THE BIRCHES ACADEMY of ACADEMICS & ART
Open Board Meeting: September 10, 2012
7:00 pm
419 South Broadway, Salem, NH

Board Members: Christie Storniolo (Chair), Jessica Wachsman, Holly Ruocco, Jennie Chisholm, Dianne Wright, Ruth Templeton, Nicole Charest, Dr. Dael Angelico-Hart, Melissa Magnuson, John Mack, Caren Brown, Kevin Collins, Christine Miele

1. **CS** Call to order at 7:06 pm

2. Approval of previous minutes. Postponed due to JC not feeling the closed minutes were updated. HR will add paragraph she requested and resend.

3. Head of School update: See attachments for more detail.
   - **a.** September Board Meeting Update
   - **b.** Birches by Numbers: Currently at 86 Students. We may possibly have 2 students start in 1st and 4th which will bring us to 88. Lottery and Enrollment process needs to be clear so we communicate clearly and effectively with parents and we can move forward with spot light tours. The goal is to increase exposure of the school and add to our the waiting list for future growth.
   - **c.** Our students are from 11 towns.
   - **d.** Goals. Reading and math assessments by the end of October
   - **e.** The students had their first gathering and these will be conducted periodically by the students going forward.
   - **f.** Drop off/Pick Up has been worked out. We are working with the town/bus company to make this a smooth process.

4. Committee reports, as needed:
   a. Governance
      - Introduction of Teacher Representative: Nicole Charest
      - School policies to draft: See attachment titled Suggested Policies to be written. Each committee should get together to assign the members to work on these policies and the time frame that they would be published.

- Residency Policy discussion: Birches needs to prove residency and answer directly to the State of NH. The Birches Residency Policy needs to tighten those standards and require additional proof. Drivers License, Utility Bills, car registration, parenting plan. We are not limiting documents to the mentioned documents.

b. Curriculum Development & Assessment: Meeting October 4th
c. Foundation: Newsletter was sent out. We talked about having the Foundation conduct Spotlight tours to raise community awareness and increase applicants.

d. Finance: Kevin Collins, Chair. See attachment titled Budget to Actual: Birches Academy. The group expressed thoughts about how the reporting could be presented at future meetings and the Finance Committee will make adjustments to that. It was discussed that money from some areas was going to be reallocated to others and this is expected to reduce our overall deficit.

e. Personnel: No update
f. Facilities: September 5, 2012. Landlord has concerns about playground and students using the pavement. JW is meeting with the planning board tomorrow and has called the insurance company. DW will reach out to the farm behind the school to see if we can continue dialogue about partnering opportunities.
g. Operations
    - Lunch program: We will be using Balducci's software for parents buying school lunches online directly, which will also track who is taking hot lunch. Jessica will go meet with him to see if the menu can be printed for those family's who do not want to pay by credit card.
    - Ribbon Cutting September 21st at 9:00 am with the Chamber of Commerce. They will get a tour, Ribbon cutting and photo opportunity.
    - Kevin Collins referenced the Pentucket Bank outing on September 26th 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm BAH.

5. Public comment*: One parent commented that the supplies we are asking for are the same things that the public schools are asking

for. (food, supplies) She feels that he residency issue shouldn't be an issue with parents but speaks for herself.

6. CS Adjourned the board meeting at 9:16 pm

September Board Meeting Update

When we sat in the downstairs room and Christie said how I would be telling you how wonderful the first day of school was, I was not sure but…
It was! They say your marriage is blessed if it rains on your wedding day so since it rained on the first day of school, I am going to say that The Birches is blessed/ or born under a lucky star!

Actually, it was a little like a wedding with huge bouquets of flowers, not only coming into the office, (Thank you Holly for one), but also a number of the teachers received flowers from family because of how hard they worked. Actually, a number of family members of faculty attended the Open House so The Birches already is an extended family.

Classroom teachers spent a good part of the first days teambuilding and creating a classroom culture. By Thurs./Fri. I could tell they were really digging in. Art started right way Tues. and music and Spanish on Thurs.
Reading and math assessments will start soon.

We had our first all-school meeting. Two students shared but eventually all students will help lead and share at the meeting. We will celebrate everyone's birthday also.

Drop off is great. Dismissal is good – until we have a downpour. I called and changed the bus route into and out of the parking lot the very first afternoon.

Early Bird and Night Owl programs have started slowly and the After School Enrichment programs have been delayed a week to wait for more sign ups which have really started to come in. Mad Science is presenting a free assembly to the schoolon Thurs. to promote interest in their program.

Challenges have included making and distributing keys and recess/playground issues with landlord. But these do not seem the biggest issues compared to the wonderful, smiling kids and parents and the great learning that has begun!

Birches By the Numbers

Towns
Salem
Windham
Atkinson
Pelham
Londonderry
Derry
Bedford
Manchester
Plaistow
Nashua
Sandown

Wait list numbers/grade	
grade 1	2
grade 2	19
grade 3	25
grade 4	16
grade 5	44
grade 6	8
grade 7	0
grade 8	0
Total	114

Declined per grade	1st	21
	2nd	6
	3rd	8
	4th	14
	5th	6
	6th	21
	7th	15
	8th	10

Classrooms	Male	Female
1st & 2nd	13	9
3rd & 4th	12	11
5th & 6th	7	16
7th & 8th	8	10
Entire School M/F	40	46

Students per

<u>Classrooms</u>
1st - 10
2nd - 12
3rd - 12
4th - 11
5th - 12
6th - 11
7th - 11
8th - 7