

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES**

**5:30 p.m., February 6, 2012**

**Blackstone Valley Prep Elementary Cafetorium**

**291 Broad Street, Cumberland**

Board Members Present:

Joe Almond

John Morton

Stephanie Noris

Ken Vaudreuil

Also present were Executive Director Jeremy Chiappetta, Secretary Daniel Waugh, Ralph Salvatore, Michael DeMatteo, Jen LoPiccolo, Colleen Colarusso, Christine Lopes, Drew Allsopp, and David Lauck

**Meeting Called to order at 5:36PM by Mr. Joe Almond**

1. Approval of January Minutes

Motion to approve minutes made by Ken Vaudreuil and seconded by John Morton

Discussion: Joe Almond raised a concern that attendance at January's meeting needed to be corrected. Joe recommended the motion be withdrawn so that the minutes can be corrected and voted on at the next meeting.

**Ken Vaudreuil withdrew his motion to approve the January minutes and a new motion was made by Ken Vaudreuil and seconded by John Morton to defer the approval of minutes until the next meeting.**

**The motion passed on the following vote:**

**AYE: Almond, Noris, Vaudreuil, and Morton. NAY: None.**

2. Public Comment: No public comment provided

3. BVP Monthly Financial Update presented by Ralph Salvatore (Support Services for Education) for financial through January 31. Based on the financials presented, Ralph noted the following highlights:

- Columns added at the top reflect some requests made earlier to provide the actual percentage spent to date and the percentage remaining.

- Trending to a surplus
- Noted that on Expenses, salaries and benefits are trending on budget.
- Surplus in disability insurance noted
- Next month there are plans to take a more aggressive stance on the utility line items as weather gets colder
- Supplies surplus now but getting to end of the year when more purchases will be made.
- Equipment building improvements and middle school modular
- Projected revenue of \$509,972 over expenses at this time.

Almond asked a question about projected variance of \$95,000 and what was its relation to the amount in the budget to which Ralph reiterated that this is amount is above the budgeted surplus and whether it is this amount or another.

Motion to accept financial report as presented by John Morton and seconded by Ken Vaudreuil.

**The motion passed on the following vote:**

**AYE: Almond, Noris, Vaudreuil, and Morton. NAY: None.**

4. Vote to Approve Financial Polices: Document Retention and Check Request

Jeremy called to attention that #4 on the check request policy is amended to clarify that the We have these controls in place, but these documents are to simply document such practice.

Question for discussion was raised from Joe Almond: how are we instituting and documenting the policies themselves? What are we doing to memorialize these policies for both the staff and the board? These policies are not numbered/catalogued or referenced and concerned that there is no way to document it's authentic. He does not to object the policy. Request to institute a distribution system/retention system on the policies themselves. If it's important to approve these policies for substance, Joe reiterated that he will bring it up for a vote.

Jeremy spoke to those points being duly noted. The current institutionalization is through approval of minutes and public filings and that is not nearly as robust as what he believes Joe is recommending. Joe clarified that he could see the need to approve this policy but would like to see a more comprehensive system by which to catalogue, particularly as we grow as an organization. Again, it is how we're producing policy and documenting policy that is his concern, not with the actual policies brought forth to the board this evening.

Jeremy clarified that the motion to approve these specific policies came at the request of West Ed, the reviewers for our federal Charter School Program grant. They requested as part of their review that we ask the board to have these policies documented and is why it is here before the board at this time.

Ken Vaudreuil questioned what the threshold is for purchasing anything for \$1,000 or more? Jeremy clarified that we do not currently follow a particular threshold but we use a more informal "best business practice" approach currently and no specific threshold is used.

Joe asked legal whether what additional policies are needed given that we are receiving grant funds. Again, Joe asked what the urgency is for these votes to which Jeremy said that at this time a vote is necessary at the recommendation of West Ed to remain in good standing with the Charter School Program grant. Joe agreed to moving forward as long as the intent of this board is to make all policies as such more formalized and categorized.

A Motion to Approve “Document Retention Policy” as submitted on this date and “Check Request Form” as submitted on this date, February 6, 2012 was made by Ken Vaudreuil and was seconded by Stephanie Noris.

**The motion passed on the following vote:**

**AYE: Almond, Noris, Vaudreuil, and Morton. NAY: None.**

John Morton reiterated that it sounds like we need to put some actions in place context of larger fiscal policies and the other is defining the process by which policies get written and the latter is more important to which Joe reiterated he would happily share some samples and start that process with Jeremy and the team. It is not the intention to review and approve every policy; rather, it the board’s role to ensure there is a process and that it is happening as such.

