

MINUTES



Birchtree APC

Board Meeting

Date: MARCH 20, 2013

Time: 3:45 p.m.

Place: Birchtree Charter School

Mission of Birchtree Charter School: to nurture and promote the development of healthy, responsible, and creative human beings.

The Birchtree Learning Plans includes:

- that the personal behavior of adults and teachers at BCS will be an example to the pupils.
- that each class will be a learning community for respect, tolerance, and understanding.
- that BCS is designed to function as a living system that balances initiative and accountability. All teachers, staff, and participants will be asked to make a commitment to develop him or herself along with the pupils.

APC MEMBERS PRESENT: Brandt Bowen (left meeting at 5:50 p.m.), Anna Folsom, Lori Berrigan, Brooke Loudon, Pete Houston, Cathy Lee, Cara Horvath (joined meeting at 4:25 on the phone)

APC MEMBERS ABSENT: Kirsten Gerrish

I. Call to Order at 3:45 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 3:46 p.m.

II. Approval of the Agenda

Motion by Member Berrigan **Seconded** by Member Lee to **(APPROVE THE AGENDA)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

III. Waldorf Activity

Anna Folsom led us in the morning verse that is said in all Waldorf schools across the world. "A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living." Rudolf Steiner

IV. Persons to be Heard

Kim Detert

V. Standing Agenda

A. Approval of February 20& 25, 2013 APC Meeting Minutes

Motion by Member Houston **Seconded** by Member Berrigan to **(ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 20, 2013 APC MEETING MINUTES WITH THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT, "CHAIR HOUSTON REQUESTED FOR THOSE WITH A CONFLICT OF INTEREST TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE VOTE FOR THE FUNDING OF THE 8TH GRADE TRIP)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Motion by Member Berrigan **Seconded** by Member Lee to **(ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 25, 2013 APC MEETING MINUTES)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

B. Chair Report – Pete Houston

Member Houston was reminded of an oversight about a meeting that took place between the APC & BPG Leadership. The term to describe this meeting was Executive Committee. His intent was to meet with a smaller group in regards to coming up with ways for the Administration, APC and BPG to work better together. There were no minutes taken and no decisions were made. In that meeting an example was used, the role of the BPG Liaison and how that position was structured. Member Berrigan was concerned about being told no when she asked if she could attend this meeting. This meeting was not opened up to the whole APC and she is trying to find out where that was coming from. Member Houston shared his opinion that it was due to there being 4 APC Members in the meeting making a quorum. Member Lee was of the understanding that the meeting was called to discuss the 4th and 5th Grades being told they could not fundraise. Member Lee is looking forward to the Principal's report and hearing some suggestions for better communication between the two boards. Member Houston stated that it is not his intent to have an Executive Committee.

Member Houston did attend the meeting with George and Donna on March 4. He was really impressed. It was not what he was expecting as it was not a marketing pitch. George used an example creating a picture of a Trifold Order with the Administration in the middle. He feels that we should be looking at the ideas that were shared in this meeting.

Member Houston stated that Cathy Busbey realized that she was not being given a contract for next school year. The deadline was March 15 to have an answer on this particular issue. The MSBSD asked Member Houston for clarification on Principal Busbey's contract for next year. The email exchange is attached.

C. Principal Report – Cathy Busbey

Play Scape: Lisa Shield and Jennifer Budde have been meeting. The current proposal is for \$14,483.21 from Rock Ridge. Rock Ridge has offered to give us a quote on the possibility of expanding the parking lot. More communication is necessary with the community before a decision is made regarding this possibility.

Professional Development: Teachers are currently visiting classrooms of their peers. The plan for next school year is being worked on.

Principal Busbey is proposing a Communication Committee be formed that would meet on the 1st of every month before any board meetings happen for that month. The goal is to have more effective communication between all the boards and administration.

SBA Testing: SBA testing will be happening for grades 3-8 on April 2nd -5th.

Member Lee suggested that the professional development quotes for FY14 be available for the next Finance Committee Meeting for the FY14 budget planning.

D. Pedagogical Council Report – Donna Levesque (document attached)

We have seen an increase in the number of excused absences that may or may not be of that nature. The Council is brainstorming on ways to deal with the loophole that is in the current BCS Attendance Policy.

In order to help families really know and understand what the expectations are in order for sustained enrollment to happen at BCS, the Council feels that these expectations need to be presented to parents after they have been selected in the lottery. The Council is currently working on this.

