

**Birchtree Charter School
Academic Policy Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 12, 2012
3:45 p.m.
Birchtree Charter School**

PRESENT: Susan McCauley, Dan Klauder, Donna Levesque, Lori Berrigan, Brooke Loudon, Pete Houston

PRESENT ON PHONE: Cathy Lee

ABSENT: Cara Horvath, Kirsten Gerrish

Convened at 3:45 p.m.

Budget Update: Cathy Lee

Motion by Member Houston **Seconded** by Member Loudon **(TO APPROVE THE BUDGET EXPENDITURES ON THE BUDGET TRANSFERS BELOW)**. The Motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Account to be reduced	Account to be increased	Amount	Explanation
Staff Travel	Equipment over \$5,000	\$14,000	Fence for Kindergarten
Staff Travel	Student Travel	\$18,000	Eighth Grade Trip
Staff Travel	Admin & Admin Support Salaries	\$15,000	Extended Contracts - Office
Staff Travel	Reg. ED and SPED Salaries	\$11,000	Extended Contracts - Teacher
Staff Travel	Co-curricular stipends	\$3,000	Extra-curricular Stipend

The APC received an amendment to the lease agreement for commercial real property for discussion. The rent will be increased for the remaining term of the lease which is 4.5 years as follows:

Starting	For	Total Amt. Increased By	New Monthly Payment Amt.
February 1, 2012	5 months	\$6,200	\$34,200 through June 30, 2012
July 1, 2012	12 months	\$2,600	\$30,600 through June 30, 2013
July 1, 2013	24 months	\$2,700	\$30,700 through June 30, 2015

If the lease is renewed, the lease rate for the new lease term is agreed to be:

July 1, 2015	12 months	\$31,500
July 1, 2016	48 months	\$35,000

All other terms of the lease will remain unchanged.

This lease will be signed by the Chair of the APC and the Landlord.

Motion by member Houston **Seconded** by member Levesque **(TO ACCEPT THE AMENDMENT TO OUR CURRENT LEASE ALLOWING US TO LEASE AN ADDITIONAL 6400 SF UPSTAIRS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT IF THE ENROLLMENT OF THE SCHOOL DROPS BELOW 275 STUDENTS, THE AMENDMENT WILL BE RENEGOTIATED)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Once the above approved transfers are made, we will have \$222,000 that needs to be reallocated. These funds are available because we have approximately \$147,000 additional revenue from the student count of which \$75,000 is allocated for an intensive needs student and is being used to hire 2 new aids, a fall conference for teachers to attend, and educational support consulting. The \$147,000 was set aside for teacher training and is now available due to the grant fund.

Additional items for consideration and discussion were as follows:

1. Playscape – \$50,000
2. Educational Support Consulting - \$15,000
3. Mercurius Order for Next Year - \$50,000
4. Kiln - \$3,000
5. Furniture for New Classroom Next Year - \$15,000
6. Rent - \$32,000

TOTAL OF \$167,000 LEAVING APPROXIMATELY \$33,000 IN CONTINGENCY.

Member Levesque requested the amount that has been spent on the Mercurius order year to date. Member Loudon requested the amount of money received from parents to offset the school supply costs. This information will be provided by Kelly and Cathy L.

Member Klauder asked for clarification on the \$15,000 for new furniture and whether any of this money will be spent on other furniture needs. It was determined that this money is for the new classroom furniture and if there is any money left over, it can be spent on other furniture needs.

The out of state PO deadline is March 15 usually and we need to plan ahead so we do not have a spending spree at the end of the fiscal year. We ended the year last year with \$7,000 left which was the lowest amount amongst all of the charter schools. Any monies left, go back to the Borough.

Member Berrigan tabled Item #1, \$50,000 for the playscape, to be discussed at the next APC meeting after input has been received on the current playscape plan.

Member Berrigan requested Items 2-6 under a consent agenda. **Motion** by Member Klauder **Seconded** by member Houston to **(PUT THE EXPENDITURES IN ITEMS 2-6 ABOVE ON A CONSENT AGENDA)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously. **Motion** by Member Loudon **Seconded** by Member Klauder to **(APPROVE THE EXPENDITURES ON THE CONSENT AGENDA)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Principal McCauley informed the Committee that the District is holding a budget open house presentation for charter schools on February 8, 2012. They have asked to have it at Birchtree. This will take some preparation. Principal McCauley will be out of town and has requested that APC and BPG members be here to welcome the School Board members and greet attendees.

