

BTN Minutes 11.24.14

In attendance: Matt Werndorfer, Christina Fox (12th grader at Independence, new Student Government President) and Onyae Coleman (presented at Board of Ed meeting about school renewal) with mother Terrica Coleman and SGA Secretary Ali Ahmed; Kelly Caswell, Kia Harper, Shanelle Hopkins, Sidney Brooks, Elijah Etheridge, Eric Rice, Leah Abrams, Mark Matthews, Matrice Gandy, Curtis Pope (potential board member), Bresean Jenkins, Gwen Mullen, Kristine Sieloff.

Opening: 5:15pm

It's been a solid month - lots of relationship building with city council members and community leaders; moving forward on building committees.

Team building activity - find someone in the room with whom you have never had a conversation. Discuss a teacher who had an impact on your life, 3-5 minutes.

Overview of Agenda

Significant influx of new people on the board; increase in capacity for development.

5:25 Independence School Report

Growth from 109 to 125 students; has shortcomings. Back to back 30 minute exhibitions; Teachers there from 8am to 6pm, which is technically against contract. Need to look at scheduling again. 8 advisories in the year after this. How to make exhibitions an honest process while accommodating for time.

Student elections - Dr. Howell assisted with helping that to happen. Kelly impressed with the seriousness with which students approached the process.

Everyman Theater - 11th and 12th grade.

Taking literacy and numeracy to a new level; two teachers in English and two in Math will work with students one on one in literacy and numeracy. Used Stanford 10 to identify areas of struggle for students in reading. Math teachers using experiential assessment.

Need to pay Ms. Griffin for summer cleaning contract; should be forthcoming.

Dr. Howell spoke about the relationship developed between Ms. Mullin and a young man who has been facing family difficulties.

Onyae Coleman spoke about her experience of speaking at the Baltimore City Board of Ed; gave her a greater awareness of what school leaders deal with on a regular basis.

5:40 Connexions School Report

Connexions coming off first round of assessments using NWEA MAP; 90% of school has been assessed. Indicates that students are 3 grade levels below or more in reading, especially apparent with incoming sixth graders and 9th graders being problematic as well.

6th grade Language Arts teacher is also a Reading Specialist; using multiple assessments and programs. Introducing slowly for 9th grade. Assessments being used show growth or progress to a greater degree than MSA.

Elijah: Role of BTN should be to dedicate resources to assist with issues such as reading deficits, including using budget; Kia says that is what Title One funds are for. Need to build additional interventions into the school.

Issues in Math also stem from difficulties students have with reading.

How many years of MAP data does the school have? Students assessed three times a year.

Connexions chosen to participate in NAEP test as well.

Student Council ready to go with a cabinet as well; meeting on Wednesdays with standard agenda.

Kia is asking members of BTN to conduct a mock-SER because Connexions is undergoing the process in the Spring. Shooting for third week in December.

Teachers having some concerns about governance structure proposed; email sent out by BTU rep. Inclusion of parents and community members caused teachers concern around issues of curriculum and instruction.

Winter production at Connexions is December 11th at 6:30pm.

Submitted enrollment cap for 475.

6:07 Finance Committee Reports

City school system keeps putting off payments to the schools; we cannot approve a final budget today as a result of constantly changing information.

Final True-Up came in on Friday afternoon (11/21) for fiscal year 2014.

Final version will go out over email for BTN members to vote on.

Outgoing BTN Executive Director salary was already apportioned out to fiscal year 2015.

However, Finance Committee assures us that the current budget will not change significantly and that it is possible to vote to accept the budget for each school.

Independence Budget - move to accept, seconded, passed unanimously.

Connexions Budget - increases to the budget; still need reconciliation for over-enrollment. Looking at a potential deficit of \$6000. Actually, looking at projections, there is a potential for \$150,000 deficit unless that money is made up. Cannot vote on this budget at this time.

Will revisit this budget, communicate via email and vote in the January meeting.

BTN Budget - Staff change resulting in salary change = \$10,000 difference; projection from over enrollment at Connexions will result in additional funds for BTN budget.

6:33 Motion to accept minutes from October meeting, seconded and approved.

6:36 Eric Rice presents draft of recommendations on staffing policy.

Issues around hiring practices in the school. Certification is significant mostly at the high school. BTN prefers that teachers at our schools be highly qualified. However, with regard to arts programs, specifically at Connexions, certification is not always possible.

Problem with certified teachers in shortage areas, ie, Math and Sciences.

Arts instructors are different - need to look at School for the Arts model. Proposal that those teachers receive 80% salary of certified teachers with 15% of that money going to assist that teacher with taking coursework toward certification.

Principal must get the approval of the Executive Director before hiring non-certified personnel, and that person is then required to get certification within two years.

Standardization of contracts is necessary. BTN office drafts a contract, along with scale that addresses the 80% - non-negotiable.

Discussion about pay with regard to years of experience.

Eric will go back and draft language to address these additional concerns.

7:01 Executive Director Report

Expecting \$517,000 from True-Up; fundraising, getting name out to different foundations.

Possible annual fundraiser - Would it be possible for this board to create an event to celebrate teachers and parent leaders that support our schools? Dinner event as fundraiser by end of the school year.

Alternative idea - Dinner and show, tacking on to one of Bresean Jenkins' productions.

Seeking additional 3-4 teachers from non-BTN schools to stay true to mission of BTN having teacher voice representation.

New office possibility - lease on Youth Dreamers house is up in May. Making final decision within next month for new location.

7:13 Voting on new board candidate, Curtis Pope

Voted in unanimously.

7:16 Need to get School Review Committees up and running

Might have first meeting about this issue in December.

Next board meeting is at the end of January.