

APPROVED



Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

Minutes

Board of Trustee Meeting

Date and Time

Wednesday January 17, 2024 at 8:00 AM

Location

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

ID: 83811467064

Passcode: 823632

MISSION

The mission of the Boston Renaissance Charter Public School is to nurture and develop academic, social and emotional competence while building confidence, character and citizenship among its students.

Trustees Present

A. Buckmire (remote), B. Keith (remote), C. Barrett (remote), C. Engerman (remote), D. Morris (remote), K. Cherry (remote), M. Gardner (remote), R. Clarke Jr. (remote), S. Dibinga (remote)

Trustees Absent

K. Davis Kernizan, K. Williamson

Guests Present

A. Emery (remote), April Shepard (remote), D. Warwick (remote), David Conrady (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

B. Keith called a meeting of the board of trustees of Boston Renaissance Charter Public School to order on Wednesday Jan 17, 2024 at 8:01 AM.

C. Welcome and Public Comment

II. Approve Minutes

A. Approve Minutes

B. Keith made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustee Meeting on 10-18-23.

C. Engerman seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Morris	Aye
A. Buckmire	Abstain
R. Clarke Jr.	Aye
M. Gardner	Aye
K. Cherry	Absent
K. Williamson	Absent
K. Davis Kernizan	Absent
S. Dibinga	Aye
B. Keith	Aye
C. Engerman	Aye
C. Barrett	Abstain

B. Approve Minutes

B. Keith made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustee Meeting on 11-15-23.

M. Gardner seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Barrett	Aye
B. Keith	Aye
M. Gardner	Aye
R. Clarke Jr.	Aye
C. Engerman	Aye
K. Davis Kernizan	Absent
K. Cherry	Absent
D. Morris	Aye
A. Buckmire	Aye

Roll Call

K. Williamson	Absent
S. Dibinga	Aye

III. Visual & Performing Arts Update

A. Visual & Performing Arts Department Update

April Shepard, Director of Visual & Performing Arts, is joining today to present an update of all the great work she and her team are doing at the school. The presentation highlighted the Digital Media Art Center, formally known as our Library. Students are experiencing more traditional library times where they're sitting in the book Nook reading stories, they are learning how to research and explore the library in a new way. They are working to coordinate both library lessons and team lessons that enhance the work that's being done in the classroom, incorporating digital library skills, Technology and STEAM. This past Friday we had a STEAM day that was fabulous.

We have our stARTs program, our 'stars in the arts program' that takes place on half day Fridays. Students have been identified by the teachers as students who are showing aptitude and an interest in a specific subject area. It's good for the students to see that their hard work and their interests are seen and that they are highlighted. The stARTs program is a staff and student favorite program. The students are loving this extra time and the staff feel like they're really getting to do a deep dive with students. It's giving the specialty teachers the ability to expand on their own craft and staff have marked it as a favorite thing we've done this school year.

The goal with having students in the enrichment classes, and in the stARTs classes specifically, is to be able to have them experience what it would be like to be part of a conservatory, or to take classes outside of school that you would have to pay for. We're trying to give them more exposure within the school and inspire them to go beyond.

In theater they're working on improvisation, theater games as well as different grades working on specific plays and playwriting.

In one of the dance studios they are researching Hip Hop History and looking at different artists. They are also working on a Harry Potter inspired piece of choreography.

They did some planting in the Chinese classes, and learned all about the parts of the plant in mandarin, and then different foods that are specific to Chinese culture.

In PE classes they're focusing on leadership and teamwork development. We're looking into how to build that into their curriculum and we're getting more time in the gymnasium for children.

In music they're doing strings, violin and keyboard. Students are learning how to read music and play music and work together. We've expanded the upper school program to include the Ukulele this year.

In Visual arts classes they are looking at different artists, they have learned a little bit about Tim Burton, and applied his style. Also in art classes we have a few students who

are coming in as mentors to lower school children. One example is an upper school student who planned out and developed an entire stop motion animation video. When we've shown the stop motion animation that they are doing in lower and upper school and collaboratively working together, people are blown away that this is done by elementary school students.

All of this is happening in the regular specialty classes and then taking it that step further with the stARTs program, where students can delve a little deeper into that subject matter.

