

Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

**Minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting
October 10, 2007**

Board Members Present: Jacquelyn Sinclair, Nia Jacobs, Carole Pelissey, Keeana Saxon, Tina Saxon, Roger Harris, Carolyn Corbe, Edna Carrasco,

Board Member Absent: Albert Pless, Dan Mulhern.

Board Foundation Members, Nick Paleologos and Bud Mosley, absent.

Staff present: Jillian Nesgos, Kevin Cherry, Alexandra Buckmire, Robin Vilorio, Mark Johnson, Michael Weinstein, Amy Carignan, Steeve Mordan.

Jackie Sinclair, Chair

Meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm

I. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (Ms. Sinclair):

● **Approval of September 12, 2007 Minutes**

VOTED: With a motion by N. Jacobs, seconded by C. Pelissey, the board unanimously voted to accept the minutes of the September 12, 2007 Trustee Meeting.

● **Introduction of New board candidate Lennit Bligen by J. Sinclair**

Board members discussed LB's nomination. Candidate asked to leave the room.

● **Vote of Nominee**

VOTE: With a motion by K. Saxon, and second by R. Harris, board unanimously voted to accept L. Bligen's nomination to the board.

L. Bligen asked to re-enter room. L. Bligen was given Board of Trustee binder.

● **Vote of Trustees Up for Renewal:**

J. Sinclair: I would like to continue on board for at least the next year until we have a suitable replacement. We've made such progress. I would like to be able to see school move to the new location. I would like to also commit myself to a committee at my daughter's school, possibly the Literacy Committee there. I'd like to Chair for as long as physically possible. With your support, I'd like to do that.

VOTE: With a motion by T. Saxon, seconded by K. Saxon, board unanimously voted to have J. Sinclair continue work on the board.

Recommendation: B. Mosley move to Foundation Board.

Trustee C. Pelissey's term is up in December. B. Pina has posted staff position nomination.

Committee Updates

- **Nomination Committee (J. Sinclair)**

Nomination Committee is active. We are continuing to recent candidates. We need someone who has a finance background. We need someone in advertising and with PR background.

It makes candidacy more attractive if we not meet every month. We've been over cautious.

R. Harris: To a potential candidate meeting every other month is more attractive.

J. Sinclair: Sub-committees often meet six times a year, and other sub-committees meet only four times. I recommend we set dates for Trustee meetings. Sub-committee can structure their meetings around the board meetings.

T. Saxon: We emphasize quality over quantity.

C. Pelissey: We should not meet during MCAS months.

K. Saxon: Saying we meet every other month may sound attractive, but with sub-committee meetings, board members are potentially still meeting every month. This would be better than meeting twice a month, though.

JS: we already have dates published. We can just slash a couple of dates.

K. Cherry: I support every other month. Committee work is the norm.

J. Sinclair: We should be doing work in the subcommittees not during the board meeting. And reports should be presented at Board meetings.

VOTE: With a motion by R. Harris, and second by T. Saxon, board unanimously voted to have the HR Committee present a modified calendar next meeting.

- **Human Resources Committee (R. Harris)**

Highly qualified teacher status is above 80%. The fact that it was 38% three years ago shows a lot of progress.

- **Academic/Curriculum and Instruction Committee**

School is making a lot of progress. Data presentation was made by the assessment coordinator. Vote taken: motion by N. Jacobs, second by R. Harris. Academic Committee recommends approval of proposal to modify Stanford 9 testing . Board approved proposal to modify Stanford 9 testing for the coming year.

- **Finance Committee:**

No presentation – Paper report. Budget on schedule.

- **Development Committee (J. Sinclair):**

R. Harris: S. Mordan will merge old and new databases and to send out letters and try to attract potential contributors. S. Mordan has taken over J. Dugan's role with development.

II. RELOCATION UPDATE (K. Cherry)

We are still negotiating a purchase and sale agreement. Neither one of those agreements have been finalized. This Friday, we should have some movement. It's in the lawyers hands. Response from seller on Hyde Park side is slow; they all have their own individual attorneys and it will take time to get consensus.

III. HEADMASTER'S REPORT (R. Harris)

In the interest of time, I have already submitted my report for your review. Assessment Director presents data charts and having growth in most areas.

Math Cohort Analysis: lines are moving in the correct direction. 2010 scored very well on the last math test. We did show a lot of progress in math, but it is still a struggle.

Math Warning Students: Made a big stride for students scoring in the lowest category. Just over 30% were scoring in the lowest category. This is a reduction by 10%. This year's fourth graders: very low percentage of students performing in lowest category.

Four recognized groups: Low income, special education, Hispanic and African-American. Hispanic and sped students did not meet standard. Concern: high percentage of IEPs in lowest categories. 32 kids. Opposite end: 55% of non-sped is scoring in proficient or advanced on ELA exam. Math: has been a struggle for us. The distribution for non-sped students is more varied. 70% of IEP students are scoring in the lowest categories.

SPED subgroup, Cumulative Point Index Performance (CPI): Math: just missed target. ELA: missed target by quite a bit. This group did not make AYP. Missed by .2 and school has filed a discrepancy report because of attendance error. Data is being reviewed. This is 3rd thru 6th.

