

Beacon Academy Charter District 4124
 Board Meeting Minutes, November 12, 2008 6:00 p.m.
 12325 Highway 55, Plymouth, MN 55441

CALL TO ORDER Tam Harken called the meeting to order to at 6:02 pm.

ROLL CALL (present at time of meeting unless otherwise noted)

Board Member	Present	Absent
Cathy Burke	✓	
Bob Zarriello	✓	
Tam Harken	✓	
Kalin Farrell	✓	
Scott DesBles	✓	

Board Member	Present	Absent
Jordan Ford (ex-officio)	✓	
Gretchen McQuillan		✓
Candace Newman	✓	
Anne Ingvaldson	✓	
Lori Karcz (6:20)	✓	

Board Member	Present	Absent
Anne Marie Roder	✓	
Terese Corey Blanck		✓

ADVISORY MEMBERS Janet Carlson, Keith Johnson, Sean Koster

MISC. ATTENDEES Christina Holmes, David Goeske, Kristi Pingel, Dave Borum

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT *(choral reading) "To provide Twin Cities' families with a proven, rigorous and content-rich curriculum integrated with sequential Spanish language instruction. The School will create a results-driven small learning community built around a culture of positive character development and committed parental involvement."*

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA: Forwarded by Candace, seconded by Cathy, unanimously approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES 10-8-08: Ann Marie forwarded motion to approve; Scott seconded it, unanimously approved.

Open Floor Comments:

Treasurers Report-Bob Zarriello-(see handout)

- Bank Balance as of 10-31-08: \$887,583.74
- *This is the first month that our fund balance has dipped below 20% and this is a signal that we need to be aware of what we are spending. The administration and business manager have done a good job managing the fund balance even with adding the additional middle school grades, but we do need to be careful.*
- *Our current budget is based on a student enrollment of 373 students.*
- *Our lunch program is currently breaking even.*
- *The lease is not signed at this point. Bob, John Cairns, Tam, and Jordan met with the landlord last night to discuss the current lease. They talked about doing a direct lease with the portable company and a separate lease with him to take care of the current building. Further discussions are needed.*
- *The audit has been completed and we had a shining report. The projected numbers matched up very close to what was actually spent. Dennis Hooogeyeen, from Larson Allen, will come to a meeting in December or January to discuss the audit.*
- *The IT committee is going to bring forward a report with a request for more money than was originally budgeted for technology.*

Motion:	To approve the financial report.		
Made by:	Scott	Seconded by:	Candace

Discussion:				
Vote:	Yea:	all	Nay: none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes			

Principal's Report(Jordan Ford):

1. Enrollment Update (see attachment)- *We are at 373 students. We are going to lose 1 student and gain 2 in the next month. All grades continue to be very close to target enrollment numbers. There is an open house on December 11th and 2 open houses in January.*
2. Hot Lunch Program - *The hot lunch program is going well and Jeanette is doing a great job monitoring accounts. We have 18-20 parents whose accounts are in the red, but the total dollar amount of accounts in the red is only approximately \$30. We are way ahead of where we were last year and the amount of revenue is \$1600 ahead. The ala carte is adding extra revenue and has not caused too many problems with parents. This has been the best start to our lunch program financially so far. Jeanette has been working with parents to fill out free and reduced lunch forms for families that qualify. We will get about \$26,000 for revenue next year for free and reduced lunch, while based on last year's applications we are expected to only receive about \$8,000 this year.*
3. MACS Annual Meeting (handouts)- *The first handout is about major components for legislative proposals in 2009. MACS is laying out what they can do to make improvements and impress legislators. MACS wants to show legislators that charter schools can effectively monitor themselves with the help of their sponsor. The second handout talks about initiatives to recognize schools that are being innovative. They want to recognize schools, teachers, and practices that are doing things that are different. Merit Pay is one thing that we could possibly submit. The third handout talks about salary ranges within positions at Minnesota Charter Schools. This information may help us when renewing contracts and hiring new teachers.*
4. Outside Authorities – Interview Procedures- *There have been 2 situations where the police have come to school to interview students either because they were a suspect or a victim. We have been informed by the Plymouth Police Department that we do not need to notify parents when outside authorities (police) interview students, but we do need to allow them to interview and provide them with a space to do so. The outside authorities will contact parents and the school's job is to remain neutral.*
5. Hotline System- *This is a hotline so that if we had an emergency and needed to close school, we would be able to communicate this in a timely matter. This could also help us if the busses were running late. Jordan is going to try to dig up information on this system and get back to us.*
6. Block of Time quote (Technology Report)
7. Finance Award – *We are putting together information currently to apply for this. Keith has a document that needs to be filled out by us regarding board training. This is due by the end of the month.*

