

**Birchtree Charter School
Academic Policy Committee Meeting
Thursday, April 5, 2012
3:30 p.m.
Birchtree Charter School**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan McCauley, Dan Klauder, Donna Levesque, Lori Berrigan, Cathy Lee, Brooke Loudon, Pete Houston, Cara Horvath, Kirsten Gerrish

Convened at 3:30 p.m.

Kindergarten and First Grade Enrollment/Retention – Lori Berrigan

The following policy allows for a child who might be on the fence, to have a spot held in both Kindergarten and First grade.

Member Levesque prefaced this that by saying that what we look at child development as a sign of first grade readiness. Parents new to Waldorf think that their child will complete the grades consecutively. Waldorf teachers do not have the same approach. Donna confirmed it is not at all unusual for children to do two years of kindergarten in a Waldorf setting.

Kindergarten and First Grade Enrollment/Retention Policy

In September of each year the kindergarten teacher will meet with the Kindergarten parents to provide an overview of child development and First Grade readiness. This will include discussion of First Grade readiness milestones that the teachers will be looking for. These are milestones that children meet when they are developmentally ready for First Grade versus skills that are met due to practice. In November, at the first parent conference, the child's development will be discussed using the First Grade readiness assessment.

If a recommendation for retention is made by the Kindergarten teacher for a child born before June 1st at the March parent/teacher conference, the school will hold a spot for that child in both Kindergarten and First Grade for the following school year IF the parent would like to have their child re-evaluated in late July to see if he/she has met the First grade readiness milestones. As per MSBSD policy, final decision for grade placement will be the Principal's.

If a recommendation for retention is made by the Kindergarten teacher for a child born after June 1st at the March parent/teacher conference, the school will hold a spot for that child in both Kindergarten and First Grade for the following school year so a decision can be made after the child is re-evaluated in late July. In most situations the school will honor the parent's decision to move the child up to First grade. As per MSBSD, final decision for grade placement will be the Principal's.

Parents with children in the lottery for First grade born after June 1st, will be contacted by the school prior to the lottery to have their child evaluated for First grade readiness. If the assessment indicates the child is not ready for the Waldorf First Grade, the family will be told that they need to lottery in for Kindergarten.

Motion by member Houston **Seconded** by member **???? (TO APPROVE THE KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE ENROLLMENT/RETENTION POLICY)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Priority Enrollment Policy

Children of the originators of the school (those who have actively participated in its initiation and organization (Founding Families)) and siblings of current Birchtree Students who submit an intent to enroll in Birchtree Charter School (BCS) at the April lottery will have a priority for enrollment for each child in their family.

If a family chooses to withdraw a child from Birchtree Charter School (BCS), that child will no longer have Sibling or Founding Family priority for enrollment should the family want to re-enroll the student.

To be clear, removing the priority enrollment status for a child who has been withdrawn does not disallow their inclusion in the lottery and potential re-enrollment. It simply removes the priority status. The child could still be re-admitted through the regular lottery process.

Any family may petition the APC to re-instate their priority status.

Motion by member Loudon **Seconded** by member Levesque **(TO APPROVE THE PRIORITY ENROLLMENT POLICY)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

New Policies Needed

Prairie Adams feels that all in-coming children should be assessed for grade placement. A work session on student data in general needs to take place and a policy regarding assessment for all grades needs to be brought to the APC.

Susan will be bringing absence data to complete a policy on withdrawal of a student due to attendance data.

DC Trip Funding

40% of the total cost is not to exceed a certain amount. One thing that was missed is the calculation did not include Dan & Dana's costs. \$570 additional is needed for Dan's airfare. Dana received gifted money for hers. Two families are asking for BCS to pay for the trip with a contract stating they will reimburse BCS by the end of the year. These loans would be in the amount of \$770.14 and \$591.14. Total of two loans and remainder of Dan's remaining is \$1931.28. There will be six adults going on the trip.

It was asked if there will always be two middle school teachers going every year? Susan would like clear direction on this for the future from the APC. Cathy predicts that this will not be a discussion in future years due to budget constraints. Having two certified teachers on the trip has benefits one being that it prepares the 7th grade teacher for the trip they take when they

are teaching 8th grade per Dr, McCauley. It was asked if there are any background checks happening for parents who are going on the trip. Dr. McCauley confirmed that MSBSD policy doesn't require it.

Motion by member Gerrish **Seconded** by member Houston **(TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL 8TH GRADE DC TRIP FUNDING FOR MR. KLAUDER'S TICKET AND THE LOANS TO PARENTS WITH A CONTRACT STATING THEY WILL BE PAID BACK BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR).** The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Magnet Fine Arts School – Finger Lake

Superintendent Deena Paramo is working on starting a new fine arts school that will be fully funded by the school district. Cathy Lee feels that we really need to talk to the school district regarding our feelings about this school being in direct competition with Birchtree. The Borough is looking at potentially giving a 3% increase to all public schools for FY13.

1. Deena Paramo meeting on Monday, April 9 at 2:30 regarding the new fine arts school.
2. Ask the School Board to increase our funding due to the tax dollars that our families pay. A letter to the MSBSD will be approved by the Birchtree APC prior to sending it. Testimony may be required at the next MSBSD School Board meeting on May 2 or 3.
3. School Board says no, we will go to the Borough to request a portion of the funding being given to this new magnet school, be dispersed amongst the charter schools.
4. Academy Charter and Fronteras will meet at Academy with Birchtree APC after the meeting with Deena on Monday, April 9 to discuss funding from the Borough at 3:10.

ADJOURNMENT MOTION by Member Houston **SECONDED** by Member Loudon to **(ADJOURN)**. There was no objection. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Brooke Loudon, Recording Secretary

Lori Berrigan, Chair