Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Date: April 13, 2021

Held via Zoom video conferencing

Present: Chair: Christie Storniolo (CES), Vice Chair: Christine Miele (CM), Secretary: Alyssa Ross (AR) Treasurer: Michael Gendreau (MG), Bob Hawkes (BH), Pamela Sarantis (PS), Debbie Kruzel (DK)
Staff: Chris Smith (CDS), Jessica Wachsman (JW), Aimye Haroutunian (AH), Erin Balfe (EB), Ruth Templeton (RT)
Regrets: none

CES called meeting to order at 5:34pm

General

This meeting is taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic; we are holding the meeting via videoconferencing software. The public was notified and invited to join. Please note even when school reopens the Board may continue to meet via Zoom in order to limit activity at school.

Approval of minutes from March 16 regular meeting. CM motions to approve, PS seconds. All others in favor. AR abstains. MG not yet present. None opposed

Correspondence

- Public Records Request to The Birches Academy of Academics & Art for Contact Information; AR sent to CS to see if it's legitimate

Next meetings

- May 4: 5:30pm Finance committee
- May 18: 5:30pm Board
- June 8: 5:30pm Finance committee
- June 22: 5:30pm Board
- July 13: 5:30pm Finance committee
- July board: TBD

Presented and reviewed 21-22 school calendar. AR motions to approve, PS seconds. All approved. None opposed.

Staff Highlight

Intern from Brandeis, Katya, worked with Ruth this year. She did a storytelling unit on StoryCorps. Several of the student projects brought about strong connections and experience,

so Katya and Ruth decided to explore this further through podcasting and added it as a new program. Katya taught the students about tools, about developing ideas, about using audio as a medium and storytelling. Additionally, soft skills were developed: social and emotional skills (tone of voice, organizing thoughts, telling a story without visuals), working in groups and following multi-step, linear processes within the designated timeline. Katya shared how impressed she was by the variety of ideas - from fun to serious (climate change, students planning their future, etc.) Now the middle school teachers can use podcasting as an option in assignments. This was across the entire middle school. Also taught the kids about the concept of podcasts as a way to learn about topics they're interested in. The middle school team is looking at ways to extend this type of learning, including through music class and other staff are looking into doing this. EB has this built into an assignment for social studies on fireside chats.

Dean of School update

Enrollment

- 2020-21 enrollment at 225, wait list at 129
- K lottery February 17 - all spots not finalized yet

Events and Updates

- Clubs
    - Drama club continues to go well, is having its last session in person (some of the students participating are full remote, but they will come in for this)
    - 3D printing club is going well
    - CDS has had some inquiries about starting additional after school clubs
- Early Birds started April 6th, Night Owls is starting April 19th
- The Governor has ordered that all schools offer 5 day school weeks by April 19th.
    - This doesn't affect us as we will already be in 5 days by then.
    - There have been several other executive orders that have an effect on our ability to pivot for Covid emergencies, but we will navigate within the framework designated by the Governor.
        - For example, the governor's latest executive order states that we can't send kids or the school remote for more than 48 hours without a request that is approved by the governor's office. We will be monitoring how other schools formulate their requests in case we need to.
- Teacher 2nd vaccination session took place April 9th

Personnel Update

- Mrs. Skerry will not be returning next year

- Mrs. Stolar will be retiring after this year, and will be teaching her class for the remainder of this year remotely

Foundation update

Read-A-Thon:

- $12,046 in pledges before expenses (credit card fees, incentives, & prizes) total will be on next month's Foundation finance report
- 46% of students got pledges
- Goal was to raise $1,500

Charity Gaming:

- Still on the waitlist for Chasers. If they get approved for a new location they will be adding additional non profits.

Mega Cash Raffle:

- Launch April 8th: within 1 hour of email several tickets already sold
- Grand Prize $10,000, 2nd $2,500, 3rd $500
- Tickets
    - $100 each
    - Maximum 300 tickets
    - Need to sell a minimum of 230 tickets to make $10,000
    - If sell all 300 tickets, Foundation will make $17,000 after payouts
- Drawing date will be selected once 150 tickets are sold

Committee updates

Finance

- Reviewed March financials. PS motions to approve, DK seconds. All approve. None opposed.

Governance

- MG is working with an interested candidate; will be sending the packet of information to review and then schedule next steps
- Placing recruitment ads with Salem Life and country club list. Also exploring CoC but they have not responded

Personnel

- CES to review Dean of School review process
- CES and AR to meet to confirm 2020-21 survey questions and select a date to send the survey

Outreach

- Sent survey to families for input on this year about COVID response; feedback has been plentiful and outstanding; Board asked CDS, EB etc. to pass this to the staff

- Working on updated marketing plan for 2021/2022
- Meeting scheduled for next week

Facilities

- Sent survey to families about options for new school building; results showed moving inside of Salem is preferred but moving just outside is not likely to be detrimental
- Had a parent who has connections in the commercial real estate sector and will join the committee

Capital Campaign, Curriculum, Strategic Planning

- No meeting or updates

Policy Reviews

Emergency Care and First Aid Policy. PS motion to accept policy with changes. BH seconds. All in favor. None opposed.

Plan to skip policy review for May and resume in June.

Motion to move into non-public.

Motion to move into public.

No public comment.

CM motions to adjourn. PS seconds. All agree. 7:50pm meeting adjourned.