Playscape

Leon presented the current work he has completed on the Birchtree Charter School playscape. This will be posted in the school and sent home with students for parents to look at. A comment box will be available for people to put their comments and suggestions in.

Next Steps:

Provide Leon a list of our questions and ideas.

Leon will send Susan the Playscape Plan to post on the Wall with a place for comments.

First part of phase one is dirt work that will need to be done this summer.

Project manager needs to be hired to work with Leon.

A Committee needs to be formed.

Out of the \$50,000 we would pay a project manager. BPG is asking the Matsu Health Foundation for \$75,000. The school bond went through giving us \$65,000 that can be used on playground. Planet Earth will do a detailed plan.

We can send out information on playscape to parents for two weeks to get feedback. Give feedback and have Leon provide APC the final plan. Professional services contract will be done with a Project Manager (Ken has been recommended by Leon). Principal McCauley will have the estimate cost of the project manager for our next meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Member Levesque **Seconded** by member Klauder to (**APPROVE THE OCTOBER 13, 2011 MINUTES**). The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Motion by Member Houston **Seconded** by member Levesque to (**APPROVE THE DECEMBER 6&7 JOINT RETREAT MINUTES**). The motion **CARRIED** unanimously. It was noted that Lori Berrigan did attend the joint retreat and worked with the BPG on their strategic plan.

Motion by Member Loudon **Seconded** by member Klauder to (**APPROVE THE JANUARY 4 JOINT APC & BPG MINUTES**). The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Second Semester Calendar

It is in the process. BPG and APC meetings to stay and not move. Rudolph Steiner College has assigned our field person. Prairie Adams will be here for two weeks starting January 21. She will observe every teacher and do a conference with them. The calendar will be put on our new website and parents will be notified.

Attendance Policy

The current MSBSD attendance policy below was discussed:

Studies have shown that student attendance at school is directly related to student success. Additionally, student attendance is one of the factors used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB. Parents, students, and schools need to work together to promote attendance and success. In order to effectuate positive results and good communication, after three days of absence a telephone call will be made to parents; a written notice will be mailed to the parents after five days of absence. After nine days of absenteeism, the student's absences will be considered habitual and another written notice will be mailed to the parents. In cases of habitually truant students, a referral may be made to the Office of Children's Services. Schools are encouraged to have positive incentive programs to reward good attendance by students and staff. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in student attendance and to alert the school when their child is to be absent. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to keep up with school work when he or she is absent from school.

The principal shall have the final authority and discretion on matters related to such discipline for truancy.

Susan supplied the APC with the following Birchtree attendance statistics for Semester 1:
Total number of students: 282

# of Absences	# of Students	Percentage of BTCS Students
0-2	81	28%
3-4	55	19%
5-8	62	21%
9 and more	84	29%
9 or fewer		71%
10 or more		29%
10-15	45	
16-20	13	
20 or more	8	

It was determined in the discussion that the school district's policy does not fit Birchtree Charter School and a more personal approach needs to be used in dealing with excessive absences and tardiness. Principal McCauley does not feel that we have an absenteeism problem due to our percentage being 93% for the last school year and this is right in line with the other schools in the district. Susan would like to have a written policy in place so the faculty and staff feel they have some ground to stand on when dealing with specific cases of excessive absenteeism and tardiness. Member Berrigan requested Principal McCauley to put together a committee tasked with writing up a Birchtree Charter School Attendance Policy. Member Levesque suggested adding an attendance piece to the rubrics. Principal McCauley is supportive of this idea.

Member Berrigan requested that Member Levesque, Member Loudon and Principal McCauley have a meeting to write up the success indicators to be presented at the next APC meeting for formal approval. The Charter requires that the APC reviews student achievement data.

Principal McCauley proposed the following meeting schedule:
 APC meet 3:30 - 5:30 APC/BPG 5:00 - 5:30 BPG 5:00 - 7:00

The following dates would be a possibility if this schedule is implemented:
 February 6 Presentation of Achievement Data by Susan and maybe bylaws
 March 19 Next Year's Budget
 April 23

Member Berrigan will discuss this with the BPG President.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION by Member Levesque **SECONDED** by Member Klauder to **(ADJOURN)**.
 There was no objection. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Brooke Loudon, Recording Secretary

Lori Berrigan, Chair