

Birchtree Charter School
Academic Policy Committee Meeting
With Open Forums at 3:30 & 5:30 p.m.

APC Members Present: Susan McCauley, Dan Klauder, Donna Levesque, Lori Berrigan, Brooke Loudon, Pete Houston, Cathy Lee

APC Member Absent: Kirsten Gerrish

Lori Berrigan began the first open forum at 3:30 p.m. She defined the role of the APC as being to ensure that we fulfill our Charter.

The APC is held accountable if we do not do that. We hire our administrator who in turn manages all the faculty and staff. APC does get to sit in on the certified staff hirings and the principle hires the classified staff. The current APC Strategic plan includes the following: Building Development, Professional Development, Birchtree Parent Guild Partnership, Success Indicators.

Building Development: 5 year plan.

Professional Development: All teachers are in school receiving the Waldorf Certificates.

BPG: Developing a relationship with BPG.

Success Indicators: Grant.

The role of the BPG is to support the APC. They have been tasked with developing a Thank You Committee, working with our Parent Partnership Coordinator (PPC) to develop a Volunteer database, establishing a Board Development Committee, and completing changes to their bylaws. Tisha Jones (PPC) was hired to assist in communication between all stakeholders. The Foracre Foundation has helped establish the goals for the BPG.

The role of the Birchtree Charter School Principal is to deal with the day-to-day operations of the school, to ensure the finances are being handled appropriately and to ensure we are adhering to the Matsu Borough School District's policies and procedures per the APC bylaws. The Principle reports directly to the APC.

Teachers: All Birchtree Teachers are enrolled in the Waldorf Teacher Certificate Program at Rudolf Steiner College. Webinars are once a month. Each teacher is receiving 3 weeks of training at Rudolf Steiner College in California this summer.

Parents: All parents are expected to volunteer, participate in parent education, participate in class meetings, to model the behavior that is expected of Birchtree students, and to follow the guidelines that are outlined in the Birchtree Family Guide.

Parent Support: Tisha Jones – Parent Partnership Coordinator is in charge of the Friday Updates, Monthly Newsletter, Community Bulletin Board, Class Meetings, Parent Socials and Education including Pastry for Parents.

Open discussion began at 3:55 p.m and finished at 4:05 p.m.

The APC meeting began at 4:16 p.m.

Principal Report – Dr. Susan McCauley

Dr, Susan McCauley presented:

1. The annual review of achievement data fulfilling the requirement stated in our charter.

AYP & SBA data was presented. Dr. McCauley stated that MAPS data is far more useful data and it will be available in the Spring. General tenor is that the AYP and SBA system is very flawed and it is completely deadlocked in Washington D.C. In the spring or early fall, we will look at the MAPS data.

Lori asked if we review in the fall, will it meet the requirement. Susan confirmed that it will meet the requirement.

AYP is the heavy hitter. Annual Measurable Objectives goals for the 2010/11 school year were: 82.88% needed to be proficient in reading/writing/language and 74.57% needed to be proficient in mathematics. Birchtree results were: 109 enrolled, 103 counted as full 3rd through 8th grade with 89% proficient in reading/writing/language and 84% proficient in math. We are not held accountable for a subgroup unless it is at least 25 students. Caucasian 92% in reading/writing/language and 75% in math. Cathy Lee put all of this information in the grant that we wrote. She put a disclaimer in the grant stating that these students had been with us for 7 months.

Dr. McCauley did make some changes in response to this data. Math time was increased to 1 hour per day and moved to the first subject of the day in level appropriate groups due to the level of students not proficient in mathematics in the middle school grades.

2. There are two resolutions on the Borough Assembly meeting agenda: reimbursement of our property taxes and the ability to carry over 100% of funds to the next fiscal year. Testimony is necessary to ensure these resolutions are passed. Pete Houston reiterated that it is necessary for the Assembly to understand why it is important for charter school funds to be rolled over to the next fiscal year. Lori stated that it is not an efficient way to spend our money. Susan suggested talking to Barb Gerard for suggestions. \$44,000 would be reimbursed to Birchtree for our property taxes.

3. A MSBSD Budget presentation for Charter Schools is being done at Birchtree on Wednesday, February 8. Susan will be out of town and it would be good to have Board members and staff available to be at the school for this.

Treasurer's Report – Cathy Lee

Each month anything below \$5,000 is notified to the APC Board.

\$3,000 was moved out of staff travel and office salaries.

Dr. McCauley recommended that at our next joint APC/BPG meeting, we discuss the play scape. \$50,000 will stay in contingency at this time for the play scape.

