

## **BTN Meeting Minutes 7.28.14**

In attendance: Elijah Etheridge (Executive Director), Bresean Jenkins, Eric Rice, Chrissa Carlson, Martrice Gandy, Kelly Caswell (Principal, Independence), Kia Harper (Principal, Connexions), Erik Sunday, Gwen Mullen, Kris Sieloff.

### **School Reports**

Connexions: Expected increase in rent for Connexions. Enrollment at Connexions was supposed to be capped at 425; need to clarify that remains in effect. School is now in position of having to turn students away. Need to make sure that the school receives the funding for the increase in number above 405.

Independence: Action Plan is currently being developed with teachers, nearly completed. School has budgeted for 130 students but only have 120 currently - need to revise the budget, but the school has until November to readjust the numbers and dollars attached to student enrollment.

Sept 4th - Charter renewal application due; still needs input from BTN Board.

### **Executive Director Report**

BTN is now fully staffed; progress with M & T Bank - funding as well as potential board member; still in the works.

Submitted small request to Abell Foundation to offset cost of Grand Opening event on 8/22.

Space for BTN - visited space at 23rd and Charles - huge property but needs work. Youth Dreamer house already not adequate for our needs in terms of staffing, and wrong location to serve as teacher resource room.

Spoke with people for Development position - \$60,000 unrealistic. Developers are more at \$75,000 - \$80,000. Someone under consideration.

Need to have longer conversation about funds available within BTN for these positions.

List of three people as potential board members, bios and resumes - motion to invite to next board meeting, seconded, passed unanimously.

We have consulted 4 accounting firms and have received bids back. ED recommends that we accept lowest bid from Miller Acct. Firm. Motion to accept, seconded, passed unanimously.

Plans for upcoming Grand Opening - Board-initiated; inviting also people from New Teacher Institute in addition to members of community; give-aways, DJ and music, two local authors. Teachers will get a tour of the resource center. Will happen from 2-6 with teachers-only after

party. Board members are expected to work the event. Politicians have been invited, especially Mary Pat Clarke. Press release to alert local media - the news is that we are opening a teacher resource center, which is a great need in the city.

Discussion of process for collecting contributions from board members: Suggestion that we do it as part of a pledge process - people commit to specific amounts. Brief discussion about whether teacher reps should be exempt, but current teacher members are willing to be contributing members.

### **Board Slate**

Chrissa Carlson - President

Matt Wernsdorfer - Vice President

Kris Sieloff - Secretary

Motion passed to accept names for board positions, seconded, passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4pm.

## **BTN Meeting Minutes 8.19.14**

In attendance: Elijah Etheridge (Executive Director), Bresean Jenkins, Matt Wernsdorfer, Eric Rice, Chrissa Carlson, Erik Sunday, Gwen Mullen, Martrice Gandy, Kris Sieloff, Shanelle Hopkins (potential board member), Mark Matthews (potential board member), Kelly Caswell (Principal, Independence), Kia Harper (Principal, Connexions), Ron Howard (Deputy Director)

### **5:27 Review of Board Retreat and School Governance Policy**

Action Items from Retreat - has been suggested by ED that we reserve time at board meetings to revisit bullet points from Board Retreat.

What are questions that we need to move forward on - for example, fundraising? A couple board members felt as though not enough was finalized in terms of mission and vision. Discussion about what the initial purpose was, with finalization in the future.

Planning on formation of ad hoc committees to address each issue from Board Retreat.

**5:32** School leaders were asked if they preferred to give school reports and then be dismissed from board meeting. Motion made that , seconded, passed.

**5:35 School Governance** - different structure proposed by Connexions; how it is implemented at the schools is the work of the ED and school leaders; distributed site-based governance policy for BTN schools. Suggested that bottom line should focus on teacher leadership, which isn't mentioned in the draft. Also open to question - what kind of decision making power do these committees have?

ED: Committee is subservient to the BTN Board.

Purpose of committees is to provide teachers with opportunities to have input on issues that they care about. However, some concern that school based committees will not have real impact on school operations in a structured way. At Independence, for example, the committee is to ensure that the mission and vision of the school is being met.