Jeremy also noted that the team has already started to compile fiscal policies of other similar charter networks as models/examples.

## 5. Executive Director’s Update

### **A. Status of Schools Update**

*Attendance:* BVP attendance is consistent across all three schools, with an overall average of **97.6%**. 176 scholars have perfect attendance (34%). 20 scholars are on-track to being chronically absent, with 9 or more absences so far this school year (chronic absence, defined by RIDE as missing 10% of school, or 19 days of a 190 day school year).

Today is the 93<sup>rd</sup> day of school at BVP, and there are 518 currently enrolled scholars (2 MS scholars, and 1 ES2 scholar withdrew since last board meeting).

*ES1:* BVP ES1 is excited to have recently hired Alex Fernandez as a Teaching Fellow working in URI. The addition of Alex will allow Mrs. Souza to shift her time from mostly teaching and some coaching of teachers to mostly coaching. Mrs. Russell has a student teacher from Providence College, Jen den Hartog; Mrs. Russell was also recently selected to participate in a NECAP Test Analysis conference in New Hampshire.

*ES2:* ES2 has recently brought Erin Donahue as a Special Educator and Interventionist. She will be working with scholars who have IEPs as well as scholars who have been referred to RTI (Response to Intervention) for literacy and math. Tomorrow, 2/7 ES2 will have its Winter Performance at 5:00pm all are welcome to attend.

*MS:* BVP has received the 2011 NECAP results which are embargoed until Thursday, 2/9/12 at 1:30PM. A press release will be distributed at that time that will detail the results for the public. BVP MS has nearly 180 scholars participating in a field trip on 2/11 to the College of Holy Cross.

### *Culture:*

It's FUNbruary! Every day at BVP something ridiculously fun is happening. From "drop everything and dance" to "crazy hair day," BVP is working hard to bring "Joy Factor." ES Concerts are this week – Tuesday and Wednesday night, board members and the public are most welcome.

## **B. Staffing Update**

There are no teaching vacancies for the current school year.

Five team members have started as "year zero teachers," several other offers have been extended, and BVP has a series of other recruitment events. BVP ES1, ES2, and MS are all on track to be fully staffed for 2012-2013 by our targeted date: May, 15, 2012.

BVP is approved to continue in a match process with the Broad Center ([www.broadcenter.org](http://www.broadcenter.org)) to hire a Broad Resident to work on our leadership team. The matching process will continue into April to determine if there is a match. Broad has placed residents in several high-performing charter networks to work in areas including Academics, Finance, Strategy, Accountability, and Human Capital.

BVP has several excellent finalists for the Director of Academics and Head of School Elementary. The Director of Academics role is expected to be filled as soon as the end of February break; a recommended candidate Head of School Elementary 1 is expected for our March or April meeting.

BVP is working to finalize an innovative partnership with Rhode Island College for the fall of 2012 to pilot year-round student co-teachers in every BVP 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom. In exchange for a stipend, select RIC seniors (in the dual Elementary/Special Education certification program) will spend the entire year (including PD and our extended day) with BVP.

BVP has engaged with Kim Noble to conduct a 3<sup>rd</sup> party Staff Satisfaction survey. We had almost 50 (of 70) respondents provide feedback on all areas of the organization, ranging from Professional Development to Special Education, from the year-long calendar to open-ended responses around strategy and growth going forward. A full report will be ready for review at an upcoming board meeting.

## **C. Lottery Update**

Having launched an online and paper application in early November, as of 2/3/12, **BVP has over 1,114 applications for enrollment for 2012-2013.** Currently there are more applicants than available seats for all grades in all schools.

- 411 Kindergarten applications (~160 seats)
- 136 5<sup>th</sup> Grade applications (~80 seats)
- Application breakdown: 50% Pawtucket; 23% Central Falls; 23% Cumberland; 4% Lincoln

On Saturday, 2/3, BVP families conducted a canvassing activity in all four towns, putting up flyers and putting cards on parked cars in all four towns. In addition, approximately 150 families attended an Open House at the ES. A MS Open House is slated for Tuesday, 2/7.

Jeremy noted that there is still more to be done to get the word out. He shared an anecdote that many current families have shared that their own Neighbors of their 4 year olds still didn't know we didn't exist. As such, BVP is working on a mass mailing to be sent to every home in Lincoln. An opportunity through offered through the post office called a "saturation mailing".