Mercurius: \$42,567.31 spent

Dick Blick: \$7,833.74 spent

Fantastic Fibers: \$6,884.18 spent

Supplies Total Spent: \$57,285.23

As of February 3, 2012 the total received from parents: \$15,450 and \$12,950 due. It was decided to wait until the next APC meeting to discuss ways to collect.

It was determined that we need to evaluate how many supplies each grade should be using. Member Loudon suggested seeing what Winterberry spends on supplies each year. A Supplies Committee will be set up to do the necessary research and to ensure that the order gets put in early enough so they can be shipped via boat rather than air. Cara Horvath volunteered to chair the supplies committee.

Parent Partnership Coordinator Report (PPC) – Tisha Jones

Mr. Bowen is having a parent student potluck on Thursday. A lead volunteer is needed for his class.

Pastry for Parents: One of our parents is interested in forming a support group for parents of students with special needs that meets once a month. We have lots of parents with social work backgrounds. Bullying in the classroom has been a concern of two parents out of eight. The parents really had a great time. Yearbook was brought up by a parent who is interested in leading this endeavor. Cathy B. will discuss this with Tisha. There is a group of families with the intent of the Waldorf philosophy and there is a group of parents here because their children aren't thriving in another environment. We hope to meet the goals of both these types of families with the type of education we are offering apart from it being Waldorf. Tisha is planning on attending all Pastries for Parents. Pete would like to be there at each one. We have talked about signage out front of the building with announcements on it. Jennifer Budde is checking to see if Lee Budde will design this sign. This can be discussed with the BPG and determine if it will come out of their budget or the operating budget. Tisha stated her position could be a full-time job.

Grant Update

Susan McCauley and Kelly Nelius fly out tomorrow morning to Washington, DC for the mandatory meetings regarding the rules for the Grant on Wednesday and Thursday. We do have a process in place for drawing down funds with BPG. Checks and balances are in place to ensure transparency. We are getting ready to spend a lot of money on the teacher training for the summer. Susan will have more information after her return from DC.

BPG Report

We are looking at a meeting on March 22 with the APC meeting from 3:30-5:00; the APC and BPG meeting from 5-6 and the BPG meeting from 6-7:30. Lori asked for a motion:

Motion by Member Loudon **Seconded** by member Houston to **(HAVE THE NEXT JOINT APC/BPG MEETING ON MARCH 22 FROM 5:00-6:00 PM WITH TREASURER LEE REPORTING)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Thank you committee is being led by Amy Sharrer and Tisha Jones. Parent Satisfaction Committee has been tabled. Auction has been tabled due to all of the work. Jennifer Budde is planning a parent social. Kristy Shea is leading up a run 1k, 5k, 10k promoting healthy living Run through the Birches. This will be a money maker. May Faire - May 5.

By-Law Revisions

Two sections of the bylaws were brought to the APC by Lori Berrigan and Pete Houston (Board Development Committee). Complete changes can be viewed at www.birchtreecharterschool.org, under the February 6, 2012 agenda:

1. Article II, Section 2

The number of parent members on the board to be reduced by 1 seat. The range is currently 5 to 8, it is proposed to change 4 to 7. The purpose of this change is we currently have 5 parent members on APC (Lori holds the BPG Liason seat), if we were to lose 1 parent we would be out of compliance with our bylaws.

Current Members:

Lori Berrigan-chair
Pete Houston – vice chair
Cathy Lee – treasurer
Brooke Loudon – secretary
Cara Horvath – member at large
Kirsten Gerrish – member at large
Dr. Susan McCauley - principal

2. Article III, section 1

A. Change the date of the annual election from March to November. As was discussed at the December retreat, we would like to have all newly elected members attend the annual retreat so all are able to participate in the annual strategic planning session scheduled for early December.

B. Changes in the way the Elections Committee will hold the annual elections.

1.Nomination of individuals who have not submitted applications will be done so as to ensure requirements of the matrix developed by the APC are met.

2.The Elections Committee will bring the full list of candidates to the APC October meeting. APC will present their recommendations for the final ballot to ensure all matrix requirements are met.

3.Casting of ballots will take place for up until 1 hour before the annual meeting.

3. Article 4, section 8

Deleted: (Treasurer) will serve as the financial liaison for all fund raising entities

Motion by Member Horvath **Seconded** by member Levesque to (**ACCEPT ALL OF THE BY-LAW CHANGES**). The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

The same information was presented at the second open forum at 5:30 p.m. Open Discussion began at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION by Member Levesque **SECONDED** by Member Klauder to (**ADJOURN**). There was no objection. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Brooke Loudon, Recording Secretary

Lori Berrigan, Chair