

September 2015 Board Spotlight

Hello Beacon families and staff,

Thank you for following the discussions and decisions that take place on the school board level. It is one of many ways you are involved in your child's education. Following are some topics we discussed at our September meeting.

Enrollment

We had more no shows on the first day of school than in years past. Those openings are being filled, but it takes time as it is our current policy to give prospective families 48 hours to say yes or no to the placement. (Our current enrollment is at 404 students and our budget was based on 410 students.) Kristi Pingel is busy working on this! We discussed some ideas that could help solidify commitment or encourage those who are planning to attend elsewhere to let us know of their withdrawal before summer's end. It is far easier to fill spots before the school year begins, so the board tasked the governance committee to take a look at our enrollment policies and determine if there are any adjustments that could help this situation.

Community Survey

Assistant principal, Kris Achter, led us through the results of the community survey that took place in early June. Thanks to 114 of you for taking the time to complete the survey because the results were helpful to us and will be a tool for Mr. Koster and Mr. Achter to make tangible changes as well. The highest rated areas were strong sense of community, small learning environment, character education, and Spanish. Leadership from our principals and overall communication also came through as strengths. The biggest areas for improvement at Beacon were listed as the need for improved facilities and playground equipment. Others encouraged us to not lose focus on our academic rigor. Some brought up the inconsistent levels of communication they have experienced from one child's teacher compared to another child's teacher. There have already been improvements made in this area. Thank you for your feedback!

Facility Planning Update

Since our last meeting, the facility planning committee has been quite busy. They had a recent meeting with all involved parties and potential expansion partners. At their recommendation, we are narrowing in on two specific options and are working to assess each one based on our expansion needs and budget limitations.

The first option currently being explored is land in Corcoran, west of Lawndale on Bass Lake Road. The city of Corcoran would welcome our charter school relocating to Corcoran, and the landowner is offering the land at a reasonable price. Building a new building would present risk but also great reward in having a purpose-built facility and ample land for our students to enjoy. We authorized the committee to initiate a letter of intent with the land owner. This will allow Beacon and its partners time to undergo more due diligence for the site, including such things as necessary soil testing and a host of other research.

The second option exists because Church of the Open Door is receptive to the possibility of Beacon expanding at our current site. The church is proposing a two-stage expansion plan where we would end up with approximately the optimal amount of space for the current vision for Beacon - a three section k-

8 school. It would include a full size gym with the current gym turning into a cafeteria or additional classrooms. We would have much more dedicated space, requiring less transformation of classrooms on weekends for church use.

As you can see, there are many details to consider in both scenarios. The facility planning committee and school board agree that it is prudent to explore both options. At this point, we are able to do so with minimal cost.

Should you have any questions about the developments described here, please direct them to Rob Kalinsky, facility planning committee chair, or David Goeske, board chair.

On behalf of the board of directors,
Heidi Sheard, board secretary