

**RHODE ISLAND MAYORAL ACADEMY<sup>SM</sup>  
BLACKSTONE VALLEY**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES**

**5:30 p.m., October 17, 2011**

**Blackstone Valley Prep Middle, URI Classroom**

**7 Fatima Drive, Cumberland**

**1. Call to Order by Mayor McKee at 5:45PM**

Present were:

Mayor Daniel J. McKee (Chair)  
Kenneth Vaudreuil  
Joe Almond  
Angelo Garcia  
Dr. John Morton

Also present were, Deputy Executive Director Drew Allsopp, Jen LoPiccolo, Assistant Secretary and Director of External Affairs for the organization. Additional guests present were David Lauck and Christine Lopes from RIMA, Kim Noble, Ralph Salvatore, Nicole Palumbo, and Paul Parker.

**2. Motion to approve minutes: Angelo Garcia (seconded by John Morton). The motion passed on the following vote:**

**AYE: McKee, Vaudreuil, Almond, Morton, Garcia. NAY: None.**

Dr. Morton noted that the Board appreciates the detailed nature of the minutes provided.

**3. Financial Update by Ralph Salvatore and Nicole Palumbo, Support Services for Education:**

- a. October report presented. We are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and revenue looks good and the larger print was noted and appreciated by the Board. \$149k revenue from sending districts
- b. October expenses also on schedule and look as expected this time of year. Salaries and benefits remain on track. It was noted that the flex spending plan has a \$0 year to date. This is the employer portion of the plan of the benefits package, but to date, all plans have been set. Some lines have \$0

for year to date, largely because of the way the budget was built for the year. The budget format continues to be refined with new, clearer line items to further clarify budget.

- c. Revenue over expenses projected is at \$653,611—some excess CSP and favorable state aid;
- d. Ralph suggested that he return in January with a reallocation of line items. For example, internet is currently listed as \$0. There is no open expenditure; rather, things were not budgeted to that level of detail.
- e. Question from Angelo about time frame for expenditures and whether roll-over is allowed of CSP funds to which Ralph reiterated that some are while others are not. For example, the first CSP for ES1 ends June 2012 while the two awarded through RIDE end June 2013 and so some roll-over will be allowed.
- f. Ralph asked for any questions to which Mayor asked Ralph to return on a monthly basis and moving forward to see a percentage used against percentage remaining, year to date. Mayor mentioned (as noted in October minutes) a concern about a schedule of depreciation, especially if RIMA-BV is going to be running a surplus. There is no municipality present for “back off” and important to strategize as a result.

#### **4. ED Report (in writing and presented by Jen LoPiccolo on behalf of Jeremy Chiappetta)**

##### **a. Status of Schools Update**

Academically, trimester 1 is coming to a close. In all three schools teachers have been preparing and/or administering exams and literacy progress monitoring assessments. While most of the data is still being compiled, the early indications based on the literacy progress monitoring using STEP and F&P are showing very positive gains. A full report will be presented in the next board meeting. Said one first-year teacher upon seeing several of her scholars grow the equivalent of an entire grade level in one trimester, “it makes the hard work and long hours worth it to see such unbelievable growth.”

Culturally, attendance remains incredibly strong at 98.2%. All three BVP schools held potlucks this past week with really positive turnout. Highlights included the “Battle of the Books” in the middle school and mini-concerts at the elementary schools.

Strategically, the BVP teacher leaders and leadership team met on 11/16 and engaged in a planning process using a protocol to analyze four school network “dilemmas” focused on staff sustainability, professional development planning, leading change, and talent recruitment. The leadership team will continue to engage with the teacher leaders and broader community as we build what we hope to be a true school of choice for families in the Blackstone Valley.

## **b. RIDE Annual Report Update**

All charter schools in Rhode Island are required to submit an annual report by the end of November. Based largely on the strategic plan, BVP will provide the required documentation to RIDE in the following standard: *Standard 2: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?*

This report helps to lay the groundwork of documentation and reporting that will ultimately drive the renewal process for the BVP charter. Note: BVP is in year 3 of its 5 year charter, and the procedural work relating to renewal will begin in earnest in year 4.

## **c. Staffing Update**

BVP schools are fully staffed and we have hired our first and second “year zero” teachers – these are talented teachers who have limited teaching responsibilities this year, but we will train and support to lead classrooms next year.

BVP held a talent showcase on Monday, 11/14, whereby we led a professional development on “positive framing” and met with a few dozen teacher candidates.

Advertisements are public for teachers, head of school for ES1, and a director of academics role. Several candidates have already been interviewed, and many others in process.

## **d. Holiday Giving Campaign**

BVP is launching an on-line tool to allow families and friends to donate directly to the school. As part of the launch to advertise this giving opportunity, we will announce to BVP families, friends, local businesses, board members, and recommendations of the board.

## **e. Lottery Update**

Having launched an online and paper application in early November, BVP has over 500 applications for enrollment for 2012-2013. With limited advertising so far, we are optimistic that we will exceed our total application pool of nearly 900 last year.

Angelo asked about “United Way” donor designee number and “Bank of America” has something similar for BVP to learn more about.

## **a. District-charter Compact**

BVP has been working the Central Falls, RIMA, and other charters serving the City of Central Falls to build a compact to improve the services provided for Central Falls families. As one of a dozen cities in the country with a commitment for initial funding of \$100,000 from the Gates Foundation, a team will be representing the compact next month in Chicago for an opportunity for a much more significant investment.

Angelo reiterated here that it is not easy work, yet the members are working to ensure all voices are heard, and it's "good work".