The Voices of Renaissance Choir performed at the Boston A.R.T.S Learning 2023 Award Ceremony. Members of the Arts Ed community throughout the State were there and the VOR received great feedback. A special moment at the event was that Ms. White our VOR Choir Director got to say Thank you to Ms. Lee for leaving this legacy for us.

Board member: Would like to connect some Boston Arts Academy (BAA) faculty to come over to the school to see what we are doing with the arts and to support in regards to getting students ready earlier to be able to audition for BAA. Possibly have some BAA students come in and perform for the Renaissance choir, and vice versa.

The Board thanked Ms. Shepard for her presentation. The Specialty department has been a real highlight this year.

IV. Finance

A. FY24 Q2 Review

Discussed FY24 Q2. These are the ratios that we review at each board meeting. We are green across the board, nothing of concern. We have some receivables tied into nutrition, waiting on school lunch receipts to come through from the State.

We did budget the year at 922 students. We are currently at our cap of 944, which helps us with tuition. We did budget conservatively again, due to us struggling for the past few years with our enrollment numbers.

Due to vacancies we are using contracted services to fill some positions which could cause overruns if those positions are not filled. We'll have some savings, probably within pupil services and the out of district tuition. Two areas of saving; staff salaries, offset by the higher contracted services, and then factoring in the increase in tuition. We have been seeing significant surpluses the last couple of years. This is due to ESSER, which is going away this September 2024.

B. FY 24 Capital Reserve

K. Cherry made a motion to Vote to approve an additional \$2 million contribution to the capital reserve, bringing total contributions for the capital reserve to \$8 million.

C. Engerman seconded the motion.

A. Emery, CFO, presented the capital reserve and the purpose of the capital reserve. The reserve is considered a board designated restriction so it can be released by a board vote as well if necessary in the future. The capital reserve would be used for a future building expansion project. We are now accounting for the money within its own bank account separate from the operating fund. At the facilities meeting back in April an amount of \$6 million was presented as an amount we feel comfortable using for the project that would be set aside, in conjunction with monies raised through fundraising efforts and additional debt. Those funds were moved out of the operating account and into their own separate bank account this November. Based on where we are financially, it is recommended that the board take an official vote to approve an additional \$2 million contribution to the capital reserve above the \$6 million discussed in April, bringing the total contributions for the capital reserve to \$8 million.

Board Treasurer added: If I could just add from the board standpoint, that the finance committee met yesterday and we had a discussion about moving the funds to a capital reserve. The finance committee thought it made sense to segregate these funds. So it would be my recommendation to the board that we set aside the 8 million dollars which I think is a good number.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Barrett	Aye
S. Dibinga	Aye
B. Keith	Aye
K. Davis Kernizan	Absent
C. Engerman	Aye
D. Morris	Aye
A. Buckmire	Aye
R. Clarke Jr.	Aye
M. Gardner	Aye
K. Cherry	Aye
K. Williamson	Absent

V. HOS Update

A. HOS Update

We will hear CAO UPDATE first and then the HOS Update:

CAO UPDATE

David Conrady CAO update: We just had professional development on Friday and we went over Upper School Writing. We're trying to create a K-6 writing scope and sequence. We'll be finishing that with a second piece for the Lower School on January 26th. At that point really establishing a foundation of what writing looks like K.- 6. It's one of the things that our teachers talked about wanting.

In response to a lot of the different data we were talking about through the fall and with MCAS, a lot of the updates that I have to share are on the academic committee board

update. It's a lot of working with our consultants on, and really helping to, increase our capacity for coaching of our mid and top tier teachers. Trying to do that by establishing what I call a cadre of instructional excellence and innovation. How can we take some of those teachers and grow them and push them a little bit more to do some of the more innovative things that we see in classrooms today. We're getting student engagement increasing, more student voice, more small groups where students are actively participating. So just trying to think outside the box on that.

We have MCAS training coming up for our curriculum coordinators and directors that has been offered by DESE.

We have 50 students that are currently participating in our Math Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). We are doing that through small groups and hands-on activities to help increase math performance for those students.

We are in the process of identifying and finalizing someone for the English Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). We are trying to think outside the box rather than having students come in for an extra hour and a half of just test prep. We want to make it a little more fun and engage students.