8. Friends of Ascension Award – request for publisher *This is a \$100,000 award for the Friends of Ascension school that performs the best on a number of different criteria. We are going to ask the person that helps out with the school newsletter to put our submission in its final form for a professional end product. Jordan thinks that it will only cost about \$200. This award is due by the end of December.*

Star Report- A report that shows that all teachers are licensed and working in their areas of licensure. Sean’s current contract lists him as the assistant principal, but he does not currently have his administrative license. He will be called the assistant director instead.

Motion:	To reclassify Sean’s contract to say assistant director.				
Made by:	Candace	Seconded by:	Cathy		
Discussion:					
Vote:	Yea:	all	Nay:	none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes				

Library- Our library assistant spends most of her time checking books in, reading to students, and helping them check out books and does not have any time process new books or do other things that need to get done. Jordan made a request to bump her hours from 25 hours to 29 hours a week. The total increase would be \$48 a week for 28 more weeks. Jordan will talk to Jan about the changes.

Motion:	To increase our library assistant’s time by 4 hours a week.				
Made by:	Bob	Seconded by:	Kalin		
Discussion:					
Vote:	Yea:	all	Nay:	none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes				
Ann Marie is under the understanding that the biggest problem she is encountering is with computer problems and not with lack of time. That problem is currently being resolved.					

Channel 5 News- We are going to be featured tomorrow on the 10:00 news. After speaking with the reporter, Tam and Jordan felt like it went well and are hopeful that we are going to be portrayed in a positive light.

Micah Schulz won the fire prevention poster contest and was visited in his classroom by the fire department.

Fundraising- Tam and Jordan will continue to have discussions with PAC to refine the fundraising. The Barnes and Noble event may be pushed back to February for I love to read month.

Air Quality Testing- We did air quality testing twice last year and should do this again this year now that the building is closed up for Winter. The Department of Health comes out for free to do this testing and Jordan will follow up on this. It is also possible to purchase a hand held device so that we are able to complete our own testing. A wall-mounted unit to test air quality is \$292 and could be placed in a classroom that had high numbers last year.

Assistant Principal's Report (Sean Koster):

- Special education teacher interviews- *Our special education team with 2 teachers and 1 school counselor is overbooked with IEP needs. They are going to be interviewing in the next few days for another special education teacher.*
- Paraprofessional interviews- *We are also looking for another paraprofessional to work one-on-one with a middle school student*
- Shuffling of the middle school students at Trimester break-*Parents have expressed concerns that middle school students will be tracked in the same classes all year long. Middle school teachers along with administration have decided to shuffle students between sections at each trimester. This will hopefully help to alleviate some social problems that are occurring in Middle School.*

Dean of Student's Report (Janet Carlson):

1. Assessment

Fall NWEA scores show a wide range of student achievement (see attachment). This is consistent with other years and assessments. This year we are addressing the disparity by adding time in the weekly schedule for students who are scoring below the 50% in math.

I am working with teachers to plan a review/enrichment block for each grade level so that students who are performing below the 50% in math will have more time to work on math skills, while other students will have opportunities for enrichment activities. For middle school students, ER will replace study hall and will include a "remix" of students during ER. Some of the enrichment options include preparing History Day projects and writing a student school newspaper.

Elementary grades will have additional blocks for music, art and physical education specialists, as well as writing club, book club and other choices for enrichment. The original master schedule included these extra teaching blocks for the specialists.

The focus on review for math ties into our Q Comp school goal to increase math achievement. It is possible that the ER review focus and enrichment choices could change to reading for the third trimester if we see enough growth in math during the second trimester.

