



Baystate Academy Charter Public School

Minutes

Baystate Academy Board Meeting

Date and Time

Thursday January 11, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Location

2001 Roosevelt Avenue
Springfield, MA 01104

Directors Present

C. CASTILLO, F. Robinson, J. Hixon (remote), L. deSousa (remote), M. Anderson (remote), P. Blain, P. Hyry-Dermith, R. Connolly (remote), R. Nieves, S. Logan

Directors Absent

G. AMADOR

Guests Present

B. Ball, T. Sneed

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Board Members participating remotely (zoom)

F. Robinson made a motion to allow board members to vote/appear via zoom.

R. Nieves seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C.

Call the Meeting to Order

J. Hixon called a meeting of the board of directors of Baystate Academy Charter Public School to order on Thursday Jan 11, 2024 at 5:33 PM.

D. Public comments

Kisha, a parent of an 8th grader, made a comment to the board regarding an incident in which she alleges that last year a male student threatening to bring a gun to the school and another student more recently bringing a knife to the school. She is concerned about the security at the school and would like more information about how to ensure that her student and all students are safe.

A second parent would also like to know why the parents were not notified of these incidents.

Mr. Sneed promised the parents that he would set up a meeting with these parents as soon as tomorrow to discuss these particular concerns, but informed the parents that the board would not provide comment or respond to the comments.

Mr. Anziano (10th grade teacher at the school) presented his support for the principal and stated that he is here today to provide his support of the cell phone policy instituted by the school. He would like some clarification on this policy as he has observed that some of the students are no longer turning in their phone and would like to implement a policy that would require steeper consequences for violating the cell phone policies. He believes that use of the cellphone directly correspondence with lower grades.

Ms. Sanchez, dean of middle school, explained the cell phone policy at the school and the corresponding discipline that occurs when students violate this policy. She also stated that in an effort to reduce the suspension rate the school is no longer using suspensions as a consequence for multiple offenses of the cell phone policy which is causing a decline in behavior.

E. Approve Minutes

Minutes will be approved next month as they were not ready to be approved for this meeting.

II. Finance committee

A. December financials

Rebecca Connolly presented the December financials to the board.

These financial documents can be found in the 1/11/2024 board packet prepared and circulated to all board members prior to today's meeting.

L. deSousa made a motion to to approve the financials.

P. Hyry-Dermith seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

III. Academic Success

A. Administrative Team Work

T. Sneed informed the board that the leadership team has been reviewing goals for the school, specifically becoming an "accountability team" in order to positively impact the learning and experience of all BACPS scholars and also what it means to lead an EL Education school.

The first session was conducted on 1/5/2024 in which they discussed the mission/vision alignment & accountable of the leadership team. The next session is on 1/19/2024 at which they will be discussing leadership mindsets and emotional intelligence. This work will continue throughout the semester. Mr. Sneed will be seeking assistance from the board in the months to come to discuss the board retreat and how it ties into this work.

B. Discipline Data Review

There have been much fewer suspensions for the month of December (down from over 100 suspensions in November) and only 14 in the month of December with no duplicates (students with multiple suspensions).

There has been a total of 133 suspensions for the school year. The goal is a 50% reduction in suspensions, and the school has met this goal and exceeded the target goal for decreasing suspensions. The data shows that female students make up approx. 65% of the suspensions and male students make up approx. 35% of the suspensions while the student populations of female vs. male is approx. 50/50. The highest percentage of suspensions are in the 8th, 9th and 10th grade, students with IEPs, African American students and females.

L. deSousa asked for the definition of "fighting" vs "battery" it was explained that "battery" means an assault committed by one person with no retaliation from the victim, "fighting" means two or more people involved in the assault.

L. deSousa asked for data on what percentage of suspended students have IEPs. 53% of male suspended students have IEPs and 35% of female suspended students have IEPs.

Dr. Logan responded to the suspension rates and cited developmental issues of the suspended students at the school, for example female students who have "adult" roles in the home but do not have that role as students in the school and also cultural responses that students of different races. She is concerned about coming up with solutions to this issue. T. Sneed stated that BHN and the Wellness team work on resolving issues relating to suspensions and the student's reentry into the school after suspension including a 4-week safety plan.

L. deSousa expressed her concern about the discriminatory impact of suspending students of color at a higher rate than white students and inquired into whether a third party should come into the school to evaluate who and why students are suspended.

T. Sneed reported to the board a current initiative to "rethink" discipline. The action plan includes restorative justice. Dr. Logan suggested that while topics of racism are important to discuss in CREW, topics involving gender would also be important.

IV. Governance Committee Report

A. Committee report

The governance committee has been working on "Board Norms" and would like input from the full board. The enumerated items below is a working list and not final:

1. The role of the board is for high level discussions and voting;
2. Committee meetings are meant to develop and recommend board actions.
3. The board should be setting board policies, procedures and financial oversight not specific operations of the school;
4. The board shall ask questions for clarity and promote discussion;
5. Any board member should feel comfortable to seek support from the board chair or governance committee as needed; and
6. Any board member can recommend a "reset" if they feel that a board discussion is going beyond board policies, procedures and financial oversight at all board functions if desired.

F. Robinson stated that the board has the responsibility to keep itself accountable and check each other if a member is going outside of the board's role.

V. Finance committee report

A. Construction project

T. Sneed reports that the bank is in discussion with Mass Development regarding the issuance of the bond and loan for this project. The bank is concerned about renewal letter that indicates that DESI wants to see academic improvement by FY25. DESI will not talk to the bank about this so T. Sneed is asking Mass Development to discuss with the bank what the renewal letter means. T. Sneed has asked for a final decision as soon as possible so that we can move forward with this project or put a pause on the project until a later date.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. CASTILLO