

**RHODE ISLAND MAYORAL ACADEMYSM
BLACKSTONE VALLEY**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES

5:30 p.m., July 18, 2011

Blackstone Valley Prep

291 Broad Street, Cumberland

A quorum assembled and Mayor McKee called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Present were:

Mayor Daniel J. McKee (Chair)
Dr. John Morton
Stephanie Noris
Kenneth Vaudreuil

Also present were Daniel C. Waugh, Esquire, Drew Allsopp, Michael Magee, Jeremy Chiappetta, and Christine Lopes, Kim Noble, and Paul Hero.

1. Executive Director's Report.

Academic results

Mr. Chiappetta reported that the Elementary School's academic results were very exciting as compared to national results and to those attained by the best schools nationwide. Assessments were conducted on three platforms—STEP, DRA, and Terra Nova. In STEP, 100% of kindergartners scored at or above grade level, as well as more than 94% of 1st graders. The Mayoral AcademySM school had achieved a letter from the Commissioner of Education, Deborah Gist, congratulating Blackstone Valley on having every kindergartner and 1st grader score proficient or better. Mr. Chiappetta quoted Ms. Gist from the letter: "To our knowledge, this is the first time in Rhode Island that every student at a school scored proficient or better on this early-grade assessment!" Similar impressive results were obtained on the Terra Nova assessment.

The F & P literacy assessment showed that 5th graders gained an average of 1.2 grade levels over the course of the academic year. At the beginning of the year, over 17% of the entering 5th graders were significantly below level; at the end of the year, only 1% remained significantly below grade level. Slightly less impressive results were obtained with students who were slightly behind grade level at the beginning of the year. As entering 5th graders, only 17.2% were assessed as well-prepared. By the end of the year, this percentage had more than doubled to 41.1%.

Family survey results

Mr. Chiappetta introduced Paul Hero to report the results of the family survey. Mr. Hero stated that the surveys generally showed good results, especially in the context of a public school. A sampling of the results:

- Pawtucket parents strongly agree that the school makes them feel valued.
- All parents agree that the school sets high expectations.
- Although elementary school parents agreed that there was enough course variety to keep their children interested, there was slightly less satisfaction on this question among middle school parents.
- The most frequently requested improvements are for better enrichments and arts programs.

Mr. Chiappetta stated that he is planning to institute art and music in the Middle School.

A board member asked how the survey questions were developed. Mr. Hero replied that the survey itself was based on the New York Learning Environment Survey.

Staffing

Mr. Chiappetta indicated that the schools are almost fully staffed. There are a few vacancies, including two teacher positions. Candidates will be tested over the next week.

Professional Development will start August 9. 70 attendees are expected. Staff will be welcomed by Commissioner Gist on August 11 at 8 a.m.

The October NECAP will be a waymark date. The school is planning 4 Saturday sessions in October to prepare.

Budget

The corporation is projecting a surplus for 2011.

The Walton Foundation has come through with a \$500,000 grant, which should be arriving in the coming week. The school will also be applying for one of 2 available grants (\$450,000 each) supplied by the federal government through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Chair requested continuing improvements in expenditure transparency.

Mr. Chiappetta said that he would be preparing a capital improvement budget.

2. Public comment

The Chair invited comments or questions from the public, but no one provided any.

3. Facilities report

The modular classrooms for the Fatima site are proceeding one day ahead of schedule. However, there will be inadequate space during the first two weeks, which the school will meet by moving planned field trips into that period and using Fatima Hall.

Miscellaneous improvements to the Fatima site are also progressing. Floors will be stripped and waxed to counteract heavy use.

Ongoing facilities planning will be needed to accommodate the schools' expected growth of about 250 students per year until reaching their maximum enrollment at 2000 students.

4. Compensation Committee Report

Mr. Vaudreuil reported that the Compensation Committee had met and developed a recommendation that an outside evaluator be hired to develop an evaluation rubric. Committee member Noris added that the committee would be looking for a 360° evaluation run by an outside consultant. The Committee had discussed using Kim Noble to assist in developing the evaluation method, as well as using RIMA as a source for best practices. Because this process had been late getting started, the Committee felt that it was important to act quickly and have the issues resolved by September.

In the meantime, however, the Committee had felt, in light of extremely smooth transition from prior management and the excellent academic and survey results obtained, it heartily recommended a 10% for the Executive Director and moved that the Executive Director be granted a 10% bonus for the academic year just ended. AYE: McKee, Vaudreuil, Noris, Morton. NAY: None.

5. Election of officers

Dr. Morton (seconded by Mr. Vaudreuil) moved to elect the following slate:

Chair – Daniel J. McKee
Treasurer – Michael Magee
Secretary – Daniel C. Waugh
Assistant Secretary – Jennifer LoPiccolo
Executive Director – Jeremy Chiappetta

The slate was elected on the following vote. AYE: McKee, Morton, Vaudreuil, Noris. NAY: None.

6. Budget items

Membership in League of Charter Schools

Membership in the League of Charter Schools costs \$18,000 per year. Keeping this item in the budget will require a cut in the budget for field trips and, in particular, the college trip. Advantages of staying in the League include fellowship with other charter schools. The League also serves as an information clearing house as well as a sponsor of various conferences. A downside is that 30% of the League's budget is spent on advocacy which may not coincide with the Mayoral Academy's goals. The advocate for the League is Advocacy Solutions.

Dr. Morton (seconded by Ms. Noris) moved to postpone consideration until the September meeting. AYE: McKee, Morton, Noris, Vaudreuil. NAY: None.

RFP for auditor

Mr. Chiappetta proposed that the board authorize the issuance of a request for proposal for auditing services. Mr. Vaudreuil (seconded by Dr. Morton) moved to instruct Mr. Chiappetta to move forward with the request for proposals. AYE: McKee, Vaudreuil, Morton, Noris. NAY: None.

7. Executive Session

Dr. Morton (seconded by Mr. Vaudreuil) moved to enter executive session pursuant to R.I. Gen. L. § 42-46-5(a)(2) to consider threatened litigation. AYE: McKee, Morton, Vaudreuil, Noris. NAY: None.

*** EXECUTIVE SESSION ***

Dr. Morton (seconded by Mr. Vaudreuil) moved to reconvene in open session. AYE: McKee, Morton, Vaudreuil, Noris. NAY: None.

Dr. Morton (seconded by Ms. Noris) moved to seal the minutes of the executive session. AYE: McKee, Morton, Vaudreuil, Noris. NAY: None.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Vaudreuil (seconded by Dr. Morton) moved to adjourn. AYE: McKee, Morton, Vaudreuil, Noris. NAY: None. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel C. Waugh
Secretary