Our Kindergarten classes do not currently fill our first grade spots. We are having to automatically pull students through lottery to fill these first grade spots. We have been working from 8th grade down to 1st grade when it is much easier for younger students to transition into a new school. The Council is suggesting that a reversal take place with the student numbers being less in the upper grades and more in the lower grades. The Council also realized that they could make the target the maximum with the realization if additional kids needed to be added beyond the maximum 24, it could be done with Principal, Teacher and APC approval. Member Lee asked if they were filling to target or minimum for the 2013-14 school year. Donna Levesque confirmed that the intention is to fill to target.

Member Berrigan stated that once you reach the 400 student mark, you start to lose funding.

It was clarified, at Member Houston's request, that there is no differentiation between elementary and middle school student numbers.

Member Loudon stated that the first grade year is a foundational year and would really like having some first grade teacher aids with the increase in the maximum students allowed in first grade.

Member Houston asked if there was a number for attrition. Donna Levesque stated that it would require a lot of research to have this information. Member Houston stated that this would be very helpful information to have. There are a number of factors that can affect enrollment numbers in a hurry. Member Houston clarified the intent in what the Pedagogical Council put together is that each year through 5th grade the classes would be brought up to maximum. Member Lee suggested that there be clarification on if the 7th and 8th grade had some openings mid-year, whether these classrooms would be filled to the target or the maximum. Donna confirmed that the intent was to fill to the 18. Member Lee stated concerns about the enrollment process being equitable and fair guarding us against a law-suit. Member Lee would like to seek outside council from both the State and District Special Education representatives, in regards to the Enrollment Policy, Attendance Policy, and any policy recommendations requiring adherence to Waldorf tenants which are now being reviewed at the Pedagogical Council level. Member Lee also shared her concern in regards to the implications the changes would have on the budget.

Parent education is a priority so that parents have as clear a picture as possible about Waldorf principals. They would like to look at having an interview as part of the enrollment process. Member Folsom suggested having a student come and participate in a main lesson. Principal Busbey stated that instead of having a phone discussion with new families this year, they will be having meetings with all new parents.

Donna Levesque used the example of students not participating in the orchestra curriculum at BCS in regards to parent education. Member Berrigan asked if a failing grade can be given to children who do not participate in the music part of the curriculum.

E. PPC Report – Mary Beth Feldman (document attached)

Cathy Busbey and Mary Beth went and visited with the Wasilla HeadStart Director and Mary Beth went to Rising Star and the Program Manager there was very familiar with Waldorf. The Wasilla CCS is setting up a Kindergarten Fair. We will miss out this year but we could participate in this next year.

There are some important dates. Prospective Parent night is March 21 at 6 p.m.

Next Friday, March 29, there is a special Pastries for Parents that will be for possible new parents.

Olivia Holland is heading up the May Faire with the 4th grade parents.

Lisa Shields, Jill Farris, and Mary Beth met as the Communication Committee. They will be using Google Docs to upload the Journey Waldorf School’s Communication Policy as an example to work from in developing one for BCS.

F. Treasurer’s Report – Cathy Lee (documents attached)

Budget Transfers

Member Lee signed off on \$1000 for the school to obtain handicap signs.

Motion by Member Berrigan **Seconded** by Member Lee to **(ACCEPT THE BUDGET TRANSFERS APPROVAL REQUEST BELOW)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Account to Reduce	Account to Increase	Amount	Explanation
Contingency	Co-curricular Stipend	\$3,000	Elementary and MS Track
110 Other Services	Contingency	\$20,000	Extra Funds from Music & Handwork
Contingency	110 Supplies	\$10,000	Supplies thru FY13
Contingency	600 Supplies	\$10,000	2012 Fall playscape & FY14 Custodial Supplies
Contingency	Student Travel	\$2,500	FY13 Student Bus Trips

Contingency	600 Services	\$5,000	FY13 Services
Cert Salary	Regular Ed. Subs	\$1,320	Teacher Certification Issue
Recess Monitor Salary	Recess Subs	\$4,320	Recess Monitor Maternity Leave
Account to Reduce	Account to Increase	Amount	Explanation
110 Non Cert. Salary	Reg. Ed. Subs	\$4,400	Classroom Aide Resignation
Contingency	Red. Ed Subs	\$4,000	FY13 Subs
Capital Fund Supplies over \$500	Capital Fund Services	\$20,000	Playscape & Parking Lot
Capital Fund Supplies over \$500	Capital Fund Contingency	\$18,792	Move Unallocated Funds to Contingency

