

Advocates for Academic Excellence in Education, Inc.
(Benjamin Franklin High School)

Board of Directors Meeting

January 26, 2017 at 4:00PM

Benjamin Franklin High School Library

1. **Call to Order:** 4:04 PM
2. **Roll Call:** Les Alexander, Mark Baum '77, Alea Cot, Duris Holmes '80, Richard Ireland, Jr., Dr. John Nicklow, Daniel Schenck '94, Todd Slack, Carlos Zervigon, Ingrid Labat, M.D. '87 and Gary Ostroske
Excused: Sandra Katz-Levy '65, Dr. Maureen Shuh,
3. **Approval of Agenda (Mr. Alexander):** Approved
4. **Approval of Minutes of November 17, 2016:** Approved as distributed
5. **Information/Discussion**
 - a. **Admissions (Ms. Jenkins)** Ms. Jenkins reported that, compared with the numbers last year, we have received approximately 100 more applications. The number of students testing in has remained about the same as last year. Ms. Jenkins has visited 16 public and 6 private schools as a means to maintain outreach to area schools. Two schools are new to this process this year, including a Waldorf school. Two more admissions tests are scheduled, and students submitting applications after January 13 are still tested, but are not guaranteed a spot the way timely applications are guaranteed. Ms. Jenkins also indicated that, with a changing emphasis on teaching language, that component of the test being used may need to be reassessed. Board members discussed the trajectory of enrollment, the total number of available students, and marketing strategies. The recently begun facilities assessment and master plan are a positive part of the message to new families.
6. **Head of School Monthly report- (Dr. Widhalm)** In addition to the written report that was distributed, Dr. Widhalm provided a handout on the Niche School Ranking report, which was very favorable for Franklin. From the monthly report, he highlighted the success of the Internship Fair. Dr. Widhalm also spoke briefly about new athletic surveys for team sports. For football, volleyball, swimming, and cross country, the responses were favorable about the students' experience and the benefit of our athletic program. He reported on a race relations forum that was organized by Student Council for students to express concerns and share their perspectives. Finally, Dr. Widhalm informed the Board that a study group would be formed to look into the idea originated from the strategic planning process to explore the possibility of adding an 8th grade.
 - a. **Close-Up Trip (Mr. Parauka)** - Mr. Parauka and Ms. Shariff took 18 students to Washington DC for the week prior to and the Inauguration. The experience included not only being on the Capitol grounds for the installation of a new president, but also experiencing the city and the women's march on the day following the inauguration. Mr. Parauka commented on the experience and interactions students had with others gathered at the Capitol.
7. **CFO report- (Ms. Bent)** Ms. Bent reported on the process of moving accounts from FNBC to Iberia Bank. She pointed out one area in the financials, dues/fees and salary line items, that she will further research to better understand the variation from the

budget. She will also be further researching the bank capital account proposal and cash reserves need for the school.

8. **Committee Reports**

- a. **Strategic Planning-(Mr. Ostroske)** Mr. Ostroske briefly recapped the successful two-hour workshop held on January 7, the feedback from attendees for determining priorities to continue further work on, and the “parking lot” items for further consideration. Based on feedback from the attendees, the number one focus for the future was curriculum development. The others were technology, adding an 8th grade, retention, academic honesty, and the role of athletics and arts in the school’s future. Mr. Alexander added that the spring board meetings will focus on strategic planning issues in order to allow for more discussions on these issues.

9. **Action Items**

- a. **Election of Allen Square as a Class B board member (Mr. Zervigon).** Mr. Square was hired by Mayor Landrieu to revamp the technology office in City Hall. He has been employed by OPSB to review the central office restructuring, and his experience and commitments demonstrate how he values public education, He has also been involved with facilities assessments. He is nominated in Class B, which will result in four Class A, four Class B, and four Class C members plus the at-large member and 2 Class D members. His election will result in a total of 15 board members. **Motion and second, with unanimous approval.**

10. **Motion to adjourn:** 4:49PM