

Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 to 7 p.m., Tuesday, January 14, 2020

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

Present: Board Chair Patti Oldmixon, Vice Chair Christian Sparling, Treasurer Peter Montano, Secretary Ruth Dean, Thorn Dickinson

Guests: Executive Director Kelli Pryor, Head of School Chad Strout, Attorney Dan Stockford, Attorney Dan Amory, Maine Charter Schools Commission member Jana Lapoint

Agenda item
<p>I. Opening Items</p> <p>A. Minutes</p> <p>Secretary Ruth Dean made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 10, 2019, meeting as written. Vice Chair Christian Sparling seconded. Thorn abstained, as he was absent from the December meeting.</p>
<p>II. Finance</p> <p>A. Financial reports</p> <p>Treasurer Peter Montano reported on financials through November. The current ratio is healthy at 1.6 and the budget is on track overall.</p>
<p>III. Organizational</p> <p>A. Student information</p> <p>Executive Director Kelli made a presentation on the decision to move Baxter to a new student information system, PowerSchool. The move is intended to address a range of institutional problems associated with the fast growth of the school. As the school grew quickly from its inception in 2013, with 130 students, to its current enrollment of just over 400, it often created systems quickly and patched them as necessary. This year is a reset opportunity to solve problems stemming from the school's rapid growth. Example of pressures: transcript requests, cumbersome data entry (80 touches per student), payments separate from student records, home-designed grading platform (Slate) managed by a single employee, burdensome enrollment and lottery process. PowerSchool offers an integrated solution from enrollment through transcripts. The school is moving forward this month with the transition into PowerSchool for the next school year (2020 - 2021). There will be trainings for staff, teachers, parents, and students</p>

IV. School

A. Head of School report

Head of School Chad Strout talked about the process for spring scheduling. He noted that the first objective of a high school is to get students to graduate. The majority of the classes made for the new semester were made because seniors needed them to graduate. This limited junior choices, sophomore choices, and ninth grade choices. The scheduling team wanted to stem this problem for next year, so it looked at juniors' needs next. Many new sections were created. Classes were removed from the old schedule that were not graduation benchmark. Study booths were removed and Summit sections were removed, which opened up the Summit teacher to teach four sections of graduation benchmark classes. Chad noted that the school has a demand for higher level courses and needs to get away from pre-requisites because they create a log jam and slow students down in a standards based system. There are certain courses that have sequestered certain standards, so we have to always offer those courses. We have to break standards out of specific courses and have opportunities for students to meet standards in more ways.

B. Certification policy

The board gave its first read to a policy to define "other" certification at Baxter. Charter schools can hire someone who isn't certified to teach in that subject area but then the teacher has three years to get certification. The policy also defines what unique experience counts in lieu of certification, in the case of professional experience that matters in the school's mission.

C. Special Education Update

Special Education Director Laura Parks has been with Baxter for about a month and a half. She has developed an action plan for herself with three goals: Getting to know students, faculty, and parents. Providing professional development to faculty with regards to special education. Understanding the various responsibilities that the special education director owns at Baxter, including referrals to special education, the budget process, and hiring an additional special ed teacher.

V. Parent Engagement

A. BPO

The BPO started in the fall. Lead parent Karen Fream reported that parent Patience Stetson had organized the ski bus for students. Parent Angie Dierks had organized a meeting with a state senator to talk about supporting charter schools. Another parent had organized Clynk bags for the school. The BPO meets after the monthly board meeting.

VI. Board

A. Board development

Board Chair Patti Oldmixon nominated a candidate for one of the open board seats. Nik Charov serves as President at the Laudholm Trust at Wells Reserve. He brings extensive fundraising and grant writing experience. Nik wrote the first grant application for which Baxter received funding in 2012. He also participated as a partner in the first Baxter internship program. After Patti's nomination for Nik to be the newest board member of the Baxter board, Ruth seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Public Comment

The board took questions from the assembled guests. And then adjourned to executive session.

VIII. Closing

A. Executive session*

The board exited executive session at 8 p.m.

Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 11, 2020

185 Lancaster Street, Portland, Maine

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