2. Gifted and Talented Services

The GLO committee has met twice this month to put the finishing touches on Kids College Day, which is this Thursday (11/13). A huge amount of work has been put into planning this event with 20 different courses presented by numerous community volunteers, student registrations and class assignments, decorating, writing surveys and much more. General Mills employees, the City of Plymouth Fire, Police and Forestry Departments, TCF Bank, Senator Terri Bonhoff and Stages Theater are just some of the guests who will be coming as "professors". Kids College could not happen without generous amounts of time from Karen Cieminski, Rachel Parnes, Laurinda Romportal, Karen Callis, Candace Newman and student

council. We'll also have at least 20 more parent volunteers on hand to serve as "assistant professors" for each community guest. Thanks to Ann Marie for recruiting so many parent volunteers.

Continental Math has begun in grades 4-5. Grades 1-3 begin in January. *Continental Math is a supplement to Saxon Math, which will help students work on word problems and creative problem solving. It involves 3 math meets for students in grades 2 and 3 and 5 math meets for students in grades 4-8 throughout the school year*

Michelle Thyren is starting the Inventor's Fair after school meetings this month. She attended a workshop for Inventor's Fair coaches last week and got lots of great ideas.

3. Transportation

All students K-8 participated in Bus safety training Oct. 22. MTN provided the buses and drivers to lead the training.

4. Visitors

Teachers, board members and the superintendent of the Staples-Motley School district visited Beacon Academy this month to see Core Knowledge and Elementary Spanish in action. Thanks to Lori Karcz who met with us and other teachers who hosted our tour group in their classrooms.

We also have a group of teachers from St. Therese's school in Deephaven who have heard of Beacon and plan to send teachers to observe our 4-5th grade classrooms later this month.

5. *Report Cards- We have tweaked the report card and have now split it up by grade level. There will be a kindergarten report card, one for grades 1-2, one for grades 3-5, and one for grades 6-8. There will also be a separate specialist report card. This will be done electronically on Excel and will hopefully be done on JMC for second trimester and third trimester.*

6. *Professional Development- Teachers will do their first Q-Comp observations next week. We are also looking into an electronic professional development program called Professional Development 360. We will discuss more when we have a technology program in place.*

PAC Report: *PAC made about \$9,000 at the Roaring 20s dance and silent auction, which was over their goal.*

Board Chair Report (Tam Harken): *Clint has been doing research regarding the lease and portables. He has been talking to the representative for the portables and was told that if Beacon Academy leased the portable directly there would be no sales tax because we are tax exempt. This would be a savings of approximately \$1500. John Cairns (who was present at the 11/11 meeting) advised that other schools have more than one lease and this would not be a problem. The payment for the lease will be about \$19,000-\$20,000 for the rest of the year. Clint has told us that the parking lot is ready to go and we will only need a 2-week turn around time to get things finalized. The board needs to authorize the portable to be purchased by Beacon under the direction of Bob and Tam with the advice of council (John Cairns). The price includes set up of the portables, the rent price for the rest of the school year, and the take down of the portable. The rent for the portable*

comes to \$9.50-\$10.00 a square foot. The electric bill would be paid by Beacon Academy directly and would not be split by the other tenants in the building. The lease that we sign would go through June 30th, and then Clint can decide what he will do after that. If we give approval tonight, the portables could be in by Thanksgiving break. The cost of tearing down the portable is \$3,000 and Scott is wondering if Clint can pay this fee if he decides to keep the portable on site. Lease aid will assist in covering the cost of the portable. We did pay Quantum Development \$100,000 toward costs for the 08-09 school year. Since we have not officially entered into this year's lease, we are now month to month off of last year's rates until this year's lease is signed. Clint will have final rent numbers to us by next week and then hopefully we can move forward on getting the lease signed. The Department of Education e-mailed all schools that have not yet filed for lease aide because they are wondering when they could expect to see the applications. Bob replied and answered the questions that they were addressing. MDE requested a copy of the current lease under negotiation. Bob sent them a draft and let MDE know that it is still a work in progress. John Cairns assured us that the state has never not paid lease aide.

Motion:	Upon advice of council to allow the signing of the lease with ModSpace for a portable classroom.		
Made by:	Bob	Seconded by:	Candace
Discussion:			
Vote:	Yea: all	Nay: none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes		
	We discussed timing of the portable, costs involved, and the reimbursement of the portable through lease aide. See above discussion.		

