

**Boston Renaissance Charter Public School
Board of Trustees
February 8, 2017**

Attendance:

A. Faturoti, S. Copeland, E. Alphone, S. Dibinga, S. Kumahia, L. Bispham, A. Kesler, H. Raymond, K. Williamson

Guests: A. Buckmire, F. Shearer, P. Littlehale, C. Fisher

Call to order: 8:10 a.m.

Public comment: No comment.

S. Kumahia: Motion to approve January 2017 minutes. Seconded by A. Kesler. All in favor.

Head of School Report – Presented by A. Buckmire

We updated our enrollment policy. It was completed and approved by DESE. The school is now involved in the online application process and we have received over 2,000 applications.

A group of us went to visit the Brook Charter School in Mattapan and we left with some good insight; it was a very good trip overall.

On February 17, 2017, we will be meeting with Lori Likis to make strategic changes without causing disruption for the next school year and try to form an informal partnership with the Brook Charter School. The student independence was evident in their classrooms and we would like for some of our teachers to visit as well and make some observations.

F. Shearer: We did some research about potential other school visits. We are trying to find schools to visit with similar demographics (urban charter schools) and similar size who doing well academically. We haven't really found a good match so far. We were pretty intrigued by what we saw at the Brook Charter School and their different practices. It is the highest achieving charter school in the state and very good at communication with us. They have competitive salaries for their teachers as well and hire teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience.

S. Kumahia – Did they talk about allocation of resources that is made in order to make their teachers' salaries competitive? No, we did not have that conversation but we did note that it is interesting they do not have a teacher salary schedule.

A. Faturoti: Regarding the hiring of teachers – it would be interesting to compare spending on teacher development vs. hiring experienced teachers.

A. Buckmire: We see it more in time; instructional coaches spend a lot of time instructing new teachers.

S. Kumahia: Is there any indication about the level of involvement of their board? A.

A. Buckmire: No, but the Executive Director is definitely open to talking about it if board members want to meet with him.

A. Buckmire: The school had its Chinese New Year celebration last week. It was a fantastic event. Hundreds of parents attended and students really enjoyed it as well.

S. Dibinga: The event was amazing. Parents were blown away by the program and they really enjoyed their children learning a new second language so congratulations to the Mandarin language teachers and people who set up the event.

Operations Update – Presented by P. Littlehale

- We are moving forward with floor replacement on 2nd and 3rd floors; meeting with former colleague about bid - ballpark at \$400k to do 2nd and 3rd floors. This will go out to bid no later than mid-March. We will get proposals and hopefully award a proposal no later than mid-April in order to start working on this over the summer.
 - o It is expensive but we will be saving money every year and hopefully it should be good flooring for the next 20-25 years.
- We do not have a financial report this month. We are starting to pull the budget together and have had some conversations around staffing and salaries.
- We are having discussions with Eastern Insurance Policy to discuss quotes for health insurance for next year. We are trying to get Harvard Pilgrim to give us a good quote.
- We will not get a good estimate for tuition for next year until April.
 - o S. Kumahia: How wide is the range? P. Littlehale: Very wide range and it is not helpful to look at now. We should wait a little longer to see what that range is.
- Community Eligible Provision
 - o My overall recommendation is that the school institute this provision.
 - o The program is funded by the federal government. They enacted this provision because students eligible for free/reduced lunch were not getting it because some families would fill out the application and then for several reasons would not submit the application or there were also families not filling out the applications even though they were eligible.
 - o This provision was part of efforts to make this process easier. What this provision does is:
 - Eliminates need for paper applications

- Schools provide free breakfast and lunch to all students without collecting applications – they can do this if at least one of its schools has 40% or more certified students for free meals without an application.
 - Directly certified students: students living in households that participate in: SNAP, TANF, certified Medicaid categories
- Our school qualifies for this – 82% would be reimbursed at free rate and 18% at paid rate; no such thing as reduced.
- Have to make sure federal funding covers cost of meals, if not district has to cover the gap.
 - Districts can potentially have problems with this.
- We have generated a surplus every year and so we have ability to institute this provision.
- Any surplus generated can only be used for food service program.
- No student will pay for lunch at all – will lose revenue from that (a/b \$40k).
- Operational perspective/positives: no longer have to do paper processing, no collection of money from students, helps out parents, eliminates ways people identify students who pay/don't pay, etc (stigmatization of it)
- I think we should move timeline up to implementing it this year. If we get it started on March 1st we're not locked in and can pull out any time; we can reapply with higher numbers next year and have more reimbursement if necessary.

A. Faturoti: I have an issue with kids not paying and then going through the stigmatization of not having a hot lunch.

S. Kumahia: Can we vote today on this? P. Littlehale: Yes.

S. Kumahia: Motion for the Boston Renaissance Public Charter School to engage in the CEP provision no sooner than March 1st, 2017. E. Alphonse: Second. All in favor. So moved.

Other Operations Updates – Presented by P. Littlehale

We are having active discussions with Century Bank about refinancing. After we receive solid information, we will share the details with the board but essentially we're looking at reducing the interest rate on one or more of the loans we have with them.

A. Kesler: Regarding the parking lot; several teachers fell today because of the ice. Is there a way to salt driveways while cars on property? Today was unavoidable but just want to know what the policy is?

P. Littlehale: Normally the school is good at getting it done before this happens, will double check with the people we hire. Today was unavoidable, but will ask them.

F. Shearer: This is not on the agenda but wanted to bring up that we have a public records request from the Boston Globe, not just the Renaissance but all charter schools. They asked for electronic copies of annual salaries for each employee for the years 2014, 15, and 16.

A. Buckmire: What will be the cost for collecting this data? P. Littlehale: It won't take up much time, the first 4 hours are free.

E. Alphonse: Regarding the flooring – are we using most of the capital budget for it?

P. Littlehale: We can use it from the capital or regular operating account as well; we are not restricted to a certain account but we do have funds for the flooring.

Visa Sponsorship:

A. Buckmire – I sent the policy the school is considering adopting regarding visa sponsorship. There is a fiscal piece to it. We want the board to decide not having in mind the particular request by the specific employee at the school.

S. Kumahia: Critical to make the decision today? A. Buckmire: The sooner the better.

P. Littlehale: The sponsor has to pay for everything; there is a commitment to that.

S. Kumahia: Since most of us have not read the policy yet we will commit to having a decision for the next board meeting and ask everyone to read it before then.

Committee Updates:

Academic Committee: A. Kesler – Academic committee will be meeting in March.

Governance and Nomination: S. Kumahia: I had a conversation with Bud Moseley - there are some names of people we want to introduce as potential board members. Erin Osbourne – never approved her board membership and so we will follow up on that.

Parents of Renaissance: S. Dibinga: Everything is going well. The parents have created a website.

A. Buckmire: There is a potential issue with one of the sections that says that any concerns/issues posted there can be brought to the board but that's not really the case. We should have the person in charge of the website sit down with Franklin. And we would want to make the statement that the website is not affiliated with the school.

Movie night and international night coming up as well.

Upcoming events

Job fair this Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 1pm. 27 people have registered but we sent an email blast to 300 more people. Directors and coaches will be there to conduct interviews.

S. Kumahia: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by A. Kesler.