

February 2015 Board Spotlight

Greetings Beacon Community,

The board of directors had a long and productive February meeting.

Our business manager, Keith Johnson, shared that our projected budget is precisely on track this year. Thanks to Keith, Jacque Lee, our treasurer, and the capable finance committee members for keeping our school fiscally healthy.

It is time for a new bus contract. Principal, Sean Koster, shared the details of the bids that have come in and the interviews that have taken place. Cost per bus per day, location of terminal to Beacon, field trip costs, and routing systems were some of our top considerations. Reference calls to schools that currently use each bus company also helped shape our discussion. Sean is going to go back to our top choice and negotiate a few more details.

Sean requested that we consider adding a para professional who could help struggling readers in grades 4-8. It was discussed, and the finance committee is going to take a look at the possibility of adding this to the budget. We have also applied for the Americorps Promise program. If our application is approved, we would get one or two aspiring teachers for a discounted fee and they would be designated to help struggling readers in grades 6-8.

Assistant Principal, Kris Achter, shared about the plans for something new: Wednesday News. The grade level responsible for character education each month gives the announcements. It is a great way to use our technology to help build community. The teachers who sit on the board all agreed that the Wednesday News segments are enjoyed by everyone.

Phil Moye from our authorizer, Innovative Quality Schools, was in the building yesterday. He observed our newly expanded Spanish department. He also praised our DDI testing and said we are hitting the mark with that process. Phil also attended our board meeting and gave our annual oversight report. He said, "Beacon is an excellent charter school and has won many awards." In summary, he said we are an outstanding school. We discussed areas on the report that we could possibly improve.

Technology committee member, Kris Achter, shared the committee's proposed budget for the next three years. That budget includes a new server and the maintenance of that server. The committee has also been researching costs we would incur should our school expand by remodeling an existing building or by building new.

Facility planning committee chair, Rob Kalinsky, reported several areas of progress. The committee had a fruitful meeting with the City of Maple Grove and several sites are being considered based on that meeting. The two sites toured last month are not being pursued for two different reasons. Cushman Wakefield, the school's representative, is actively helping us negotiate potential expansion options for our current facility at Open Door as well as land and existing buildings available in our defined search area. The committee is also moving forward on interviewing two bonding companies so that is in place whenever we are ready to proceed.

Finally, employee retention and compensation committee member, Melanie Spall, outlined the committee's proposal to the board for restructuring the current pay scale. The teacher's compensation package has not changed in the last five years. We had a good and lengthy discussion about the value of retaining teachers and the direct benefit that is to our students. Most notably, the proposal provides

more frequent incremental increases in salary for teachers in years 1-6. The board asked the committee to make a few more adjustments and it will be back on the agenda next month.