

DRAFT BOARD MINUTES

ASD Board Meeting April 10, 2013

Board Members Present: David Alukonis, Heather Bobbitt, Jane Buck, Thomas Frischknecht, Karen Graham, Idina Holden, Brandon Jackson, Kim Lavalley, Heather MacDonald and Joel Preminger

Board Members Absent: Kent Glossop, Patty Humphrey and Lucille Jordan

Non-voting Members Present: Jennifer Cava, Lizzie Cassady and Doug Belley

Others in Attendance: Brian Smith, Tracey Cassady, Dominique Dadekian

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

1. Public Comments

None.

2. Approval of Board Minutes from the Prior Meeting

Ms. Holden moved that the public minutes for March be approved. Ms. MacDonald seconded. All voted in favor, with one abstention.

3. Items of Board Business

- a. Board Chairman – Mr. Frischknecht will be contacting Board members whose terms are ending to find out if they intend to continue participating, in preparation for the organizational meeting.*

Mr. Frischknecht would like to invite Brian Smith to take over Mr. Bonner's vacated seat on the Board. Mr. Smith introduced himself and explained his background. Mr. Frischknecht and Ms. Cava spoke of the work that Mr. Smith has done to support the school in the past. Ms. Bobbitt would like to see a greater affiliation between ASD Board and ASDEF. Mr. Smith would finish Mr. Bonner's term in June and could stay on for another two years without election.

Ms. Bobbitt moved that the Board accept Mr. Brian Smith as a parent Board member to finish Mr. Bonner's term. Ms. Lavalley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Mr. Smith moved to sit with the table and was a voting member for the remainder of the meeting.

- b. Board Treasurer – Ms. Lavalley explained that the budget report had been sent out to Board members in email this afternoon with nothing new to report.*

4. Director's Report

- a. Operations & Personnel Report –*

- The master schedule for next year has been completed. Ms. Cava will need a full-time computer science teacher instead of a part-time computer science teacher and hopes to make this work within the approved budget, but it is too soon to know. She will come to the Board in May if she needs a budget adjustment.
- The daily schedule, including times for classes, is still being decided. Classes are expected to start 15 minutes later to accommodate the Nashua busing schedule.

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- The Employee Handbook is being updated. Contracts will be sent out before vacation, middle of April.
- A verbal offer of employment has been extended for a science teacher.
- b. *Facilities Update*
 - Ms. Cava is working with the construction company to work out the details of the science labs. The first lab is almost complete.
 - The electronic buzzer for the front door is ready to be installed. The students at NCC are putting together a pancake breakfast that is expected to cover the door installation.
- c. *Special Events*
 - Two teachers are working on a proposal for a field trip to Costa Rica for next year. There is no formal field trip policy in place, so this is informational. Ms. Cava asked that Board members review the information and raise any areas of concern for those teachers.
 - VIP Visits
 - (1) Mr. Baer's visit moved to May 7.
 - (2) Leadership Greater Nashua Education Day is tomorrow, April 11. Leaders will be attending ASD looking for a tour and to sit on a panel. 3 Board members will be attending.
 - (3) Mr. Frischknecht and Ms. Cava met with representatives from Rivier College and will reciprocate at the college.
- d. *Annual Fund* - 64% of our families have participated pledging and donating a total of \$143,436, \$107,277 of which has been received. We have \$6,564 left to reach our goal (numbers as of 4/8/13).
- e. *Proposed Academic Calendar* was handed out. School will start on August 26 and June 11, which are not school days for Nashua so there will be no busing those days. This allows two full weeks of vacation over the December holiday.

Ms. Bobbitt moved to approve the academic calendar. Ms. Lavallee seconded. All voted in favor.

5. Faculty & Student Affairs

- a. *Faculty Update*

Mr. Belley said the Teachers' Workshop day today was extremely productive. Another Performance Assessment workshop will take place next week. Two field trips will take place over vacation: Washington DC and China. The school play will be the weekend of May 11 at NCC's auditorium.

This year was one of the earliest times that contracts have been approved. Along with the early master schedules being finalized, it has been a positive faculty experience to already be looking ahead to next year.

- b. *Student Body*

Ms. Cassidy reported that students are excited for spring semester and a vacation. The field trip to the Palace Theater was fun. The team coached by Ms. Cassidy participated in the DI finals this year and was selected for the Global competition. ASD students participating on a Nashua team and a Bedford team have also been advanced to Globals.

Prom has been rescheduled to May 4 due to a robotics competition. The prom committee is self-sufficient and does not need anything from the Board.

6. Committee Reports

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- a. *Communications* committee is revamping the governance section of the website. The committee would like to add to the Board roster which category (parent, external) that each Board member represents. The committee would also like to include a short bio and photo of each Board member and will be reaching out to each member for the information.

