

BREVARD ACADEMY – A CHALLENGE FOUNDATION ACADEMY

Board of Directors Regular Meeting

May 18, 2015, 5:45 p.m.

Searcy Hall, BA-CFA Campus

Chair: Warren Alston

Secretary: Zia McConnell

Members present: Stewart Marshall, Laura Thomas, Amy Knight, Nick Iosue

Administration present: Barbara Grimm, Camy Stirling

Guests: John Lanier – Transylvania Times

Charlie Garcia, Mark Bebee, Mike Harrington – C.F. Properties

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The regular meeting of the Brevard Academy Board of Directors was called to order by the Chair at 5:47 p.m. A quorum was present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Zia to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Stewart. Unanimous vote -- **Motion carried.**

**Consideration and approval of minutes:**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Stewart to approve the minutes from the 4/20/15 regular meeting with the correction of the enrollment number. It should read: 284 students (237 less 8, 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates +55 new). Nick seconded. Unanimous vote -- **Motion carried.**

**Challenge Foundation Properties:** Mike Harrington

Charlie Garcia (contractor) and Mark Bebee (architect) were introduced. Mike said that we are in the due-diligence process of the project, and working to determine if the site is adequate and that it meets all permitting requirements.

Mr. Garcia said that his company has many years of experience on school buildings/grounds combining functionality with the business of education. He is on other school boards, and understands the need for practicality – a design that the parents, staff, and board want in conjunction with what we can afford. Challenge Foundation Properties (CFP) truly wants to get BA-CFA the best bang for our buck. No one wants to incur a huge future financial burden -- the idea is to have a building and site that is affordable so that the staff, parents and board can put their energy and resources into focusing on the education of our students. What CFP wants to provide is a design and financing that is turn-key, so that the school can be up and running as quickly and affordably as possible.

Mark Bebee spoke about the work that his architectural firm does. They have done many additions and renovations as well as new construction. They create designs that incorporate sustainable and green planning. They do not have any pre-conceived ideas of what we need – they listen to our planning committee has in mind and go from there. In fact, they pride

themselves on good listening and translating that listening into ideas that work for clients. The Facilities Committee will have a very interactive relationship in the design process of the project.

Stewart Marshall asked about where we are in the due-diligence process. Mike responded that we are in the Phase 1 of the environmental study. A Phase II is not predicted for the site, but if it is needed we might need to extend the time needed to do such a study by 2 weeks.

Stewart raised concerns about the enrollment needed to afford the new building. The number of students suggested by Nick Iosue (Treasurer) in a financial analysis that he did was 325. How are we going to reach that number? Mike Harrington answered that it is up to the school to come up with the numbers; his job is to work on the building and financing. Nick reminded Stewart that 325 was the number we would need to have if we were financing the project through a bank. Not that we do not need to strive for that number – we do. But with CFP’s help, we will have some leeway in working toward that number. Charlie mentioned that the ability to work in phases is a possibility if necessary. Mike Harrington reiterated that this is a team effort with the Facilities Committee, CFP, and the Board being integral components.

Mark Bebee said that another reason they made the trip to Brevard was to look at our current campus, and see what parts we like so that perhaps some of those things can be translated into the new campus. A conceptual design is already being worked on by his firm and it is based on the needs, wants, and dreams list that the Facilities Committee gave them.

**Public Comment:** None

**Teacher report: Camy Stirling**

Camy handed out a report showing what each grade is currently working on. There are just 7 days of school left! Then there was a report from Dana York, 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade Science teacher, Kim Hargis, the 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade Math teacher and Derrick Gardner, Music teacher.

Dana York explained that 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders had an opportunity to take a field trip to a farm preserve, Green River. While there the students had an opportunity to:

- [ Witness nutrient cycling and sustainability
- [ Have a person from the reserve come in and provide a lesson
- [ Build self-irrigating buckets

The students have an ongoing project to monitor plants to see what plants are missing which nutrients. Some students will be monitoring plants all summer long. We hope to take the information we learn over to the new school site to the plant life there.

Kim Hargis spoke about Singapore Math, and the bar models used – she LOVES these, and feel they are so beneficial in helping illustrate the math for the students.

Her education philosophy is “Edutainment” – making education entertaining for students. She feels this helps students engage in the learning process and retain the information learned.

One project they did was build hats using templates and finding the surface area – some students figured out the surface area all by themselves without any hints! Another project was using numbers and patterns to build flexangles.