Joe Almond asked a question about closing of applications to which Jeremy reiterated the application deadline is March 15.

Jen LoPiccolo was invited by Jeremy to speak about the ongoing school tours going on during lottery specifically for prospective families.

Jeremy noted that Stephanie's firm has been really helpful yet again this year. BVP is also working on Google AdWords, Facebook advertising and targeted advertisements. NPR underwriting ads will be starting this week.

Other outreach activities include:

- Valley Breeze Color Sticker (2/2)
- Public Service Announcements on local radio (beginning this week)
- 20 NPR 10 second sponsorship ads per week for 13 weeks
- Direct Mail to selected postal carrier routes, targeting Lincoln

Detailed outreach plans are in place to make every effort to ensure that every eligible family is aware of the choice to apply to BVP.

#### **d. District-charter Compact**

BVP continues to work with 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. Fran Gallo (and Mike Magee) recently attended a conference in Center for Reinventing Public Education in New Orleans focused on "portfolio districts." A comprehensive proposal to the Gates Foundation is in process for approx.. \$3.5M with a focus on the following initiatives: human capital; STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), Special Education, and Family Advocacy.

A celebration of the work-to-date and the overall initiative is scheduled for this Saturday, 2/11/12, 10AM-1PM at Central Falls High School.

#### **e. Facility Update**

Presented by Michael DeMatteo at Jeremy's request.

*291 Broad Street:* working to finalize details for a proposed addition to 291 Broad Street to allow for additional storage, small group, and office space to be completed in the summer of 2012. Several smaller but significant investments are also necessary (e.g. shades, conversion of a bathroom). Working on an RFP for some significant additions to the back of the current building.

*7 Fatima Drive:* working to finalize details for enhancements to 7 Fatima Drive to allow for use for 2012-2013 school year, including the addition of a play space.

*Fairlawn Elementary School, Lincoln :* a lease agreement has been approved by the Lincoln Town Council. RIMA and BVP staff are working with the Town of Lincoln to complete all necessary documentation (e.g. systems documentation to address mold issues) and service vendors are scheduled to study the building in depth over the February break (2/21-2/25). Arden Engineering will run test everything and a design engineering firm as well as Sydexo and our IT vendor as well as some small miscellaneous vendors to have a full picture of what is needed. BVP will house the MS there in 2012-2013 and ES2 thereafter.

*Drew Allsopp was invited to speak about the Roosevelt Avenue site in Pawtucket: RIMA has made an investment into 1135 Roosevelt Avenue. Complete renovation July 13, 2013 and RIMA is working full steam ahead in the coming months on this. RIMA has secured the site and is proceeding with necessary steps to prepare the site for a MS opening in fall 2013.*

Jeremy entertained questions from the board once the Executive Director's report was presented and the 2 asked are noted below.

Question from Ken Vaudreuil asked about the process for the direct mail around lottery outreach. Jeremy clarified that we worked with a direct mail to buy lists of households with targeted age groups. For a similar prices as a small postcard (.50), the postal service has saturation mailings available. Include specific Southern Lincoln and Manville. We need to do this for a number of reasons: 1) urban/suburban communities model is integral to the work here ; 2) make sure everyone is aware of this choice and RIDE has explicitly asked that we work to make sure all 4 of our sending districts are represented better; and 3) excited to talk about growth to scholars.

Question from Joe Almond asked how the upcoming NECAP results will be part of this mailing? We are excited to share the good news of our schools and are working on a positive message about that. Joe reiterated that you will be compared as part of the RIDE report that is published, regardless of how we message it. Teaching year data is what we hope to talk about and the data that we are going to market with and that will be able to be apples to apples comparable around the state.

**Motion to Accept the Executive Director's report by John Morton and seconded by Ken Vaudreuil.**

**The motion passed on the following vote: AYE: Noris, Vaudreuil, and Morton. ABSTAINED: Almond NAY: None.**

6. Discussion Topic: Executive Director Performance Goals

Jeremy presented the chart below taken from the approved strategic plan as a recommended starting point for the board to consider with regard to the framework for the process of evaluating the Executive Director based on performance outcomes could be.

