

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, August 11, 2020

ZOOM LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87180125782?pwd=b095WWNpUWNObkpkVGJvejZKeS9SZz09>

Present: Vice Chair Christian Sparling, Treasurer Peter Montano, Secretary Ruth Dean, Thorn Dickinson, Nik Charov

Absent: Board Chair Patti Oldmixon

Guests: Executive Director Kelli Pryor, School Physician Dr. Charles de Sieyes, Interim Head of School Cicy Po, Special Education Director Laura Parks

Agenda item

I. Opening Items

- A. Approval of Minutes for June 9, 2020

Secretary Ruth Dean moved to accept minutes. Thorn Dickinson seconded. All board members voted in favor through roll call.

II. Finance

- A. Budget Process Update

Vice Chair Christian Sparling provided a brief update on the budget for this fiscal year. As discussed at the Board meetings in May and June, he reiterated that the school had been advised by the Charter Commission to expect cuts in subsidy for the current fiscal year. The budget adopted by the Board in May addressed this by anticipating a subsidy reduction of approximately 10%, and the Board planned a number of cost saving measures to achieve this, including reductions in instructional and administrative staff. The planned faculty reductions included elimination of 4 positions: health and wellness, 2 world language positions and a special education position. After the Baxter Educators' Association (BEA) requested to negotiate over the decision to eliminate faculty positions, the Board put the faculty reductions on hold and currently is in negotiations with the BEA over the decision to eliminate these positions. While these negotiations are taking place, the Board rescinded the notices of termination that were sent to the 4 teachers and offered each of them contracts of employment for the 2020-2021 school year. The final decision on employment of faculty for the upcoming year will depend on the outcome of the negotiations with the BEA that are ongoing. By agreement of the parties, these negotiations are confidential.

- B. Financial statements

Treasurer Peter Montano shared the consolidated balance sheet for as of June 30th, 2020.

- Current Ratio - Current asset over current liabilities.
 - Current Ratio 1.22
 - Required Current Ratio: 1.05
- Surplus of \$63,287, required to have a surplus

- 54 days cash on hand, 30-60 days is required
- Debt to Asset Ratio is 75%
- School has clean audit

The school has also managed to contribute to its sinking fund to pay facility's debt due in four years.

The Board discussed the budget and the outlook for the coming year.

Thorn Dickinson motions to approve the year end financial statements, Vice Chair Christian Sparling seconded. All present voted in favor by roll call vote.

Vice Chair Christian Sparling offered his thanks to Treasurer Peter Montano as the school met or exceeded all financial targets. Peter added that he would also like to thank CFO Kerry Bush for all her help as well.

III. School Program

A. End-of-year reporting

Executive Director Kelli Pryor briefed the board on the end-of-year reporting. The school met or exceeded all targets:

Student Achievement assessments were not administered in the Spring due to COVID-19.

The school's chronic absentee rate stood at 7.17 percent, meeting the expectation that it fall between 7 and 10 percent. Average daily attendance, at 94.97 percent met the expectation of 91 to 94.9 percent.

Student enrollment at 97 percent throughout the school year exceeded the expectation of 90 percent. Recurrent enrollment from one year to the next, at 98.39 percent, exceeded the expectation of 90 percent.

The four-year graduation rate of 96.7 percent exceeded the expectation of 90 percent. The five- and six-year graduation rates, at 100 percent, exceeded the expectation of 92 percent or more.

Participation in post-secondary readiness opportunities during the year of graduation met expectations at 79.12 percent (with a target of 70 to 79.9 percent). Success rate of students participating in post-secondary readiness opportunities was 97.22 percent, which exceeded the expectation of 80 percent.

Financial performance and stability were healthy in near-term measures (54 days of cash on hand and a current ratio of 1.22) and in sustainability (end-of-year surplus was \$63,287 and debt-to-asset ratio was 75 percent). The school has a clean audit report.

In terms of Governance Board Performance and Stewardship, the Board exceeded expectation by holding 12 meetings during the year (against an expectation of six). Agendas and minutes were published on the website.

Facilities management meets expectations.

Annual climate and culture surveys administered by the Maine Charter School Commission did not happen because of the pandemic.

Analysis of the summary report reveals that student support is paramount at Baxter, and it shows in student success:

- Strong loyalty from students
- Robust graduation rates
- Individualized focus that matters in everything from daily attendance to dual enrollment.

B. Plan for SY 2021

Executive Director Kelli Pryor presented on the opening plan for the 2020-2021 school year. This coming year presents challenge but also opportunity: Baxter Academy can realize more of its potential to do good for its students and for Maine. Kelli summarized the successes of the school's student driven projects from remote learning last year.

The school administration recommends that Baxter Academy open the school year with remote learning, as reflected in Stage One of the school's COVID-19 response reopening plan. This is in part due to the six health and safety requirements from the state for in-person learning. Baxter is constrained by having 400 plus students from sixty hometowns across a map four times the size of Rhode Island. The school has a small urban facility and a small operations staff compared to other schools. 90% of community members have some level of concern about returning to the building. 80% of Baxter teachers are concerned about returning to the building.

Team working on the instructional planning for remote learning are Interim Head of School Cicy Po, Assistant Principal Mary King, Director of Special Education Laura Parks, Director of Student Life Anna Gervais and Dean of Faculty Gretchen Yock.

Interim Head of School Cicy Po presented on this instructional framework. Their priorities have been student care, community connection and faculty care. For student care, they are looking at remote learning culture and norms, coordinating advisories.

Laura Parks presented on Special Education. Processing referrals is the number one priority right now. Virtual IEPs will continue this semester. She noted several students actually had a higher rate of check-ins during remote learning last year than normal. Regular teacher check-ins and small groups will also occur.

Interim Head of School Cicy Po went on to discuss some possible calendar modifications. This includes extra orientation days and teacher academy days. This would put the first day of classes on September 8th. We are also looking at a modified weekly schedule. This would also schedule community time that could be used for a wide variety of community uses. She asked for the community to share their considerations and suggestions with us to help the school work in this new model.

School Physician Dr. Charles de Sieyes came on to provide a snapshot of the situation in Maine. He believes the remote model is the only one that makes sense for Baxter at this time. With the school's lack of outdoor grounds to hold classes and the transportation over our large geography, it doesn't

make sense for Baxter to resume in-person courses at this time. He is worried about Influenza this fall in conjunction with COVID-19 and recommends all members of our community get the flu shot.

The board asked questions to clarify the remote learning plan, to understand assessment and grading in a remote environment, as well as teacher preparation, and about how community feedback was gathered.

IV. Public Comments

Vice Chair Christian Sparling opened up the floor to public comments. Questions were posed via a Google Sheet and were answered by board members and administration members.

V. Closing

A. Executive session*

Vice Chair Christian Sparling moved that the board go into executive session. Peter Montano seconded. All those present were in favor.

Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 8, 2020 (rescheduled to September 22, 2020)

Via ZOOM

** Executive session to discuss collective bargaining pursuant to Section 405(6)(D) of Title 1 of the Maine Revised Statutes.*