Friends of Beacon Update (Bob Zarriello): *Friends of Beacon has been working on the design of the new building along with the Steering committee and Jordan. The date of a September 1st opening for the new school is beginning to look tight. The bond market has been atypically volatile due to market conditions. They are still working on designs, but are a little bit uncertain of when the closing will take place and when the school will be able to open. Things change week-to-week and exact dates are very hard to predict. We will need to start thinking about a plan B for the opening of school next year. Part of Jordan's salary can be put into the bonding project. In order to do this, Jordan will need to resign from Friends of Beacon and his services can be contracted from Friends of Beacon instead. The Friends of Beacon board is looking for someone to replace Jordan that has some construction or legal experience. David Goeske mentioned that parents are already starting to plan for next year in terms of day care, work schedules, moving closer to Maple Grove, and other things. He thinks that parents should be informed about these decisions as soon as possible so that they can make plans for what they are going to do. Bob says that a team is meeting tomorrow to discuss plans and will let parents know what the plan is as soon as they can. Bob states, Beacon Academy has a great thing going here with students and faculty and it is not about the building that we reside in. According to David, we need to take our time and do a good job on the building project and not rush into things without thinking and being diligent.*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **STANDING COMMITTEES**
 - a. **Governance (Ann Marie)** – *The governance committee met on Monday to discuss the kindergarten program for next year. The board has already voted on having 4 sections of kindergarten and the governance committee is now discussing the possibility of a kindergarten plus program, which would really be a half-day program with enrichment options available in the morning/afternoon. If we do offer a kindergarten plus program, we need to discuss scheduling and how much we are going to charge.*

The enrichment portion could consist of lunch, recess, rest/story time, science/social studies, and snack time. The committee has seen other programs charge \$875 per trimester per student. Janet mentioned a survey that was done in the first 1-2 years of the school that did not show much interest in full day kindergarten. Christina mentioned that approximately 50% of the prospective kindergarten families ask about the possibility of all day kindergarten as well as before and after school care. A survey to prospective families done at open houses might give us some direction of where to go with this decision. The board also needs to decide about capping enrollment or over-enrolling for each grade level. The governance committee recommends that we need to go on a year-by-year basis and not set a standard procedure at this time. Their recommendation for grades K-3 is to not over-enroll because of long waiting lists, but in grades 4-8 to over-enroll by 2 students per class. The next governance committee meetings will be on 12/1, 1/5, and 2/2 at 5:30 p.m. They will begin to discuss by-law changes and defining the lottery procedures at their next meeting.

b. Executive (Tam Harken)- No report

c. Finance (Bob Zarriello)- See Treasurer's Report

d. Technology Committee (Scott DesBles)- *Since the website has been live, there are about 140 visitors every day. The marketing committee review and decide what should and should not be on the website.*

1. **Staff Survey-** The Committee took an informal verbal survey at the all staff meeting to get feedback on several current issues related to IT. The results aligned with our expectations and helped to finalize many decisions.
2. **Power School-** The scope of work involved to enter all student, classroom, attendance, etc. data into Power School is sizeable. We estimate it would take one person 4 weeks full time to enter data. Once all the data was in place, we estimate it would take another 2 weeks to train the teachers and office staff how to use. At the staff meeting, we asked what the primary want for Power School was. It is to have a web site to post classroom information, such as homework assignments. Because of the work involved in getting Power School ready, and since the school already has another program in place to provide report cards and other classroom information (JMC), the committee is recommending we table Power School for this year and immediately start to implement for next year in June.
3. **Report Cards/Classroom Websites-** JMC is used for the lunch program and daily attendance. This software includes the capability of progress reports, lesson plans, and report cards. We will go forward with using these functions in JMC for this year. Entering progress reports and lesson plans can start as early as 11/24 (possibly earlier). Report cards for the first trimester will be paper, but will be delivered by JMC for the next two trimesters. In addition to JMC, the IT Committee will be installing a web portal application called SharePoint from Microsoft. This is a web portal tool that will allow those teachers who want their own website to easily create them yet have them all

have a uniform look and feel. This should be functional by 11/24.
There will be a training for teachers on Monday 11/24 from 4-5 p.m. on how to use JMC.