## **5. Vote on the Approval of the 2011-17 Strategic Plan**

Jen LoPiccolo presented a high level overview regarding the work that occurred since the last time the plan was brought to the board for feedback and approval. At the board's request, the plan was presented at a BVP Family Leadership Council (FLC) meeting at which there was a "healthy conversation" during the September meeting, after which there was a public comment time where staff and families were encouraged to submit feedback and respond. We had little feedback from the staff, largely because. As for families, there was written feedback presented following the presentation. To no surprise, they wanted to be sure that our vision for family engagement was clear. There was some additional clarity made on the visual representations in the plan, particularly around enrollment and how we talk about growth in a really positive way.

Kim Noble was asked to further clarify what work was done to the plan to which she reiterated that families spoke to wanting more clarity in the area of assessment, so there was more added to explain the ANET work and other features of the school design that is now explained in more detail.

Lastly, the language we used to talk about school culture was revised to make it more positive in tone and more familiar, particularly for external readers that may not be as familiar with our model. Facilities plan was not changed but there is a reference made in the plan to the MOU with RIMA, which does go into great detail about facilities.

Mayor McKee noted here that the MOU was approved by RIMA at their last meeting.

Mayor asked for any questions at this time but that this is a working document. Jen echoed this and that with charter renewal process beginning next year, this document will also be examined for revisions. Mayor noted that he has shared RIMA-BV's plan with OCYL as an example for their own planning. Given that we are just 3 years into our growth, having a strategic plan in place is remarkable.

Mayor asked board to respond with any questions.

Angelo spoke to his comments about vetting family engagement with particular lens to ensure that we are working to involve *all* families and not just those that are frequently involved. Angelo reiterated that charter renewal will require more candid conversations with families and those candid conversations with families can really affect the evaluators' feedback. Making sure that the document is a living and breathing comment.

Secondly, Angelo reiterated that as a board member, he has not felt fully engaged and he is wanting to be engaged more, as he volunteered to do so. Angelo noted that he has a strong relationship with Jeremy and wants to be sure that BVP is taking up on offers made to help and support. Kim Nobel commented to Angelo's feedback and that what is here doesn't mean that there isn't more work to do and that his welcomed invitation is appreciated. Angelo shared perhaps we can "marry" this process with Segue as both are going through this same process and even share families.

Mayor reiterates that this is going to be the board's role to hold the staff accountable to what we need. Perhaps the board could designate someone from the board to work with the BVP team on this effort, particularly as we lead up to the renewal process. There is also more to be done as dynamics change with the growth and the introduction of new families.

**Motion to approve the Strategic Plan was made by Ken Vaudreuil and seconded by John Morton. The motion passed on the following vote:**

**AYE: McKee, Vaudreuil, Almond, Morton, Garcia. NAY: None.**

## **6. Board Orientation, Part 1**

- a. Christine introduced herself representing RIMA and the binder that will be used to build out the board orientation for the coming year, something already done with both Angelo Garcia and Stephanie Noris, RIMA-BV's 2 newest board members. She continued to identify the different sections of the binder
- b. 1<sup>st</sup> tab = Board responsibility divided into 3 main areas: 1) hold Executive Director Accountable; 2) hold school accountable to academic and fiscal goals and 3) oversee fiscal health of the organization. Board members' personal responsibility includes 1) supporting the organization in its fundraising efforts; 2) advocating for the school; 3) participate in school activities; and 4) demonstrating good faith and whenever necessary, disclosing anything necessary in good faith.
- c. 2<sup>nd</sup> tab = RIMA-BV Bylaws: review them and make sure that members of the board are familiar with these and reach out to Christine with any questions
- d. 3<sup>rd</sup> tab = Charter and Mayoral Academies legislation. This may be particularly handy for FAQ RI Legislation and Mayoral law
- e. 4<sup>th</sup> tab: RI Open Meeting Laws, including a Frequently Asked Questions and the Attorney General's guide to open government. which will provide a guide. This will be a good resource moving forward

- f. 5<sup>th</sup> tab = Annual financial disclosure compliance form required of all board members. Required to file an “annual disclosure form” and any board or elected official should add RIMA-BV to their form. All the forms are due April 29 (and sample form from 2010 with directions included).
- g. Dr. Morton noted that the pertinent RIDE regulations would be useful to include and wanted to echo that would be helpful, with the key word will is “pertinent”. Or even a guide where the pertinent info. can be found online to which Christine noted that she could definitely provide a list of links that would be helpful.
- h. Christine asked when might work to schedule a more lengthy board orientation, ideally on a Saturday. Those proposed were Feb. 11 or March 10, 9-12noon. However, neither of these dates were ideal. Christine will propose some new dates that better accommodate the board’s busy Feb and early March schedules, as long as it is after NECAP test results are released. Feb. 25 might work as would March 17.
- i. Christine asked for any further/comments questions to which Mayor McKee asked for timeline for Charter Renewal to be included as part of the future. Angelo reiterated that continued transparency with RIDE is important and that the timeline for next year’s process has not been determined yet.

## **7. Public Comment**

Having no public comment offered and before Mayor McKee asked for a motion to adjourn, he shared that there was a meeting at which Arne Duncan spoke that allowed he and others to meet with Mr. Duncan. It was a very positive start with some expected follow-up with both local and national mayors

## **8. Motion to Adjourn was made by Ken Vaudreuil and seconded by John Morton**

**AYE: McKee, Vaudreuil, Almond, Morton, Garcia. NAY: None.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen LoPiccolo

Assistant Secretary