

**Advocates for Academic Excellence in Education, Inc.**  
**(Benjamin Franklin High School) Board of Directors Regular Meeting**  
**Thursday, Nov 16, 2023, 4:30 PM Cafeteria**

**1. Call to Order:** 4:36 p.m.

**2. Roll Call:** Sean Blondell, Jill Condon, Alea Cot, Charmaine Cooper Hussain, Shaneika Dabney-Henderson '96, Tim Duncan, Jenny Kottler '79, Dolly Malik, Alexis Parent-Ferrouillet '96, Jeffrey Seymour, Mitchell Turnbough. Excused: Jon Levy '03, Brian Mora, Todd Ragusa, Mark Rubin '86 and Anu Varadharajan.

**3. Announcements**

- a. Recognition of our volleyball team for making it to the State Volleyball Semifinals– Coach Buford and team captains Aubrey Muirhead '24 and Cori Staes '25 celebrated the end of a successful season. Their individual successes and honors were also highlighted.
- b. Reminder of annual giving – Ms. Read shared the Shoot for the Stars campaign and requested board pledges, including that they can make their pledge donation on Giving Tuesday or GiveNOLA Day. Mr. Blondell shared progress in the Thurber Fund investments with Friends of Franklin. He also requested recommendations for leadership on the FoF board.
- c. Annual Ethics training due by December 31. – Reminders for board members to complete this training each year and email the certificate to Ms. Cot. Information at [Louisiana Ethics Administration Program](#) under “Training”
- d. Next meeting on January 18, 2024. (December meeting is canceled.)

**4. Approval of Agenda** – Ms. Cot asked for an action item to add approval of the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire added. Motion. Second. Approved unanimously. Ms. Cot distributed the questionnaire.

**5. Approval of Minutes of Oct. 12, 2023**–Motion. Second. Approved unanimously with no comment.

**6. Information/Reports**

- a. Head of School Monthly Report (Mr. Ferris/Mr. Jackson)-- Mr. Ferris shared the recent campus events: Parent Teacher conferences and moved into an overview of the new SPS scores. We appreciate the successes of other schools making growth and progress. Mr. Ferris shared the changes to the SPS formula, including the Strength of Diploma changes, Interest & Opportunities additions, LEAP

progress and growth indexes, Cohort Graduation Rate, ACT averages. Mr. Ferris noted that a data error in the I & O data makes that score incorrect, and we are working to make that correction. With strength of diploma, Mr. Ferris shared that while we are not going to begin awarding Associate's degrees, as that is not what our stakeholders value, that we can more readily improve the strength of diploma score by getting more students to take an AP Exam or begin offering the CLEP exam as well. Getting student engagement in their impact with the SPS scores will be one avenue of changing this. Mr. Ferris also acknowledged that the school has additional priorities that are outside of the SPS score, which should be celebrated. We do want to improve the SPS score, but we do not want to sacrifice the students' needs. We want to meet both needs. Comparable schools were highlighted and differences noted. Mr. Ferris shared plans to consider to improve our SPS that also further our mission, including improving LEAP and ACT scores. Some methods are already underway, but impacts won't be seen in SPS for a few years. Dr. Ferouillet suggested an Academic Policy Committee Meeting be scheduled to address this as well. Ms. Malik noted that she researched and comparable schools require a 2.5 GPA, and if our 2.0 would relate to this different requirement. A discussion of how our admissions standards impact this score continued among board members and Mr. Ferris. Ms. Dabney-Henderson asked about the growth of our students matters more than just the top performance level. Mr. Parauka asked about the other school's scores improving where we went down. Mr. Ferris also shared the outcomes of the Executive Team workshop with Krystal Allen, including decision-making matrices, climate & culture, and professional expectations. Mr. Jackson shared further athletics celebrations, upcoming IT projects, facilities projects, student clubs and activities recent highlights, as well as staff-led events and community service projects. The Social Studies Department was interviewed about their work bringing real-world events into class analysis and discussions. Dr. Lastrapes shared specifics about the work of the Social Studies program to engage and address world events in their classes.

b. Committee Reports and Discussion

- i. Finance Committee (Ms. Perkins)--Ms. Condon shared the FC meeting outcomes. She also shared the audit timeline and a discussion of cash investments. She also explained that approval of the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire is needed for the audit.
- ii. Facilities Committee (Mr. Turnbough)--Mr. Turnbough shared the cooling tower, roof replacements and security grant projects. Mr. Jackson detailed that the security grant project includes facial recognition software. Volume One Architects is owned by the Class of '89 valedictorian.
- iii. Governance Committee (Ms. Cot)  
Report from the CEO Search Subcommittee (Ms. Cooper Hussain)-- Ms. Cooper Hussain detailed the process for interviews and that upcoming

dates are being scheduled.

**8. Discussion**

**9. Action Items:**

a. Approve the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire completion. Motion. Second. Approved unanimously with no public comment. Mr. Jackson shared that the traffic study and school zone camera are moving forward. The need for staffing to address concerns on Leon C Simon and St. Anthony was addressed in response to a public question about entering and exiting safely.

**10. Executive Session to Discuss Pending Legal Matters.** Motion. Second. No board comment. No public comment. Approved unanimously by roll call vote. Board went into executive session at 5:40 p.m. Board adjourned from Executive Session at 6:01 p.m.

**11. Meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.**