President will work on second draft to include mission and vision as well as teacher voice. Will be sent through email, but not necessary to make schools wait before they begin the work of defining issues and meeting in their committees.

School committees should make minutes of their meetings available to the BTN Board, especially if they are having influence on policy.

Proposed that each school committee also have a member of the BTN Board.

### **5:55 Executive Director Report**

Board members fill out form for contributions and subcommittees.

Membership committee for teacher members - need to solidify methods for recruitment and requirements for membership

Teacher Resource Center - supported by TDP and BTN. TDP interested in formalizing relationship with BTN. TRC is taking on its own identity beyond BTN. Question about fiscal responsibility and membership identity. When people "join," are they signing up for the Teacher Resource Room or for BTN? TDP is not partial to charter schools, which complicates the relationship. Decided that those who sign up for the TRC are also signing up for BTN.

New accountant to replace resigned Bud Cavanaugh; ED is following Bud's recommendation to accept contract with L. Abrams and Company.

August 22nd Back to School/Opening of TRC Event - reached out to New Teacher Institute, and many of them plan to attend. Will happen rain or shine.

Fill the Bus Event - Wal-Mart went out of their way to assist us with getting school supplies donated for our event. People were very generous, also lots of contact made with teachers who were there to shop.

## **6:22 School Leader Reports**

### Independence:

Listed at 126 for student population; had hoped for 130, but didn't want to force students who weren't totally on board with the school mission. First time offered remedial summer school - designed for individual child. Cost of summer school through BCPSS is prohibitive, and therefore the school is offering summer school at a reduced cost. Two teachers offered a range of credit recovery in English and Math. Some students do need to attend outside academy due to number of credits to be made up. Charter renewal submission deadline is September 4th. Staff has been engaging in discussion about what they want to see over the next five years. 100% of teachers returned; only 6 students left (1 to Connexions).

Looking at staffing model - Full time AP position still exists at Independence. Wants to abolish that position. Still unclear about part time principalship at the two schools, roles and responsibilities; getting mixed messages from Mark Etienne and BCPSS, Thornton. Important to Kelly that it be made clear to the BCPSS that she is not responsible for policy at Connexions.

Eric Rice will meet with school leaders and head of Human Capital and make intentions about school administration/leadership clear.

### Connexions:

A couple issues requiring BTN Board intervention, specifically, underestimate of student enrollment. Should be 425. Anticipated having even more than 425, but BCPSS disallowed additional enrollment. We have it documented that BCPSS acknowledged this number for the future but not necessarily for this year. Connexions has 30 students who have not been released from previous schools yet. Means a difference of \$300,000.

Special Education is also seriously under-enrolled. Will be fixed after true-up, but interferes with things that should be done now.

BTN Board will run interference to ensure that BCPSS recognize the 425.

BCPSS charging Connexions \$8000 for renovations that were extraneous. Eric Rice willing to run interference about this amount - needs all details laid out.

Issue with MATHS over usage of front door; meeting with ED of MATHS tomorrow. It is unacceptable that Connexions students be forced to enter through the back of the building.

### **7:03 Financial Reports**

The BTN Board doesn't vote to adopt school budgets before end of September. Approving financial reports tonight.

Some questions about staffing in Connexions budgets - whether staff has been certified and can therefore be moved from BTN salary to school budget.

BTN Financial Report - expectation for board fundraising is high; we need to raise 50,000 beyond the school contributions. Concern that budget projects \$23,000 deficit. Possible to hold off hiring an Office Manager before issue is resolved.

Suggested that we seek volunteers through Department of Aging.

Motion to approve financial reports with caveat that the projected \$23,000 be dealt with and that hiring be reviewed to cover shortfall. Seconded and approved unanimously.

### **7:24 Board Composition**

Question about whether we want to formalize the involvement of parents and students on the BTN Board. No need to adopt a resolution to the end. Students and parents can be involved in decision making at the school level.

Committees can meet informally; non-board members can participate as well.

### **7:37 Election of New Board Members**

Motion to elect Shanelle Hopkins to the BTN Board as Treasurer, seconded, unanimously passed.

Motion to elect Mark Matthews, Sr. to the BTN Board as Parent Representative, seconded, unanimously passed.

### **7:45 Motion to adjourn, seconded, passed**