

Advocates for Academic Excellence in Education, Inc.
(Benjamin Franklin High School)
Board of Directors Meeting
February 16, 2017 at 4:00PM
Benjamin Franklin High School Library

1. **Call to Order:** 4:06 PM
2. **Roll Call:** Les Alexander, Mark Baum '77, Alea Cot, Duris Holmes '80, Richard Ireland, Jr., Sandra Katz-Levy '65, Dr. John Nicklow, Daniel Schenck '94, Dr. Maureen Shuh, Jyric Sims, Allen Square, Carlos Zervigon, Ingrid Labat, M.D. '87, and Gary Ostroske
Excused:, Todd Slack
3. **Announcements:**
Welcome Mr. Sims and Mr. Square to the AAEE board.
April board meeting moved to April 20th due to Franklin Welcome Night.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved.
5. **Approval of Minutes of January 26, 2017:** Approved as distributed.
6. **Head of School Report (Widhalm):** Dr. Widhalm shared information about the success in soccer and basketball this season, with boys' and girls' teams of both sports qualifying for district playoffs. Board members were reminded of the Athletic Association's upcoming fund raising event, Falcon Feast. He reported that, to-date, 268 students have been offered placement, which is a slight uptick from last year. Finally, he noted from his distributed report that of 23 National Merit Semifinalists, 20 were named National Merit finalists; that the senior class includes an exceptional number of 8 Presidential Scholars; and that another ranking system, Best Schools, was just released with Franklin listed as the nation's #24 ranked high school.
7. **CFO Monthly Report (Bent):** Ms. Bent presented the monthly financials and noted certain variances from the budget, including: benefits change due to TRSL; \$9,000 over budget in Repairs and Maintenance due to locker repairs that occurred in the beginning of the year; changes in Salaries due to part-time hires for the Theatre Program, security costs, and needs for additional study hall proctors. She announced that the preliminary budget for the next fiscal year will be presented at the April board meeting.
8. **Committee Reports**
 - a. **Facilities-(Baum)** Interviews and work sessions have been completed by Trapolin-Peer for the facilities masterplan, and the facilities assessment is ongoing for the next few weeks, with mechanical and energy evaluations well underway. Mr. Baum also announced that Trapolin-Peer have selected two Franklin students as interns (Ethan Nicklow '18 and Mauni Haldar '17) and that they will be working on this project.
9. **Action Items**
 - a. **Approval for BFHS to sell beer and wine at the International Festival/Crawfish Boil on April 22, 17 (Ms. Read).** Motion and second, with unanimous approval. Discussion confirmed that we were following OPSB policies and that there were not issues with insurance.

- b. **Election of Christy Read, Gary Ostroske, and Mary Sullivan as members of the Development Committee (Cot)**—Mary Sullivan is a parent and alum. Motion and second, with unanimous approval. No discussion.
- c. **Franklin to become its own Local Education Agency (Widhalm):** Dr. Widhalm discussed the process whereby the school’s administration had studied and determined the pros and cons of remaining in the OPSB Local Education Agency, and Franklin becoming its own LEA, with OPSB as the school’s charter authorizer. He also provided a handout and background on state legislation, and how the option of becoming a LEA relates to the required unification of OPSB and the Recovery School District by 2018.

In becoming a LEA affiliated with OPSB, Franklin will not be subject to anticipated increases in fees from the district, and will have direct access to federal funds. In material from OPSB, they estimated that this could result in a \$450,000 to \$550,000 net increase in funds for the school. From the school administration’s perspective, not being subject to increased fees from the district is a significant reason to choose LEA status.

As a LEA, Franklin would be directly responsible to the State Department of Education for all reporting. The administration sees no increase in responsibilities, and as a LEA would have improved access to the Student Information System and teacher evaluation system, with direct reporting to the state. In essence, OPSB has been acting as the “middle man” for these reports, and direct access is preferred. Mr. Ferris spoke about changes in reporting.

Franklin would also be responsible for Special Education. This year, Franklin was able to hire a very experienced Special Education teacher who can provide all of the services necessary. There is no need to increase personnel. Ms. Lori DeFils spoke about the requirements and the work that she does. She also commented that as a LEA, we would be able to respond in a much timelier fashion to requests for accommodations that require testing. Using the district often slows the process.

Dr. Widhalm confirmed that, because Franklin’s facilities remain property of OPSB, the school can still access the Facility Preservation Fund. There would still be some services that could be purchased through OPSB, such as food service, speech therapy, and translation services, or those services could be obtained through a collaborative. He also iterated that this would require an amendment to our charter (in place until 2020-2021), but would not open it up for re-consideration.

Among the board’s discussion, Dr. Shuh expressed concerns about the school’s capacity to manage federal funding. In her experience, this could be a full-time job. She also advised waiting a year, since the option to become a LEA occurs annually, and see what happens. Mr Zervigon discussed his experience with the lessening of services, but increases in expenses from OPSB. He also pointed out that, with

bundled reporting of all schools in the OPSB LEA, if one school has errors, then no schools get to submit. Mr. Square explained that Type 5 schools have been their own LEA for years so there is no need to delay or be worried. Dr. Nicklow shared that if we remain in the OPSB LEA it reflects poorly on us as less capable than other schools. Motion made to become our own LEA affiliated with OPSB, effective July 1, 2017. Motion carried with Dr. Shuh voting against.

10. **Strategic Planning Discussion (Mr. Ostroske, Ms. Bent, Mr. Ireland, and Mr. Slack):** Mr. Ireland expressed his confidence in the transparency of the financial reporting, and that Financial Strategic Planning has not required rewriting, but has been strengthened. As an example, the extra-curricular responsibilities of club sponsored has been addressed as a responsibility of the club sponsor to communicating and collecting fees. A reserves policy will be established once we have the final plan/report.

11. **Motion to adjourn:** 5:39PM