

Academic Policy Committee
Thursday, August 30, 2012
3:45 p.m.
Birchtree Charter School

APC MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan McCauley, Dan Klauder, Donna Levesque, Lori Berrigan, Cathy Lee (on phone), Brooke Loudon, Pete Houston, Kirsten Gerrish, Cara Horvath (On Phone)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Cathy Busbey, Diana Basner

Convened at 3:45 p.m.

I. Reports

A. Principal's Report

- Enrollment Update

311 for enrollment. Budget is built on 300. If we hold at 311 through enrollment period we will have \$100,000 additional in budget. Largest class is in 6th grade with 26 kids and smallest is in 2nd grade with 19.

- Pedagogical Council

Susan is working on Policy language for a Pedagogical Council which is pretty traditional in both public and traditional Waldorf Schools. It would consist of staff members who would help to vet things that have school wide implications such as programs, curriculum etc. before they are presented to the APC. There would be requirements to be on the council. It is similar to the Curriculum Council that the MSBSD has.

Member Houston was concerned about adding more to the teachers workload. Membership is voluntary ensuring that there is representation across the grades. Susan feels that this Council will formalize the decision making process and will ensure that the appropriate input is being received from teachers.

-English Language Arts & Mathematics Curriculum

The National Common Core Standards (adopted nationwide except by 5 states) and Waldorf Curriculum were reconciled this summer by three BCS teachers and Dr. McCauley. The final product is a work in process and is being used to determine the scope and sequence of what should be taught in each grade at BCS.

The Scope and Sequence of what should be taught in each grade was handed out to the APC. The early release time on Friday's is focusing on ensuring that the standards are being taught appropriately in each grade.

Copyrighting this document is being researched.

-Job Responsibilities Chart

Susan handed out the job responsibilities chart to the APC. This shows how responsibilities are being divided administratively. Misty Davenport was hired as the Office Assistant. Member Lee asked if a condensed form of this would be helpful for parents. Member Berrigan suggested publishing a document for parents so they understand the correct communication process. Dr. McCauley would like the Parent Partnership Coordinator to create a document with all teachers, administrative staff, APC & BPG Members.

II. New Business

A. Approval of July 31, 2012 Minutes.

Motion by Member Lee **Seconded** by member Houston (**TO APPROVE THE JULY 31, 2012 MINUTES**). The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

B. Assessment Plan for 2012-2013 school year

Grade 1	Quick Phonics Screener	September, January, May
Grades 2-5	AIMSweb (w/o nonsense word fluency)	September, January, May
Grades 5-8	MAP in reading, language, math	September & May

Data will be kept "in-house" and used for monitoring student progress according to the content in Birchtree's curriculum for English Language Arts.

Member Gerrish asked if this is a temporary practice while our teachers are learning ways to assess their students. Dr. McCauley confirmed that this is to be done in addition to traditional Waldorf methods of assessment. This is not a substitute for qualified assessments being done by the teachers. This data is not being used without input from the student's teacher.

Member Berrigan shared her concern with the teacher's receiving the data from the January assessment making the teacher's feel pressured.

Member Lee suggested that this information can be used by the teacher to determine if a particular student who is struggling could benefit from a different method of instruction.

Dr. McCauley confirmed that this data is being used to determine if skills based grouping would be beneficial in grades with students who are on a broad spectrum academically. She is not concerned about teachers feeling pressured.

Member Horvath supports the January screening so that intervention can happen prior to Summer break if necessary and asked what is being done with the Spring data? Dr. McCauley is hesitant to make a lot of strong decisions with one data point. There are several new students who we have no data on. The Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 data will be compared in order to identify growth.

Member Houston asked if Dr. McCauley foresees a time when we wouldn't need the January assessment? Dr. McCauley feels it is possible. These assessments

are more important now and will be until our informal assessments are more solid. Member Houston stated that the appropriate is whether we are talking about a philosophical shift away from the original Charter or if is this temporary while we are building up the knowledge of our teachers. Dr. McCauley feels that it may be necessary to carefully consider a philosophical shift. She believes that formal assessments are more common in Public Waldorf Schools than first thought.

Member Berrigan, who wrote the charter, stated that the teacher is there to allow the child to unfold at their own pace. We need to be very careful about how we use this assessment data.

Member Lee feels we need to trust the teachers that have been hired. It seems to her that this is out of our hands. We need to trust that they are going to use this information appropriately. We cannot micro manage our teachers and administrative staff.

Member Houston feels we need to articulate the need for the assessments for the parents. The APC needs to draft something. This can be done at the retreat with the Pedagogical Council.

Member Levesque stated that teachers are to remove all hinderances for a child's learning. She is not completely comfortable with how the assessments are being brought to the students. The assessments need to be presented in line with how the child is being taught. Dr. McCauley agrees that there needs to be sensitivity to this and feels confident that school staff administering and using data from the assessments understand its appropriate use in a Waldorf school. Member Berrigan mentioned that perhaps we should develop our own assessments. Both Member Levesque and Dr. McCauley agreed and hope that this will be accomplished in time.

Motion by Member Houston **Seconded** by Member Loudon **(TO ACCEPT THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED BY DR. MCCAULEY)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Motion by Member Lee **Seconded** by Member Gerrish **(TO ACCEPT THE AMMENDMENT TO THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN AS FOLLOWS: IN ADDITION TO THE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS AS OUTLINED IN THE CHARTER, THE APC APPROVES THE 2012-13 SCHOOL YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED BY DR. MCCAULEY.)** The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

C. Budget Revisions

Contingency Beginning Budget: \$128,000

Current Contingency Budget: \$141,191

Account Reduced	Account Increased	Amount	Explanation
Contingency	Equip. over \$500	\$20,519	Computer Lab
Contingency	Textbooks	\$10,500	Math Textbooks
Contingency	Teacher Salary	\$10,547	Extended Contracts for Kindergarten
Contingency	Purchased services	\$15,000	Handwork Teacher
Contingency	Certified Sub Acct.	\$5,000	Library Cataloging
Contingency	Co-curricular Stipends	\$2,000	Athletic Director

Contingency left after above transactions: \$77,625

We are still waiting to get our tax credit which will increase our contingency.

We will have additional money if our enrollment stays at 311 through the enrollment period.

Computer Lab for middle school.

New Math textbooks for middle school.

It was recommended selling the Saxon Math books that were used last year.

Extended Contracts for Kindergarten teachers to participate in Friday meetings.

Handwork Teacher: Mary Mueller.

Library Cataloging of \$30,000 worth of library books to be catalogued. These books were purchased with a grant received from the state.

Athletic Director: Brandt Bowen.

Motion by Member Loudon **Seconded** by Member Houston **(TO APPROVE THE ABOVE BUDGET REVISIONS)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

D. Elections Committee

Moved to Joint APC/BPG Agenda

E. Meeting Schedule

Third Thursday of every month at 3:45 p.m.

Next Meeting Agenda:

Scheduling of Retreat

Pedagogical Council

Elections

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, September 20, 2012 at 3:45 p.m. at Birchtree Charter School.

Motion by Member Lee **Seconded** by member Gerrish **(TO ADJOURN AT 5:29 P.M.)**. The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.