

June 2015 Board Spotlight

Greetings Beacon Academy community,

A special welcome to new families who have registered to attend Beacon this Fall!

Our June board meeting was all about setting the stage for a successful year to come. The 2015-16 budget was approved after a several-month review process. We will be able to increase our state aid figures since the Minnesota legislators reached a budget deal in their special session last week. All public schools will receive a 2% increase this next year as well as a 2% increase the following year. This is good news as there are no strings attached to this increased funding.

The Facility Planning committee is continuing to pursue our two best options: working with Open Door to build an addition for more dedicated space and building a new facility near the border of Maple Grove and Corcoran. They are still watching our defined search area for other opportunities should something new come up. Removing obstacles to a swift and sound decision is our goal.

We discussed the Personal Time Off (PTO) policy for staff and various possible adjustments that would be both fair to staff and also help reduce the number of days in which there are too many staff out of the building. The Governance committee is going to take a look at this as well. A good discussion led to an agreement that we would continue this conversation at our meeting in July.

Lastly, the board is considering increasing either the kindergarten or the first grade class size by two students per class for this coming school year. With this change, more siblings would be allowed into their family's choice school (Beacon) at an earlier date. Also, bringing these classes even with the rest would help alleviate the challenge of bringing the new second graders up to speed in Spanish as well as the rest of our curriculum. (Currently, kindergarten and first grade classes are smaller by two students and then two new students from the waiting list are brought into each second grade class, with siblings getting priority.) The change we are considering would be a one-year trial to see how it works for everyone involved. In the future, there would be potential for kindergarten and first grade class sizes to match that of the grades 2-8. Further discussion about this possibility will take place with our trusted kindergarten and first grade teachers.

Enjoy this beautiful Minnesota summer weather,

Heidi Sheard, on behalf of the Beacon Academy Board of Directors