Derrick Gardner spoke about the trip that the Travel Band took to Disney World. There were 29 students who took the trip (plus parents and staff that chaperoned). They had a marvelous experience! They received a workshop with a Disney Orchestra bassoonist who gave the

students music to site read, and then recorded their work. They practiced the music several times, and then recorded again, and were proud to hear their improvement.

They played the theme of “Tangled” and the Disney Production studio put their recording together with scenes from the movie. (The Board got to see the video.)

The students then performed on a stage at EPCOT and were told that while they were performing, they were true Disney Employees, and represented the park to everyone visiting the park. The students behaved accordingly, gave a great performance, and won a Golden Mickey Award!

In speaking about the trip, Derrick told the Board that the community really helped make this trip a reality – 185 King sponsored \$1500 of the trip, and Oskar Blues then matched that amount. Having these local music sponsors really helped reduce the price for the families and shows how the BA-CFA music program is appreciated in the community.

Derek Wilbanks suggested that the video/picture slideshow be given to all the sponsors as a thank you. Warren asked for a list of all the sponsors so that he could write a thank-you on behalf of the Board/school.

Warren stated that our teachers and staff are able to draw talents from our children (in all areas) that are absolutely amazing. Since he has been here, Mr. Gardner has really stretched the music program offered. Mrs. Grimm said that there are very few lessons that have as much impact as working hard for something – the students really worked hard to get to go on this trip.

**Financial report: Barbara Grimm**

Listed below are the budget items requested:

1				Barbara wanted to pay stipend to theater coordinators, just as the coaches of sports receive stipends
.	Line 1: Salary Supplemental Pay	Add	\$4500.00	
2				
.	Line 1: Salary-Coach stipend	Reduce	\$2400.00	
3				
.	Line 2: State Retirement	Reduce	\$7000.00	
4				
.	Textbooks	Reduce	\$1052.45	
5				
.	Line 3: Special Projects	Reduce	\$1047.55	

**Motion:** A motion was made by Zia to approve the budget amendments as presented. Nick seconded. Unanimous vote -- **Motion carried.**

Three Board members are not getting these budget reports from Acadia. Barbara will check with Krystal and see what the problem might be. Those Board members will also check their SPAM mail to see if by chance the reports are going in there.

We should have a budget surplus of ~\$120K from the 2014/2015 school year. It will be a bit reduced as the grant from Team CFA for the conference travel will not cover all of our expenses this year. Next year we will look into booking flights sooner to hopefully avoid the summer airline rate hikes. This kind of surplus looks great to lenders as we get ready to take on the new school project.

**Director report: Barbara Grimm**

(See attached written report)

*Testing:*

The representative of the Office of Charter Schools for our area, Kebbler Williams, noted in a comment on our minutes, that a review of test scores should be discussed at every meeting.

Barbara gave a review of the test scores.

- [ Scores were a bit disappointing in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, although it was recognized early on that this was a big class (25) and there were some students not up to speed. So, in an effort to help students, a teacher was added (Anna Wilborn) so that the class could be divided. Also, fifth grade Math now being taught by Kim Hargis, the Singapore Math specialist. Ms. Clanton was shifted from 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math to teaching Middle school Social Studies.
- [ It has been noted that while MAPs testing is a great assessment tool, it does not correlate directly to the End of Grade (EOG) state test. BA-CFA teachers will next year really focus on doing a better job of using the same academic language used on the EOG tests so that students will not be thrown for a loop when a different term is used from what is used in MAPs.

The question was asked, does Compass Learning help? Yes, it is an intuitive program that asks harder and harder questions as the student progresses. But again, the Compass Learning language matches the MAPs test, not necessarily the EOG tests.

Remember that as a charter school, in order to adhere to our own Core Knowledge standards and comply with the state (DPI) standards, we have to align Singapore Math, MAPs testing, and EOGs to make sure that we leave no learning gaps. This is quite a task for our teachers as they design their learning plans for each year.

Do we want to post these scores on our website and use them in our printed Marketing tools? Yes, in some form we want to be able to present this information so that it is understandable to parents as they are searching for a school for their children.

The scores are important, but so is student growth -- when will that data be available? Barbara stated that we should have those figures in June.

A discussion ensued about BA-CFA marketing ourselves (using these scores) as the “best school in the county.” We want parents to make that choice for themselves – we may not be the best fit for all students, and parents need the right to decide which school suits their child(ren) best.

Warren stated that speaking personally, as a dad of student who graduated from BA-CFA, he does feel that we produce a better educated student and we are proud to operate our school with a budget **surplus**. We have worked hard to bring BA-CFA to this level, and we should be proud of our accomplishments with tax-payer dollars and the students that we feed into the Transylvania County School system.

