March 10
    - Castleton Event Center
    - Online ticket through Boonli. https://www.birchesacademy.org/schoollunch
    - Family & allergy friendly buffet.
        - Mixed Greens Garden Salad
        - Seasonal Vegetable Medley
        - Herb Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes
        - Honey Ginger Marinated & Grilled Chicken Breast
        - Baked Macaroni & Cheese
        - Chicken Tenders
        - Cash bar

Committee updates

Finance

- Motion to accept finance to accept finance report through December 31, 2022. CM motions to approve, MG Seconds. All in favor. None opposed.
- Committee will redo the budget in order to accept the grants. Will review in December.

Governance

- A potential member is sitting in on tonight's meeting so she can see how meetings are structured.
    - We have her resume and references; committee will be following up with them.
    - If all things check out it is possible, we will be interviewing and voting on a potential member in February meeting.
- Has received information on 2 potential new BOT members not affiliated with the school. Research in the early stages.
- Goal is to have 2 new BOT members before the end of second quarter of 2023.

Facilities

- Reviewed parameters for what we want in a new facility

Outreach

- Updated volunteer page on website with current policies and volunteer hours links
- Updated rack card “What is a Charter School” to include updated charter school statistics
- Updated Birches tri-fold brochure to include STEAM and Blue Ribbon
- Ordered new business cards for STEAM coordinator Allison Baldonado
- Reviewed updates needed to Family pages on website
- Added teacher wish lists under website bios for easy shopping
- AH working on creating a Friends of the Birches logo with Mabel (parent)
- AR discussing with a parent who may be able to connect us to someone to update the website; have put in a request to Squarespace as well but no response
- AR and AG working on getting out consistent social media posts; Teacher Features have started
- Set a meeting for February 4 to review overall marketing plan for 2023/2024

Personnel, Curriculum, Strategic Planning did not meet

Policy Reviews

January: none
February: TBD

PS motions to adjourn. AG seconds. All agree. 6:58 PM meeting adjourned.