Improving Educational Outcomes...A Theory of Change				
Focus	Goals	Outcomes	Strategies	Performance Measures
<b>Educational Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children in sending districts, and RI are prepared for college and life success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•% BVP scholars proficient or better exceeds sending districts, state, in NECAP assessments</li> <li>•ELL students demonstrate English language mastery—their academic achievement is on par with native speakers and ELL classification is no longer needed.</li> <li>•Attendance exceeds average of sending districts</li> <li>•BVP family survey reports satisfaction and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Highly effective teachers</li> <li>•Core PRIDE Values for staff and scholars</li> <li>•Literacy focus K-8</li> <li>•Standards based assessments</li> <li>•Robust Music, Art, Phys. Ed, Language, Technology Curricula</li> <li>•Lead/Fellow teaching model for early grades</li> <li>•Alignment of high expectations culture horizontally and vertically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•80% BVP scholars proficient or better on NECAP</li> <li>•80%BVP scholars at or above grade level in school administered standards based tests</li> <li>•95% or better attendance</li> <li>•90% families/scholars report satisfaction and engagement in regular surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enrollment growth achieves a diverse school community (staff, scholars)</li> <li>•Increase awareness of highly effective education practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•High demand for BVP seats</li> <li>•Low attrition of students continuing to live in district.</li> <li>•Family Leadership Council is diverse and positive</li> <li>•ELL and FRPL families choose, engage, support the school enthusiastically—it is the school of choice</li> <li>•BVP active member of professional learning communities promoting highly effective education practices including Charter/District Compacts and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enrollment outreach targets diverse communities including ELL families</li> <li>•School and Network leadership have intentional plan for how FLC will benefit the school.</li> <li>•Family engagement strategies targeting ELL families to ensure inclusion and cultural benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 applications per open seat available for lottery</li> <li>•90% of family and scholar survey results indicating level of engagement and satisfaction</li> <li>•90% of external partners gauge partnership as effective or highly effective.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Robust Talent Pipeline</li> <li>•Full Enrollment</li> <li>•Sustainable financial model</li> <li>•Safe, attractive, desirable affordable facilities for all BVP schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enrollment growth as planned</li> <li>•Retention of most effective staff</li> <li>•High demand from highly qualified candidates for all staff positions</li> <li>•Financial operating surplus</li> <li>•Facilities are a positive factor in school choice</li> <li>•Facilities cost is reasonable</li> <li>•School meets RIDE annual report criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Relationships with key higher ed (Brown, Salve, PC, RIC)</li> <li>•Relationships with TFA &amp; TNTP</li> <li>•Budget controls</li> <li>•MOU with RIMA provides framework for facilities planning and subsidy during growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•10 qualified candidates for every open position</li> <li>•90% retention of teachers receiving proficient or better on the Educator Evaluation Rubric</li> <li>•5% annual negative student attrition</li> <li>•4% Operating surplus</li> </ul>

Joe Almond clarified that this discussion was based on conversations in earlier meetings around the contractual agreements for the Executive Director (ED). Stephanie shared that this came out of the Compensation Committee’s work to determine how the board would evaluate the ED and the need to proceed with that work.

Jeremy also shared that there are 2 additional pieces to this discussion specific to evaluating the organization which is similar to evaluating the performance of the ED. The first is Year 4 site visit and RIDE charter renewal. The other is the hiring of an external evaluator to give a thorough 3<sup>rd</sup> party review. One that is being researched is SchoolWorks. 16 days on site plus a report out, advanced prep work and post visit work. Stephanie wondered whether this was something we do annually to which Jeremy shared that his recommendation will be to make this investment regularly but not necessarily annually as it is a very expensive process.

Joe Almond expressed a desire to see some internal review of baseline data including staff and parent feedback while keeping language consistent with retention and contractual language as well. The board may then want to see an external review as further evidence but that Stephanie reiterated that there was additional data and wondered whether 360 review process might be able to determine a baseline as well as the teacher satisfaction survey.

Joe suggested contract language as well as language from the charter that presents a proper baseline and then the board can come to an agreement of what is needed to evaluate. The 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluator is another layer and not necessary to the evaluation of the Executive Director. This is more about the work specific to the duties and responsibilities of the ED.

John thought a 360 review may help compliment this and Stephanie noted that a 360 would round out the picture. Stephanie agreed to continue to work on this and requested the support of Kim Noble; John Morton also shared that there are places out there that are designed to compile data such as Survey Monkey and to do so in a streamlined way.

#### 7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Ken Vaudreuil and seconded by John Morton.

**The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:43PM on the following vote:  
AYE: Almond, Noris, Vaudreuil, and Morton. NAY: None.**