*Compliance:*

Other items that the Office of Charter Schools has noted: we need to have on file a Grievance Policy and a Nepotism Policy. Zia McConnell stated that we did indeed have Grievance Policy, but Barbara said she could not find it electronically in any of the files that were passed on to her. Warren stated that we have a temporary one in place now, and this will be something that we need to address at the retreat.

Laura Thomas said that she would send out a sample Nepotism Policy to all the Board members this week for review before the July retreat.

**Team CFA report: Laura Thomas**

In the process of kicking off 3 new schools:

- [ Veritas in Charlotte, NC a K-3 school
- [ Shining Rock Classical Academy in Waynesville, NC (starting K-5, but will go K-8 or K-12)
- [ Excelsior Classical Academy, (starting K-5, but will go K-8 or K-12)

Deanne Rowe is the new Southwest Regional Director at Team CFA.

Team CFA is helping to write charters for 3 new schools in Indiana, and there will be 2 additional charters written in the future.

Warren wanted it to be noted that there has been a lot in the press lately about for-profit charter schools, and the BA-CFA is NOT a for profit school. All of the surplus cash we have will be put right back into the school itself.

**Committee Reports:***Fund development/Marketing & Outreach – Nick Iosue*

- [ Nick to meet with John Felty this Thursday at 10:00 a.m. to see what kinds of ideas John (a professional, successful event coordinator that lives in Brevard and has students at the school) might have for a big fund-raising event for the school. Nick will email those who originally said they would be interested in being on this committee.

*Facilities: Amy*

- [ Covered in the first part of the meeting. Next meeting possibly June 1<sup>st</sup> as a Web-Ex meeting with Charlie Garcia.
- [ It was requested that all Board members be copied in on minutes from all committee meetings.

*Long Range Planning and Visioning: Zia*

- [ Zia will send out the 5-year Rolling Plan so that Board members can review it for discussion at the July Retreat. We need to not pick apart each detail of the language – that is just too time consuming and we have so much to cover at the retreat. Perhaps Board members could give language edits to Zia after the meeting. But the Facilities portion of the document needs to be fleshed out and added.

*Personnel: Zia*

- [ No report

*Board Development, Policies and Procedures: Stewart*

- [ As mentioned need to develop and add a Grievance and Nepotism Policy to our documents. Warren said these need to be ready by the August meeting so that they can be voted on for the 2015/2016 school year.

**Old Business:**

School calendar for 2015/2016: We need to change all of the half day dismissal times to 11:30 instead of noon. Kimberly Best said she would change it on the web version of the calendar immediately.

Laura asked that all holidays be noted in a color, as the state requires that teachers receive a certain number of holidays off. (Last year there were 9 holidays.)

Students must have 1025 hours, or 185 days of instruction. This calendar meets these requirements.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Nick to approve the 2015/2016 School Calendar as presented with the addition of color-coding the holidays, and the dismissal times for half days being changed to 11:30 a.m. Nick seconded. Unanimous vote -- **Motion carried.**

The Board will have a Special Meeting to vote on the 2015/2016 Budget. Several meeting times and places were discussed. The final outcome was for the meeting to be on May 27<sup>th</sup> in the Conference Room at 8:00 a.m. There is a conference call phone box now...the number to call is the school fax number.

#### **New Business:**

For the June 15<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting, Laura Thomas will take minutes as Zia will not be able to attend the meeting.

There will be no Teacher Report or PTO Report for the June meeting.

#### **Next Meeting:**

The next regular meeting will take place on June 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 p.m. This meeting will be in the Alumni House on the Brevard Music Center campus, as our regular Conference Room will be in use.

*Short Break (approximately 5 minutes)*

#### **Closed Session:**

**Motion:** Nick made a motion from the floor to enter into a closed session to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential information under the NC general Statutes 143.318.11 (a) (1) to discuss items related to personnel matters. Laura seconded.

**Motion carried.** The Board entered into Closed Session at 7:54 p.m.

**Motion:** Nick made a motion to come out of Closed Session. Zia seconded.

**Motion carried.** Time: 8:17 p.m.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Nick to offer Barbara Grimm a contract for the 2015/2016 school year. Stewart seconded. Unanimous vote -- **Motion carried.**

#### **Adjourn:**

**Motion:** Nick made a motion to adjourn. Zia seconded. Vote was unanimous.

**Motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.