

Hello Beacon Community,

During our October board meeting, we voted to appoint 6th grade teacher, Sandie Illi, to fill the vacant board seat that was left by an outgoing teacher. For those who are new to Beacon Academy, charter schools in Minnesota are unique in that teachers serve on the board of directors, often holding a majority. We are proud of this and feel that it makes a positive impact on the decisions we make as a school board.

Our finance report was fairly routine. We are, of course, watching things closely, both for our own commitment to fiscal health and also because we are responsible to our investors. Always closely tied to our financial outlook is our enrollment report. Mr. Koster shared that in our 12-mile move to Crystal, we lost around 120 students and gained about 280 students. That means we have just barely more new students than returning students! Administrators and teachers are doing a commendable job of welcoming new students, while working to maintain our school culture. Mr. Koster shared and others echoed that recent visitors to our building, including substitute teachers, have commented on how they love coming to our building because of the unique feel and the warm welcome climate we have at Beacon. Mr. Koster called it the “Beacon Difference.”

We had a brief, high-level discussion of paid time off for teachers and paras. HR is working to establish a guideline that allows for four pre-approved teacher and para absences per day. The fifth request would be considered a maybe and the sixth would be saved in case someone calls in sick. We are not planning to restrict teachers and paras from being absent on certain dates because we are a community who supports each other and understands the importance of being in the building to support student learning.

Board Chair, David Goeske, explained that the Executive Committee has done its annual task of working with Principal Koster to establish his goals for the year. The most notable thing coming out of the conversation is that character education is a primary pillar of our school and we are wanting to look for ways to build upon this distinction. Mr. Koster is planning to create more opportunities to weave this into the fabric of our identity as a school.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,
Heidi Sheard, Board Secretary