HOS Update

As mentioned at the last board meeting a climate survey was given to staff, it was a PBIS tool and the results are back. The survey focused on 6 areas. Staff connection, structure & learning, school safety, physical environment, peer & adult relations and parent involvement. We had 98 staff members, which is about 50% of the staff, respond to the survey. The leadership team has reviewed the results and the results will be shared with staff this week. Next steps will be to hold focus groups in each area to allow staff additional opportunities to give input to make improvements. We want staff to know their voices matter.

Board member asked: Who are we bringing in to lead professional developments with staff?

Professional development predominantly this year has been focused on academics. However, we do have the DEI committee and we are starting an affinity group for our men of color staff. Board member D. Morris will be attending the affinity group kickoff meeting.

Board member suggested: Maybe consider professional development where we do work around purpose. Why am I doing this work? Think a lot of schools don't do this sort of exploration for fear of losing people.

Board member shared: Need to look at how the feedback that staff are giving, how does it compare to last year or years past. We have not had a climate survey in recent years to compare it to.

Board member shared: We need to hear what's being said, areas to react to and bring in the resources when needed.

Something we've always had every year is a Sunshine Committee. It's a group of volunteer staff members, who work to spread sunshine around the building and try to do things to make work a little bit more joyful.

We have invested tremendously, as a school, in social, emotional support for students. We have put into place a new resource called Cartwheel Care Partnership. It's an external resource that provides counseling support to students and families. It's for up to a hundred children. Our school based providers are currently working on referrals. Also this year we adopted PBIS, which is about rewarding positive behavior versus punishing the negative. We know students need consequences but what we are also trying to focus on is avoiding suspending students, when possible. We look for opportunities to keep focusing on the great things that students are doing.

The first Steering committee meeting, for our Strategic plan, is tentatively scheduled for January 26th. D. Morris and M. Gardner are our board members on that committee.

We held our student led conferences in December. It was a very good turnout. We changed the format this year, we held conferences on a Thursday night until 6:00 pm and Friday half day, so that families had options. We look forward to holding our next round of conferences in the beginning of April.

Our Soul Train Celebration will be on March 1st. You are welcome to come and dance with the students .

VI. Expansion Study

A. Expansion Study

- Expansion study was discussed at the Facility committee meeting. We have had many discussions to decide what to do with the property since its acquisition.
- We agreed we will try to make a recommendation, at least with a direction that the school is happy with, what works best for our academic program and what our budget will allow.
- At the last board meeting we discussed the different options. Most of these options are expensive.
- Discussed at the Facility committee meeting that there might be a prospective partner to develop the site for joined space. They were informed that we would need an answer soon.
- Recommended that regardless of whether or not we move forward with the partners, the best option may be to build at B street. From a financial standpoint and disruption with the day to day business at 1415 Hyde Park Ave. Agreed school activity should remain on the current site.
- Due to the traffic issues and safety issues we do not want students crossing Hyde park Ave.
- We will ask the prospective partners to respond by a certain deadline
- Not having the partnership will free up even more space, but it will cost us more money.

- Whatever option we choose we wouldn't have a big timeframe for building or construction (over the summer) for 1415 but a lot of stuff would be done at the B street site with little impact to the school daily operations.

VII. Committee Updates

A. Academic Excellence

Dr. Conrady, CAO, gave an update at the last Academic committee meeting. He talked about the school wide writing initiative. Our MCAS data shows that students had more difficulty in writing tasks and tasks requiring higher levels of thinking. There is a need to strengthen a School-wide approach to writing. He shared that research indicates many of the structures and processes around the writing process increase student achievement.

Explicitly taught writing instruction increases reading comprehension and ability to communicate mastery of concepts. He shared a visual outlining how to explicitly teach the Writing Process. Dr. Conrady also shared the Writing Initiative PD Timeline from trimester 1 23-24 up to trimester 3 24-25. The Writing Curriculum will be aligned from PreK-6th grade. This Initiative is already in full swing.

Dr. Conrady talked about the coaching framework and what highly effective classrooms look like and how to maximize student learning outcomes.

Guaranteed Viable Curriculum (GVC)-All students must have access to and be able to meet the grade level standards to ensure equity in their current and future performance. This creates a clear focus of what students are learning and enables students to understand what is expected of them for each learning objective.

