

I. Call to Order

5:30 p.m.

A. Odum, H. Kleiner, B. Bingham, V. Jenkins, N. Vouvalis in attendance

M. Kidman & P. Willis joined in the first 30 minutes

T. Slocum joined approximately an hour later and was asked to stay outside until discussion of the potential building purchase was complete, at which point he joined the meeting.

II. Public Comment

Amanda Thompson came to speak about ability grouping. She provided an example of one of BRCS' newer teachers having a difficult time grouping children appropriately. She is concerned that, using reading as an example, the students who were performing strongly last year will be set back this year. They do not seem to be being challenged, mostly just clustered. She understands that the school is moving away from moving students between grades, but she wonders if that will cause some of the children to not be challenged at the level they should be. She brought her three children to BRCS because of its ability grouping value in the charter and she feels like her children are doing well because things come easy, and she is concerned that the current grouping is simply not meeting their needs. At one point in the past, she felt like she had waited too long into the school year to address the issue. So she is hoping to address this at the beginning of the school year; she's not sure where the balance is but hoped that erring on the side of too early would be better for BRCS than too late.

H. Kleiner invited the parent to stay, as ability grouping is on the agenda for later this evening. He clarified that the conclusion of last year's work shouldn't have been that we don't move students, but that if an ability group can be attained within a grade, it should be. If not, students should be moved between grades.

III. Red Apple Update (Steve Finley)

Revenues

Local money (line 1000) is mostly made up of pledges and money from parents - not a lot of that happens in July and August. So that will be coming, but it is normal for that to look low this time of year. Federal dollars, as always, come later in the year. The state allocation (line 3000) is looking good, but it's also not all in because the state splits that up.

In federal revenues (line 4000), last year we were told one thing about Title I funds, and then another thing, and then it ended up being something different. This year, we planned for \$8000 in Title I funds, because that is what we received last year. It will likely be \$13,000, but we don't want to budget for that because it can be so fluid. Those funds will come later in the year and will likely be higher than we have budgeted for.

Expenses

Under reserves, one line item is new: the additional use of reserve. This was for the large textbook order that we made before the school year.

In the month of July we spent a lot on furniture and technology, as is normal for the beginning of a school year. So our expenses were higher than our revenues. In August we have reversed that trend, so revenues are higher than expenditures. Our forecasted remaining cash is almost certainly lower than what we actually will have, which is great.

H. Kleiner asked about the use of funds to assess whether to purchase the building. Steve said we can do one of two things there: take it out of normal operating, or take it out of reserves.

N. Vouvalis asked about whether the \$2000 SCA is requesting is within our budget; Steve indicated that that was perfectly fine within our budget constraints.

N. Vouvalis also requested that a separate tab be included in the budget breakdown excel sheet for SCA so that it is clear that the Board is not "managing" this budget, but can still have appropriate oversight.

III. SCA Funding Request

An emailed request to the BRCS Governing Board, requesting a \$2000 allocation to the SCA, was circulated prior to the meeting (appended to these minutes). N. Vouvalis moves that we allocated \$2,000 to the SCA out of operational funds. A. Odum seconds. No further discussion. All in favor, none opposed.

V. SCA Update

Amy Kleiner provided an update for the SCA. The SCA now has a teacher representative. Some focus for the year: developing/strengthening middle school pride, general school pride, and increased participation from parents and community members. H. Kleiner asked about the Green Science Fair; historically, it has been used to fund, in part, the Stokes Nature Program. He asked whether that was still a viable funding mechanism for the Stokes Nature Program. J. Adams clarified that the expenses for Stokes were more than what was raised. SCA has decided to make the Green Science Fair K-8, and it will be promoted as something that supports field experiences. Stokes costs \$2600. The Board has been supplementing this anyway, but Amy Kleiner thinks that we need to consider how to separate these items out because we've never met the funding goal for that via the Green Science Fair. J. Adams clarified that the money they raise should just go back into the field trip budget line item.

H. Kleiner explained that Stokes is historically K-5, so we are focusing more on the broader field experiences because the field experiences are also relevant to 6-8 and that's why it's good to discuss this as a broader school opportunity.

VI. Building Update

We have been meeting with all kinds of experts to investigate the possibility of purchasing the building. The building is in very sound condition for its age and materials. Some of the bigger issues:

- We are about 100 years older than contemporary seismic codes. To bring ourselves to code, it would be impossibly expensive. Parts of the roof will need repair within the next ten years, and will need to be completely removed and replaced. We will have a roofing company come out to give us a quote.
- Windows need to be replaced.
- There are sagging ceiling tiles which need to be replaced as soon as possible. The engineer thought that this was going to come down on peoples' heads sometime in the near future. They suggested sheetrocking the ceiling. Another option is to do the T Bar ceiling which allows for the hiding of a lot of cable and such. Estimated cost: \$2000.
- The cafeteria floors are fine; the gymnasium floor needs to be sanded and refinished. Another contractor suggested replacing them because the maintenance of a wood floor is expensive.
- The parking lot is in pretty good shape and suggested sealing the asphalt. They suggested that we do it soon, before winter hits, because it needs to be sealed. One company offered to talk to us about the structure of the parking lot, too, saying that there are improvements that could be made.
- There are drainage issues with the playground area. They suggested a French drain system; N. Vouvalis thought that this would cost about \$1500-2000, but the drainage is not set up well and it could be more.

- The boiler is in good shape. It is quite old, but the maintenance person who came out to see it was shocked at how great a condition this was in. A new one would be tens of thousands of dollars, so this is a relief. Continued, strong maintenance would make it last indefinitely.
- The gym is the most serious situation. There is cracking on all of the walls but there's one wall that is worse than others. A fuller design from the engineers are needed, but they think that wall needs to be reinforced. The contractor doesn't know yet what it would cost, but their ballpark was \$100,000.
- There is a steeple near the playground that, in the event of a major seismic event, would definitely fall.
- The engineer estimated that we would pay 1.2 – 1.5 million for a new building, not including the land.

