**Linden STEAM Academy**

Governing Board Meeting

Attendees: Richard Bransfield, Kathleen Cutting, Marguerite Gonsalves, Rachana Gray, Jocelyn Ken, Alisha King, Melissa Lightbody, Linda Patrie, Ann Schiro

April 10, 2014 5:45 PM Linden Library

**Agenda**

IConnections/Public Comment

* There were none.,

**II** Acceptance of Minutes 3/13/14

* One correction for Judy’s last name
* Ann Schiro made a motion to accept
* Linda Patrie seconded

**III** Principal’s Report

* Discussed in later sections since it will be brought up then.

**IV** Old Business

* Kindergarten certification –we passed without having to make any changes.
* Nonprofit status. – Form is complete but not filed yet, It still needs a few more signatures

**V** New Business

Reflection/ discussion of current By-laws

* Kathleen Cutting stated that as the teachers were organizing for the next election, they felt that the makeup of the board and the number of members needed to be addressed. There was some confusion on the numbers since there were originally 11 members.
* Richard Bransfield stated that the original planning committee involved 11 people. It was very specific. The planning board had to be made up of parents, teachers, union liaisons etc. The governing board is a separate entity and not related to the planning board. It’s make up is decided by us and our by-laws. The Paul Revere School has 5 teachers and 5 parents and 3 community members (including union rep and staff). Some schools have 16-17 members. There is no set number from the state. We do need to agree on the number. There are no specified ratios.
* Richard Bransfield cautioned that making the board smaller will mean less information getting out to the staff and parents.
* He heard that the teachers feel the large numbers are bogging us down and doesn’t agree. The problem is we don’t have enough innovated ideas to vote on. When ideas are presented we vote on them.
* He cautioned that we need to be careful with our emails are a violation of open meeting laws. We need to be transparent
* Jocelyn Ken voiced the issues that she has heard from the staff:
  + The board is much larger than the school committee and the board is only responsible for one school and not the whole city
  + Not much new has happened since becoming an innovation school.
* Someone voiced that the board members need to better about educating the staff about the things we do.
* Jocelyn Ken stated that they have presented them with a list of our successes.
* Ann Schiro said that change has to come from the teachers. They have to step up with ideas since they are in the best position to know what the students need.
* Kathleen Cutting had an item to bring up on behalf of the teachers.
  + This year picture day was split into two days. One for the individual pictures and the other for class pictures. The teachers feel this is too disruptive since they have to take the kids out of classes twice.
  + She made a motion to have spring pictures on one day. Ann Schiro seconded the motion. It passed.
* Kathleen Cutting said the percentage of teachers should be higher since they are the ones who will be implementing the changes we decide on.
* Richard Bransfield handed out a list of the board members. He split the members in two columns. The teachers on one and everyone else on the other. He believes every teacher will act in the best interested of the school. He feels that the teachers want to have enough representatives to outvote the administrators.
* Marguerite Gonsalves reminded everyone that we vote based on consensus. And the we have in fact not been bogged down as we have just voted on changing picture day from two days to one and we did it fairly quickly.
* Jocelyn Ken asked if David DeRousi is a voting member. And wanted to know when Nicholas Catoggio and John Froio are no longer on the board who would take their place?
* Richard Bransfield answered that John Froio is our school committee representative. His position will be replaced with whoever would take his position on the school committee. Nicholas Catoggio is a community member. The by-laws state that the board would approve any community members.
* Jocelyn Ken brought up that we need to update the bylaws to include special elections for when people leave before their term is over.
* Rachana Gray responded to an earlier comment that the LSA governing board is much larger than the school committee. She reminded everyone that the school committee is made up of representatives from each ward in Malden. There are only 8 wards. At the LSA we need to represent a larger variety of people. We need representatives from Kindergarten, Grade 1-4, Grade 5 and Grades 6-8, Special Ed, and exploratory classes. The needs of each of these groups are different and we shouldn’t make decisions without considering the needs of all the different groups. The LSA governing board has to be larger to accommodate all these groups.
* Marguerite Gonsalves said we need to make the small decisions and promote them. Then we will build to the larger ones after building trust with the staff.
* Kathleen Cutting said the teachers are worried that they will be asked to work more hours with no extra pay.
* Richard Bransfield clearly stated that he would never ask anyone to work without paying them. He has said that from the beginning. He brought up the need for candidates during the staff meeting. He reminded the teachers that if they don’t fill the seats they will not get a vote. Teachers need to be involved or they get outvoted.
* Kathleen Cutting said the alarming part is that the board is voting on how the teachers will do their jobs and so many of them are not teachers.
* Richard Bransfield had the same fear that in the opposite. The teachers can keep voting down new ideas so we will never move forward.
* David DeRousi spoke up and said he has tons of ideas all day. Most die during the school committee meetings, until he builds consensus. If there is an idea that he feels strongly about, he approaches his opposition and finds out what it would take to change their mind. He continues to find a middle ground that will allow the idea to continue with everyone’s concerns addressed.
* Richard Bransfield asked what would it take to stay to 3pm? More money? Everything is on the table. And to worry about things or shut down an idea isn’t right. He is worried that they want to design the board to be able to out vote him each time.
* Marguerite Gonsalves voiced a concern that our votes are not by the book. Is a quorum a percentage of the whole board? Do we need a particular percentage of the teachers and parents present? The bylaws are not clear on these issues. She also said, we need to not get used to always voting no. We need to have dialogs on issues that are important to us. So we can give the rationale behind the idea.