The Culture of Learning- assures that classrooms will maximize instruction time on task. It also allows for the establishment of a community in the classroom where students can have trust to have difficult discussions and stretch their own learning and that of others. In the classroom this looks like; Clear Expectations, refocus positive interactions, strengthen relationships and provide opportunity.

Delivery of Instruction- provides students the clarity of what they are learning, establishes a consistent pacing to maximize Time-on-Task (TOT), and utilizes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure all have access.

Instructional Strategies- The use of highly engaging instructional strategies, maximizes the amount of student engagement through dialogue and use of higher order thinking skills

Student Accountability & Output- Ensures that students are challenged frequently to provide an output to keep their minds actively engaged and provide targeted feedback to inform their learning.

Roles of Instructional Coaches, Curriculum Coordinators and Consultants

BRCPS Coaches and Coordinators will be working to support our classrooms that need more frequent coaching needs and work with newer teachers. Coordinators will assist with the implementation of writing and support grade level subject specific planning.

Collaborate with Consultants.

BRCPS will be utilizing our consultants to

- support classroom with less intensive needs; to push the innovation in instruction and classroom performance. Coaching up to 30 teachers (seven 6 week cycles of 4 teachers)
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in our current WIN structures; making recommendations for improvements.
- Designing WIN/MTSS Handbooks to provide formal guidance of best practices.
- Provide Intensive MTSS Classroom management coaching
- Provide guidance and support with the implementation of the Bridges Math Curriculum

ALP Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) started in January.

- 50 students to strengthen and accelerate their mastery of math concepts
- Grades 3-5 and will run for 6 weeks.
- ELA will begin in mid-February using a similar format as math.
- Writing Boot Camp will begin in mid-April to provide a boost in writing skills for students in grades 3-5 as they prepare to take the MCAS.

B. Governance & Nomination

Board discussed a member who has been frequently absent. We want to make a decision for quorum and participation purposes and do they want to remain on the board.

The Board officers will review the 'BRCPS Bylaw section-ARTICLE IV: Resignations, Removals and Vacancies.' They will then bring the issue back to the board.

C. Facility

1415 Hyde Park update:

The Air condition system (HVAC SYSTEM), we have started preparing the RFP (Request for proposals) to have the current HVAC system upgraded.

Due to storms there was water damage to our modular classrooms and the brick facade of 1415 Hyde Park Ave. The mortar needs to be repointed at some point. There are only issues to the brick when the wind blows.

Roofs on the modular are leaking and our modular company is coming out to assess

B Street update:

We have a covered structure attached to the apartment building, referred to as the covered shed. The roof of the covered shed collapsed due to the high winds last month and when the roof fell down, it damaged 2 staff members' cars.

We had someone come out and remove all of the loose debris and the remaining parts of the roof and body of the structure. All that's remaining is the cinder block.

D. Parents of Renaissance

The Parents of Renaissance (POR) will be holding another Chez Vous Fundraiser event. We are breaking it up into lower school and upper school, which is a great move because we had such a large crowd last year. The lower school event will be Sunday March 10th and the upper school event will be Sunday March 17th. The fliers will be going home soon. It is a fun afternoon of roller skating, raffles friends. We are going to look into getting some T-shirts for the active members of the POR, so we can stand out at the event in case anybody has questions that day. Board members and all school staff are welcome to attend.

We are looking into a movie night or something out on the playground. Trying to think of ways to incorporate the parents and give parents an opportunity to meet other parents.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

B. Keith

B. Keith made a motion to Adjourn meeting.

C. Engerman seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

D. Morris	Aye
B. Keith	Aye
C. Barrett	Aye
S. Dibinga	Aye
M. Gardner	Aye
C. Engerman	Aye
K. Davis Kernizan	Absent
R. Clarke Jr.	Aye
K. Williamson	Absent
A. Buckmire	Aye
K. Cherry	Aye

Documents used during the meeting

- 1_17 Specialty Board Update.pdf

- Q2_Financials_2024.pdf
- BOT Update January 17th.pdf
- BRCPS Expansion Study_Adjusted 2024-01-17 OPTION B.pdf
- BRCPS Expansion Study_Adjusted 2024-01-17 OPTION A.pdf