

## Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

### Board of Directors Meeting

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

ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/171690778?pwd=Y0dWdXVVMXN6V0VSdmlYdEpFcXV1QT09>

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

Guests: Executive Director Kelli Pryor, Attorney Dan Stockford, Attorney Dan Amory, Special Education Director Laura Parks, Head of School Chad Strout

#### Agenda item

##### **I. Opening Items**

###### A. Minutes

Secretary Ruth Dean asks for edits or changes. Nik Charov clarifies language to note that the full-year budget is expected to break even. Ruth Dean moves to approve the minutes with the amendment and Treasurer Peter Montano seconds. The motion passes unanimously with each director indicating approval.

##### **II. Finance**

###### A. Financial statements

Treasurer Peter Montano briefs the board on current financial statements. The school is in a strong position right now with \$400,000 in the cash reserve for summer payroll for teachers and debt service. All schools are looking closely at their financials with the pandemic. The school is down on total revenue but also down on expenses. Legal fees, at \$78,000, are over the budgeted \$60,000. The board discusses whether there are any possible savings while the school is operating remotely. Public transportation costs are down, along with fuel, but the school is still under contract with the bus company. Some hiring is also on hold.

Chair Patti Oldmixon moves to accept the financial statements as presented. Thorn Dickinson seconds. The motion passes with each director indicating assent.

### III. School

#### A. Executive Director update

Executive Director Kelli Pryor updates the board on the many changes since the last meeting on March 10th. Two days later, the school had to move to remote learning. Baxter had an exemplary move to distance learning. The teachers and students were well prepared by remote snow day learning. The teachers have been doing an amazing job both with instruction and with supporting students struggling with all the dynamics of the pandemic and shelter in place orders. The whole school community has been buoyed by teacher Jon Amory and engineering students working on the design and build of an emergency ventilator; that project exemplifies Baxter's real world model. The ventilator was tested at UNE and featured on the evening news.

The governor has moved the state of emergency to May 15th. This brings up the question of graduation. The school is holding the May 30 date at Merrill Auditorium, pending more information, but also remains open to the possibility of a summer date. Staff will be working with the seniors to set up an alternate plan if necessary.

#### B. Remote learning plan

Kelli Pryor presents the distance learning plan. All students have school-issued laptops and have received IT staff help if they need internet access or other tech support. Baxter Academy's distance learning plan features retaining the shortened block schedule in the morning, and then giving students abundant access to teachers during office hours in the afternoon. Student engagement with teachers has been the priority. Flex Friday proceeds at home, with modifications to existing project plans or new plans. Project exhibitions will be held on an online platform.

Each teacher has a Google Classroom with objectives posted daily. Grades are posted into Slate. The same grading expectations apply with 3 pieces of evidence, but emphasis is on individualization to support students in whatever circumstances they find themselves. Teachers track attendance, which is updated daily and weekly and is determined by work completion and participation in Google Meets. Teachers can complete their attendance in Infinite Campus or they can complete the weekly attendance form.

The instructional team also maintains a means for tracking disengaged students. Staff and administrators are reaching out to all the students. Weekly engagement for each student is recorded, as well as what the efforts to reach each student look like.

Laura Parks, the director of special education, and the special ed department have been going the extra mile for students with IEPs and have been making sure they have the extra support they need. Students seem to be benefiting from the one on one interactions.

April vacation will run as scheduled, April 20th - April 24th.

Regular classes will run through May 26th. The last day of regular classes is May 26th.

May 25 there will be no school in observation of Memorial Day

May 26th to June 16th, students will attend a period of reteaching and credit recovery that will concentrate on helping students who are struggling to meet standards or who need extra instruction. All students are encouraged to access extra help during this period.

Emotional support for students and teachers has been a priority.

Vice Chair Christian Sparling moves that the board approve the Baxter learning plan, attendance, and school days for the COVID-19 response. Peter Montano seconds. This motion carries unanimously with each director indicating approval.

#### C. Leadership transition

Kelli announces that Head of School Chad Strout has indicated that he will resign at the end of the year. Kelli notes that Chad has been a strong systems builder at Baxter, noting particularly his work on the transition to PowerSchool. He is excited about his next phase, and all of us wish him well and thank him for the work he's done at Baxter. As a leadership transition, Cicy Po will step in as interim head of school. She has a background that makes her a uniquely wonderful fit for the school. She is a very engaging science teacher who sees the world in terms of STEM as a way of solving problems faced by the community. Chad and Cicy will have the opportunity to work together for the duration of the school year, which is a boon to the school and will ease the transition. Cicy will be fully engaged over the course of the summer. In a video introduction, Cicy Po shares that she was a founding faculty member of the first performing arts school in Boston, followed by a year at Deering when her family moved to Maine. For the past ten years, she's been a faculty member and administrator at Cheverus High School in Portland.

### **IV. Parent Engagement**

#### **A. Baxter Parent Organization**

Parent leader Karen Fream updates the board on work being done by the BPO. The focus is on helping the seniors and bringing everyone at Baxter together. Parents are excited to see Baxter in the news with the ventilator project, and they have been posting and fundraising for the project. The parents appreciate the staff stepping up during this challenging time.

## **V. Public Comment**

Patti Oldmixon opens the meeting for public discussion through the chat function. Discussion ranges from questions about the transition to PowerSchool to updates on teacher concerns and enrollment.

## **VI. Closing**

Patti Oldmixon thanks the instructional team for executing the distance learning and other board members echo gratitude. Thorn Dickinson makes a motion to adjourn to executive session in accordance with state law\*. Peter seconds the motion and it carries with each board member voting yes.

### **A. Executive session\***

No action was taken following the board's exit from executive session.

**Next regular meeting: 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 12, 2020**

Via ZOOM

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