Budget

* There is a 2.5m deficit for schools. Richard Bransield wanted to bring it to the board so that we can see what cuts might look like at this building.
* It is especially difficult because we are a STEAM, innovation and gifted strand school. He can’t cut things that will affect those statuses.
* Ann Schiro asked if there was a target for the building.
* Richard Bransfield responded that currently the budget cuts equate to 5 positions. But reminded everyone that that number could change as the City Council votes on the final budget.
* The last time we had big cuts, health classes were cut, and 1 foreign language teacher.
* He said he looks at services and numbers of kids and how we maintain our integrity of a STEAM school.
* When he started at Linden, we didn’t have 4 strands of each grade. We do now. We can’t reduce the numbers.
* Melissa Lightbody asked if this counts retirees
* Richard Bransfield responded tha they are already out so we are losing above that number.
* David DeRousi said he is leveling against the teachers leaving so no one school is hit harder.
* Rachana Gray asked how we can cut the budget if we are already below the state requirement.
* David DeRousi said this will move us closer to the 5% limit below state limits. The state level funded the cities. Due to a large retirement pool, he has been able to save some money in the past.
* It costs 81 million dollars to education kids in Malden. 47 million of that has to be provided by the city (the state says). If the city pays less than that amount, then the state can come in and take over.
* David DeRousi has been getting lists of students with the same address. Granada highlands now has 250 kids attending Malden Public Schools. When they were built, it was felt that only young professionals would live there and they would not add to the number of kids in the schools. This happens again and again when new apartments are built.
* We are up by 200-300 kids . More families are staying, less are leaving
* Marguerite Gonsalves said that cutting people has to start with junior people
* David stated that there will be bumping because senior people stay.
* Richard Bransfield said the principals were looking to keep all the schools the same so they are trying coordinate so they all do away with the same things.
* David DeRousi stated he has already cut administrators, he will continue to look at that. And asked the principals to look at what they can do.
* Kathleen Cutting asked about the consultants
* David DeRousi answered, most of them are paid with grant money. He also feels they improve student learning. So he does not want to remove them. They move teachers forward as well as students.
* Richard Bransfield hates that he has to cut things that he feels the kids need to have but they become luxuries when you have to protect the core courses.
* Eric Hamylak voiced an opinion that we should have standing subcommittees to discuss decisions. This board meeting should just be for making the final decisions. We spend too much time going around and around on issues.

Next meeting date/May 8th at 5:45 PM

**VI** Board Members’ Comments

* There were none

**VII** Adjournment

* Kathleen Cutting motioned to end the meeting. Ann Schiro seconded it.