The board discussed a lot of the ups and downs about purchasing the building. We explored getting an appraisal. We also discussed disclosures to parents about the state of the building, and agreed that we should get more information and synthesize it into something useful for parents. T. Slocum joined the Board after this discussion had ended.

VII. Spring Trip

Last year, there was a three day two night trip that included half a day on the river. It was \$280 per student. Something with a full day on the river is \$350 per student.

The five day four night trip is \$480 per student. One day is on the river. We qualify for a discount from Canyonlands and that is \$432 per student.

J. Adams expressed that some teachers were hesitant about going last year because it is so long and people did not want to be away that long. The Board expressed that this is a really neat and unique experience, and we would hope that teachers would be excited about it. The Board needs to know what kind of support they might need for them to enthusiastically embrace this trip.

VIII. Skill Level Grouping

Slocum discussed skill level grouping and instruction. Particularly at the basic skills level, the curricula are fairly sequential. It matters where you start with Direct Instruction. This is not necessarily true of *all* subject areas, but for the basic skills pieces, it is true. You want to find the right place in the sequence for each child. You don't want children bored, and you don't want children frustrated because they don't have the prerequisites to be successful. The "teaching zone" should be appropriate to the group. If you have students in very different places, it is difficult to just deliver one curriculum.

The idea behind Direct Instruction is that each step is small and incremental, and repetitive skill building is important.

Skill groups need to be flexible. Students learn at different rates. Students might start in the same place, but learn at a much faster pace. Another might move at exactly the speed of the curriculum. Another might need to repeat lessons. The groups must be flexible because what is appropriate on Day 1 is not always appropriate on Day 20. Patty added that collection of data on their skills on a constant basis is also critical to appropriate skill level and ability grouping. Tim added that one great thing about the DI curriculum is that there are ample opportunities to secure this data. If a child is scoring less than 80% on a mastery test repeatedly or a lot of students are scoring there, something is wrong. However, on the flip side, parents who see their students scoring in the 90% area constantly should be cautioned that it doesn't mean their student should move forward. Students should be highly successful *where they are intended to be*.

H. Kleiner expressed that teachers had a hard time grouping appropriately given numbers and time constraints. He asked Tim and Patty to discuss what it should "look like on the ground." DI programs vary in terms of how long the teacher presentation part should take. But the independent work part is also very important. If there is more than one group, the instructional period needs to be long enough to do 2x however long the teacher presentation should take. If a teacher presentation portion is 40 minutes, for example, the period for a subject should be 80 minutes. Patty cautioned that also, teachers must instruct both groups. They should not take ownership of any particular group. She thought it critical that the aide be able to deliver the instruction because timeframes and DI and ability grouping cannot work without highly qualified aides. Time must be made to allow the teachers to train the aides. If the paraprofessionals cannot deliver DI, ability groups are not possible beyond two groups. The DI experts on the Board identified two core needs to do this well:

- adequate materials
- strong, enduring training for both the teachers and the aides

Two instructors for three groups is a very viable structure. Most DI programs have substantial independent work and you can provide extra work to even out the time. With good behavior control, Patty agreed that three groups with two instructors was not just possible but the norm.

B. Bingham asked whether we had a mechanism for a strong training program. J. Adams indicated that we had training for some aides, but not all because we had to do a lot of on-the-job training with those due to their later hire. For the ones new this year, they only had an afternoon with their teachers this year. Additionally, some of the teachers aren't confident that their aides can deliver the instruction.

J. Adams distributed a sheet that discussed skill level grouping among the teachers and particularly how they are using their aides. We discussed some particular classes and some particular training needs.

H. Kleiner identified three areas where we aren't as strong as we can be:

- Fully trained aides
- Additional training for teachers
- Additional training for the executive director

Board members identified a need for parents, too, to make sure that they are working through the placement protocol. Which means ensuring that J. Adams has heard about the concern first.

IX. Follow Ups and Updates

Tetra Analytix will be here next week to train the teachers on using this interface.

On PBIS, Sarah Pinkleman, new faculty at USU, met with J. Adams and Annette to identify some areas of strengths and some areas where we could be stronger. She's going to help out with some parenting courses BRCS wanted to offer.

On the DI Consultant: the first one had not been reached. The second one has been reached, and asked for some time to look at her schedule and learn more about the school. Last week, she contacted J. Adams to say that she would love to work with our school but it won't happen last year.

After School Club enrollment is low, but there was a grant awarded that can help make up the loss. It is going really well and is very high quality so J. Adams thinks more will enroll.

XII. Recent Brags

A BRCS student had a poem published in the LA Times! It has been posted on the blog. Also, J. Adams and Annette wrote a grant to strengthen our anti-bullying efforts. Teresa Buttars received recognition from the State Board of Education for her excellent growth in DIBELS assessments.

XIII. Suicide Policy

A draft suicide policy was written by the school guidance counselor, Annette Watson. T. Slocum moves to approve the proposed suicide policy. B. Bingham seconds. The approval is preliminary until the Board can review and provide feedback, but should be used in the meanwhile.

IXX. School Grades

The State Board of Education has announced that they are moving the cutoffs for school grades this year. Bear River Charter School had earned a B, an improvement from a D score last year, but it is unclear whether we will keep that grade. (Subsequent update: BRCS did maintain its B status)

XX. Closed Session

B. Bingham moves to enter a closed session; Patty seconds.

Adjournment at 9:45 p.m.