

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2015

54 York Street, Portland, Maine

Directors Present: Kelli Pryor, Peter Montano (left at 6:30 pm), Allison Crean Davis, Kim Gustafson, Christian Sparling, Ruth Dean, Peter Morrison (left at 7:15pm)

Guests Present: Carl Stasio (Executive Director), Michele LaForge (Head of School), Shanna Guevin (Business and Operations Manager), Jana Lapoint

Agenda item

I. Opening items

Kelli Pryor, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

A. Minutes

Allison Crean-Davis, Board Vice Chair, made a motion to accept the minutes from the Board of Directors meeting on January 13, 2015. Peter Montano, Board Treasurer, seconded, and all unanimously approved the board minutes from January 13, 2015.

II. Enrollment

A. Lottery review & enrollment targets

Michele LaForge, Head of School, provided information on current trends for enrollment. This year, there was an overwhelming number of applicants for the 2015-16 school year. Because there were such a high number of students (two times the number of available spots) who completed all required parts of the application, a lottery was held on February 11, 2015. The vast majority of accepted students from the lottery have submitted Commitment to Enroll forms, and new spots have been offered for those who have declined their spot. As typical for schools, movement is expected in August, at which point Baxter will continue to work off of the healthy waiting list, which continues to grow.

To prevent numerous transfers during the school year, Baxter's admissions team will work to ensure expectations are clear prior to enrollment and to create opportunities over the summer and during the year for new students to become involved. Suggestions offered by Board Member Christian Sparling included implementing new student orientation, in-person registration, and utilizing parent or student "buddies," to name a few. Although a Shadow Day for prospective students was already held in January 2015, there are still many requests for shadowing. The admissions team is considering additional opportunities to help families better understand the Baxter curriculum, culture and expectations. We currently still have students interested in shadowing. Possibly an outreach – ice cream social?

III. Finances

A. Year-to-Date

Peter Montano shared the year-to-date financial report. Recent projections confirm that continued fundraising is needed throughout the remainder of this fiscal year. There are several fundraising efforts in the pipeline that should help Baxter meet its fundraising goals. Baxter's bank has renewed a Line of Credit that can be tapped to help manage cash flow until next year when economies of scale improve.

B. Budget projection work-

Baxter is currently working on building the budget for the upcoming school year (2015-16). It is already anticipated that the revenue from the increased enrollment will essentially offset the additional operating expenses. The budget will not be as dependent on fundraising.

C. Development

Kelli provided an update on development activity. To date this year, Baxter has received pledges in the amount of \$118,727 in contributions and grants, including a \$50,000 matching grant. Over the next three months, there will be two more appeals for annual giving, a marketing and fundraising event, as well as additional grant writing efforts. Baxter continues to host a variety of visitors and supporters on Fridays for tours; these tours are increasing exposure and introducing Baxter to its greater community.

Baxter is currently exploring opportunities for more Maine students (beyond Baxter's enrolled students) to become involved with Baxter and its many offerings. For example, offering after-school or summer programming would enable students who are not enrolled to learn in similar ways that school year students do at Baxter.

IV. Facilities

A. 2015-16

Executive Director Carl Stasio provided an update on the facilities and needs for this coming school year. To accommodate an additional 100 students and staff next year, Baxter is looking at renting a minimum of 7000 ft² of space in the nearby area. A space that is currently being considered and negotiated was narrowed down from a search of several facilities over the last year and is within walking distance of 54 York Street. An architectural firm is currently involved in ensuring that the negotiated space is ready for the next school year.

V. Transportation- Carl

A. Planning

Baxter is currently spending over \$200K for transportation this year. As the number of enrolled students increases, there is a need to consider alternative methods of transportation to/from Baxter Academy. Baxter is currently exploring the use of public transportation and carpooling. There was discussion among board members regarding the advantages of public transportation for Baxter students:

1. Public transportation allows for a more flexible schedule that would enable students to stay in Portland for after-school activities.
2. The buses and ride would be more pleasant than the traditional school bus
3. There is parking available at many public transportation bus stops, which Baxter cannot offer to its students driving to/from Baxter.

Board members also discussed ways to incentivize the use of public transportation, and the unpredictability of student ridership for next year given the new class and increased number of juniors and seniors driving their own vehicles. Baxter will look at the enrollment for next year to help inform the transportation needs for next year.

Head of School, Michele LaForge, noted that the current contracted bus company has been flexible and responsive to our needs, particularly given the large catchment area.

VI. Outreach

A. Goodwill tours

Kelli shared that the Goodwill tours hosted on Fridays are going very well. Recent visitors to Baxter Academy during these tours are Maine State Senator Justin Alford and Maine Commissioner of Education Tom Desjardin. The Goodwill tours have helped create and nurture partnerships among nearby neighbors, as well as institutions outside of Portland.

B. Charter School coalition

Representatives from each of Maine's six public charter schools have been meeting over the last few months to discuss issues affecting the charter schools. Efforts are being made to utilize collective services to increase efficiency and reduce expenses on topics such as lobbying, legal needs, payroll, purchasing and transportation.

VII. Public Discussion

The board meeting was opened for public discussion. There were no additional comments.

Kelli moved that the board conclude the meeting. Member Ruth Dean seconded. All board members present approved that the board conclude the meeting at 7:20pm

Next meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 2015; 54 York Street, Portland, ME 04101