- 4. Ricoh Contract-** The contract we signed for \$25,000 was estimated to provide enough support hours to cover the school year. To date, we have used all the hours in the contract. If we renew for additional hours, we estimate the costs to the school to be an additional \$26,000, assuming the same rate of usage. At the staff meeting, we asked how the experience has been with Ricoh to using technology is, overwhelming the answers were lack of training and onsite help. Ricoh does a decent job of reactive break fix, but this is not providing the teachers and staff with the needed help. When asked if anyone. The results were mixed. When asked what the barrier has used the laptops since the NWEA tests, no one has. The reason again was lack of understanding and training. It is our recommendation that the school board creates and approves a full time position for an IT Support Associate.
- 5. Data Backups-** As discussed at the last board meeting, our current data backup is insufficient and if a disaster occurred it is likely we could not recover from data loss. We have reviewed several backup solutions. We recommend a backup service from Evault. This is an enterprise class, 100% offsite backup service.

Motion:	Approve hiring a full time IT Support Associate for \$35,000 a year plus benefits.		
Made by:	Scott	Seconded by:	Ann Marie
Discussion:			
Vote:	Yea: all	Nay: none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes		
	The rate would be pro-rated for the rest of this school year. Keith says that it is much more economical to have a person on hand than to continue to contract through Ricoh. We do have funds set aside that could pay for this. We also should purchase a laptop for this person. Scott will take care of posting jobs and looking at resumes.		

Motion:	Approve contract with Evault for backup services at \$560 one-time costs and \$1,205/month for two years.		
Made by:	Scott	Seconded by:	Lori
Discussion:			
Vote:	Yea: all	Nay: none	Abstain: none
Decision:	passes		
	This will be an additional line item to the budget that we do not currently have money set aside for. This is a much safer and more secure way to back up data than servers that can be purchased from stores. As the amount of data that we store grows, the monthly charge may go up.		

- e. **Curriculum (Lori Karcz)-** *We are meeting November 17th at 6:30. Our focus will be on technology.*
- f. **Marketing and Public Relations (Cathy Burke)-** *There is going to be an open house on January 22nd at the Maple Grove Community Center from 6-7:30. The other open houses will be at Beacon Academy. The lottery in February will also be at the Community Center in Maple Grove. The committee has created two handouts for marketing purposes. The first one will be for current families (will be sent out with the electronic Thursday envelope) and will be posted on the website. The other flyer would be posted in the area and passed out in pre-schools around the area. The committee is working to create different flyers and marketing tools so that when they get the go*

ahead, they will be ready. They are also researching doing advertising in movie theaters. They have researched theaters in Plymouth and Maple Grove. Since the chip clips were such a hit at the parade, they might pass out more at open houses. There is \$10,000 budgeted for marketing and only \$250 has been spent. Kristi mentioned that there was discussion at the PAC meeting last night that advertising in movie theaters might make us appear desperate and that nice mailings would be more effective. The committee wants some direction as to when the marketing should take place. Christina mentioned from all the parents that she talks to that a majority of the parents have heard about us from word of mouth and a few from postcards, but none of them from movie theaters.

g. New Building (Ann Marie)- *The committee has met twice and the committee chairs have met with the architect three times. The feedback from the committee has given architects feedback and the architects have then made changes to the plans. There are still a couple different versions of plans that they are working with and will make final decisions when we know more about the bonding. They do not have another meeting scheduled until more decisions need to be made. The Geothermal energy plan is not as cost effective as we may have originally hoped.*

h. Transition (Gretchen McQuillan)-

The transition committee has meet twice during the last couple of months. We have covered and discussed these topics.

- 1) Moving into the portables. What needs to be moved? Who is going to be helping with the move? What items need to be ordered new?
- 2) We have collected a list furniture items from all teachers for the big move at the end of the year.
- 3) Began discussion what the end of the year checkout list will look like for teachers. Our committee will be meeting again soon once we know the status on the portables.

i. Transportation (Tam Harken)- *Transportation has met once and will continue to meet. They are hoping to have a skeleton of 4-6 bus routes with satellite stops by the middle of December. We want to have an idea of routes before open houses next year.*

• **ON CALL COMMITTEES**

- a. Fundraising and Grants- No report needed**
- b. Long-range Planning- No report needed**

Board Correspondence and Communication- *Review the Academic Performance from Friends of Ascension. (See handouts)*

Old Business- None

New Business- None

NEXT MEETING IS DECEMBER 10TH AT 6:00.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF NEXT MEETING AGENDA

MOTION TO APPROVE FORWARDED BY ANNE, SECONDED BY ANN MARIE, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn forwarded by Scott, Lori seconded by. Approved unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 9:47.

Approved on _____

Anne Ingvaldson, Secretary
Beacon Academy School Board

Approved