Mr. Preminger mentioned the committee would like to reconsider the current approach for approving the minutes. Currently draft minutes are published, which carries a risk of error, but the current process has a month delay before the minutes are approved. The committee does not want to delay the dissemination of minutes that long. The Board discussed the option of posting a video of the Board meetings online, to supplement minutes. Mr. Smith added that this is how Brookline School District functions.

- b. *Outreach* – Ms. Buck and Mr. Alukonis met with a professional fundraiser, who recommended the following priorities for maximizing fundraising: (1) Board phone tree, (2) fundraising event, (3) grants, and (4) corporate fundraising. Ms. Buck will review these ideas with Mr. Smith.
- c. *Personnel* – The committee is working on contracts and updating the employee handbook.
- d. *Policy* – No update.
- e. *Strategic Planning* – Mr. Jackson sent out a proposal to reword the charter with regard to maximum headcount. The committee would like to get to a graduating class of 75 students. The current maximum headcount of 450 allows for 75 students in grades 7-12 but does not take into account attrition or the 6th grade. Additionally, the school does not have an entrance point after 9th grade, because of the advanced courses required for graduation.

Mr. Preminger asked whether we would no longer accept students after 9th grade. Mr. Jackson said there would not be a formal restriction, but it is difficult for students to meet the requirements. Ms. Cava added that 1 student transferred in this year and appears to be working out.

Mr. Preminger asked if the proposal is active targets to be pursued or just new caps for the purpose of the charter. Mr. Jackson said these are active targets.

Mr. Preminger asked whether the targets would support the financial needs of the school in the future. Mr. Jackson explained that finances were not the primary driver of this request. Generally speaking, the school will be more financially secure with a larger number of students. Mr. Frischknecht added that the ideal number of students would be less than the requested 675 but the exact number is not known.

Ms. Bobbitt said ASD would not be able to expand without the state approval for the whole number, because we don't want to go piecemeal to the state for incremental additions.

Mr. Jackson commented that the committee did not address the current political climate with a current moratorium on new charter schools and the current budget situation in Concord. Mr. Jackson suggested that the Board might want to authorize the Chair to work with the state to understand what could be acceptable. Mr. Frischknecht talked about the moratorium on new schools and

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HB2 which undermines the financials of charter schools. As an approved charter school ASD is not restricted by the moratorium.

Ms. Buck asked if sufficient applications are on hand to meet the proposed numbers for next year. The target for next year says 497, but Ms. Cava is planning for 450. Mr. Jackson explained that the numbers would be revised based on the timeline of approval that we receive from the state. Ms. Cava said that it is common for schools going through the renewal process to go back to the DOE to request changes to the charter. The visiting team for ASD recommended that we get more strategic in our approach for the next 5-10 years.

Ms. Holden spoke against the recommendation. She said she could not approve the numbers without seeing financial projections to understand the fixed and variable costs that go along with it. Mr. Preminger asked about financial projections as well. Mr. Jackson responded that those projections have not been put together and the committee would be working on those. Ms. Holden also raised a concern about the projected retention numbers and asked that the school focus instead on increasing its student retention. The Board members discussed different causes for students leaving the school. Mr. Jackson said the targets would be adjusted based on improved retention. Ms. Holden stated a third concern: Whether there are enough prospective students in the area to support 675 students, or whether the retention issue would be magnified by enrolling students that won't make it through. Ms. Cava explained that one of the causes of students leaving is that ASD does not have enough upper level classes for the high school students. Ms. Cava would ideally have 75 students per grade, but until she gets the student numbers into the upper grades she won't be able to add the advanced classes to keep them there.

Mr. Belley questioned whether the day-to-day culture of the school would change and felt it would be a major concern of the current students. Mr. Belley said that the students come here to avoid middle school and then transfer back out for high school. Ms. MacDonald added that students attend for 7-9th grade for IBC and then leave when they finish the program, but there is no entry point at 10th grade to replace those students.

Mr. Jackson moved that the proposal from the strategic committee be approved as written and give the Chairman the authority to apply for this and carry out negotiations with the Department of Education.

Proposal:

Amend the ASD charter to include the following:

1. Section (e) subsection "Enrollment," 1st paragraph: Change

"The school will serve a maximum of 450 students in grades 6-12" to

The school will serve students in grades 6-12. The number of students will follow the schedule in Table 1 with adjustments as necessary to compensate for variations in attrition rates to achieve a target graduating class of 75 students.

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- 2. Section (e), subsection "Enrollment," add the following after 1st paragraph:

School Year	Enrollment
2013-14	500
2014-15	560
2015-16	610
2016-17	650
2017-18 and beyond	675

The motion was seconded and passed with a vote of 8 to 1 with 1 abstention.

Mr. Jackson moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lavalley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 8, at 6:30 pm.

The Board meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Idina Holden
Secretary