Enrollment Policy

The Finance Committee realizes the Enrollment Policy is somewhat complex and the way to make sense of the Pedagogical Council's proposal is to look at how enrollment changes based on the scenarios suggested. If we stick with our current system, there would be 337 students with 59 being new next school year. The Finance Committee decided to report the following information to the Board and suggest that this be looked at in more detail. They are very concerned about having 72 new students next year. The Committee would like to have a meeting in regards to this concern. Member Houston clarified that the concern is the unpredicted costs that come with expanding the school. Member Lee recognized the amount of work that has been done by the Pedagogical Council and recommends that more discussion take place. Member Lee invited anyone who is interested, to join the Finance Committee for further discussion and stated the recommendation from the Finance Committee is to wait on this decision. Donna Levesque stated there are qualitative aspects to the decision. The recommendation is to not approve right now and to refer to Committee for additional work over the longer term. Donna stated the concern is about building a strong foundation with the younger grades.

Motion by Member Houston to **(ACCEPT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT ENROLLMENT POLICY FOR THIS YEAR AND REFER THE ENROLLMENT POLICY BACK TO THE COMMITTEE FOR MORE DISCUSSION.)** Member Bowen amended the motion to not include "this year." The motion **WAS WITHDRAWN.**

Motion by Member Berrigan, **Seconded** by Member Houston **(TO FORM A NEW ENROLLMENT POLICY COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, APC, ADMINISTRATION & PEDAGOGICAL COUNCIL IN ORDER TO BRING ALL LENSES TO THE POLICY AND TO REWORK IT AS NECESSARY WITH THE RECOMMENDATION TO BE PRESENTED AT THE APRIL APC MEETING.)** The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Member Berrigan will be the chair of the Enrollment Policy Committee.

Questions from Member Berrigan

The funds in Contingency are not allocated funds. The Principal needs APC approval to

move funds out of contingency. If money is already in a line item, the Principal does not need APC approval to spend this money. The Principal does need APC approval to transfer money between line items. It was clarified that student fees can be spent at will without APC approval.

G. BPG Liaison Report – Lori Berrigan

Lunches on Wednesdays at Vagabond Blues will start Parent Empowerment Committee.

The results of the workshop that was done are in the Parent Room. This will be presented to the APC and BPG in the future. One of the ideas was coming up with a Parent Mentorship Program with experienced parents taking a class on the Waldorf Tenets and then sharing this information with 2 or 3 new families.

Lisa Shield is starting a lunch-time meeting in Palmer on Wednesdays for parents. Member Lee asked if there are any activities scheduled for the evening? Lisa Shield stated the effort is to try and make people feel included so lunch-time may work for working parents. The evening activities are in the future.

The next BPG meeting is scheduled for April 3 at 3:30 p.m.

H. Standing Committee Reports

1. Facilities Committee Report – Pete Houston – No Report

Member Houston met with Dwight and Scott in regards to maintenance and lease issues. It was not a formal meeting. Member Folsom was made Chair of this Committee.

2. Board Development Committee Report – Pete Houston – No Report

Member Houston would like to have a database to track committees and resolutions. He would like people to think about what else they may be able to do. He does not have the time to chair and attend all committee meetings. Member Lee was made Chair of the Board Development Committee.

3. Legal Compliance Committee - No Chair – No Report

Member Houston stated the Bylaws require a Legal Compliance Committee. This committee has not been formed. Abigail Beechum was suggested as a possible chair for this committee.

VI. Adhoc Committee Reports

1. Principal Hiring Committee – Cathy Lee – No Report
2. Fundraising Policy Committee – Lori Berrigan – No Report
3. Communication Policy Committee – Mary Beth Feldman – Report in April
4. Bylaw Committee – Pete Houston – No Report

VII. New Business/Action Items

A. Confirm Next Regular Board Meeting Date and Time (April 10 at 3:45)

VIII. Future Items/Future Business

A. Next Meeting Items

Communication Policy Committee Report

Principal Hiring Committee Report

Enrollment Policy Committee Report

B. Subsequent Meeting Follow-up Items/Annual Calendar

This is needed by the District sooner rather than later and will be submitted after the Professional Development plan has been determined for next school year.

The general feel is that we do not want to continue with the early Friday release.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

VIII. Ending Comments

A. Cathy Busbey, Principal, Ex Officio

B. Pete Houston, Chair

C. Kirsten Gerrish, Vice Chair

D. Cathy Lee, Treasurer

E. Brooke Loudon, Secretary

F. Lori Berrigan, BPG Liaison

G. Anna Folsom, Teacher

H. Brandt Bowen, Teacher

I. Cara Horvath, Parent