We need growth out of this group to make AYP. T. Saxon: Sped brings down aggregate? R. Vioria: Yes. R. Harris: That question is a part of state-wide debate; whether it is a fair expectation that a sped student should be held to the same standard as a regular student.

R. Viloría: Hispanic: did not make their ELA target. This group met their math target. Not a huge difference overall, but we have to take a closer look at the numbers to see where these kids are falling down. C. Pelissey: how are Hispanics identified? R. Viloría: Not sure whether it is self-identified. Subgroup is minimum of 40 students. Not enough Native American students to be considered a subgroup. Board looked at comparison of Hispanics to non-Hispanics for math test.

Hispanic: CPI performance: actual: 65.7, but target was 70.6 in math. ELA: actual: 71.5 and target was 78.

AYP is calculated with following factors: (A) Participation Rate—95% or greater part in MCAS; (B) Performance: 85.4 or greater in CPI and ELA and 76.5 or greater CPI in math; (C) Improvement: meet or exceed 2007 BRCPS Improvement Target; (D) Attendance: 92% or higher attendance rate or 1% improvement over 2006. J. Sinclair: Kids, who don't come to school, don't learn. We need to seriously address attendance and tardiness.

T. Saxon: is there anything we can do to prevent the dip in the 4th grade? R. Viloría: we are doing something to soften transition. 4th grade teachers will know what 3rd teachers are doing. We have a literacy program. We are looking at it more strategically. J. Sinclair: we should do something during the summer between 3rd and 4th-- making kids who are on the cusp and who are obviously under performing do something during that summer. Not just for 3rd graders, but for sped and Hispanics as well.

R. Harris: This is the red flag. We have a number of interventions. We don't use Saturdays and summers to the best of our ability. T. Saxon: on expecting the same response from a child who is SPED: are these emotional problems or are these children with true learning disabilities? R. Viloría: This is everything, based on IEP. IEP could be based on behavioral issues or cognitive ability. T. Saxon: Can't lump them together, you can't do that. R. Harris: That's why there's a debate. The affluent school communities are also missing AYP because of SPED. This is a national debate. T. Saxon: I worked in field of mental retardation and so I know that some students will never be able to pass MCAS. We must teach them to the highest level they can attain. R. Harris: I agree, but that's not a debate that's ours. We have to do the best we can with every student.

R. Harris: We have weekly meetings with teachers and school principals to make sure strategies make sense. The 1.9M cut allowed us to be more efficient. With Jillian, Lateefah, Alexandra, schools are more effective and more efficient. K. Cherry found money for paras and lunch mothers so we now have more people for kinder school, so we have more help than we did last year.

R. Harris leaves.

IV. FINANCE UPDATE (K. Cherry)

Any questions about what R. Harris said? We've commenced the audit and we've worked with them since Tuesday. The budget update is in the package, some of it is repetitive because there's not much progress. There is additional funding from grantors. We use a very conservative approach in how much money we receive from DOE because they are apt to change how much money we receive. We increased the amount of professional development programs (PD) so it was a nice windfall to provide for PD. We were able to increase the amount of dollars for instructional materials. We really don't have a lot of say in what we use it for because of entitlement. Next month, I'll have more projections as far as where we will end up. One thing that we did find, one of the benefits of bringing in new teachers: we based budget on last year's salaries and because a number of the teachers this year are on a lower pay scale, we were able identify reserve dollars. So we used newly-created reserve to purchase some paras. That was a very good opportunity for all of us. We were able to rally around Principal A. Carignan for support.

V. PARENT TRUSTEE UPDATE (E. Carrasco)

We had meeting last night. Presenter was there and gave good presentation. We discussed attendance concerns: enforcement of attendance rules and sick-time. How do you differentiate parents who abuse system and legitimate sicknesses? Parents' notes will not be accepted, but doctors' notes will be. There is a process to catch those who are abusing the system. For parents who are ill who are not able to take child to school, do you penalize the child? Principal will make the decision. We did have elections: 16 put in nominations. 7 showed up for 6 positions. We have a full board now. J. Sinclair: Do we have a parent-trustee? No. There's an attorney, teachers, a pretty good group who have a lot of experience school-wise.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

New calendar: We're all set.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

C. Pelissey: HR committee should work on salaries for the school. J. Sinclair: teachers get paid less here. C. Pelissey: We need to talk about retention and above that, teacher's hours. Teachers have seven sped students. They deserve to be paid. Pay scale is too low. People need to be appreciated. C. Corbe: people leave because of pay scale. 3, 4% raise is not enough. J. Sinclair: 3% is average. Teachers here need to be paid just as much as people outside. But it is financially impossible.

JS: Things will change once we move. C. Pelissey: that should be a priority once we move. Big problem is this building. C. Corbe: We get new teachers and then they move on and get paid more. K. Cherry: \$20M debt weighs heavily on school. HR Committee should make it a priority. C. Corbe: get seasoned teachers as opposed to new teachers.

VIII. OPEN FORUM

Is there anything else to discuss? No.

IX. ADJOURN

With a motion by E. Carrasco, seconded by N. Jacobs, board unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:09 pm.

Clerk for this meeting: K. Saxon

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