**Linden STEAM Academy**

Governing Board Meeting

July 23, 2014 5:45 PM Linden Library

Attendees: Sarah Boswell, Richard Bransfield, Laura Degelmann, Susan Goldstein Fghani, John Froio, Rachana Gray, Jocelyn Ken, Alisha King, Sonia Miller, Conrad Mitala, Elaine Rittershaus, Franklin Shearer, Susan Terban

**Agenda**

1. Connections/Public Comment
   * Richard Bransfield mentioned the MATV video from exhibition night. It is really good. He thanked the staff for all the time and effort they put into making this year’s event so great.
   * Richard Bransfield said the Parent Information Center is being flooded with requests for LSA. One parent even stated they were going to call John Kerry if they didn’t get in.
   * Sonia Miller talked about Cairn Hill. They currently have the same students for their sessions. They would like to change to either 3 or 4 sessions per year, so other children could attend.
     + Comments were made that PCSM is going to switch to 4 sessions per year so it might make sense to stay in sync with them.
     + A comment was brought up that this isn’t really an issue for the board.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from 6/11/14
   * Go math should be My math. Rachana will make the change before posting it
   * Richard Bransfield motioned to accept, Elaine Rittershaus seconded.
3. Officer Elections – done
   * The new officers are:  
     Sonia Miller - co-chair  
     Franklin Shearer - co-chair  
     Alisha King – Treasurer  
     Rachana Gray - Secretary
4. Principal’s Report by Richard Bransfield
   * He commented that summer is crazier than school year
   * There are several teachers who are leaving for various reasons. Finding replacements and space for all the classes has been a challenge.
   * We are getting adding a grade 8 Pathways program. This program is for kids with severe emotional issues. Sending these kids out of district costs 100k per student. So keeping them here is cheaper.
   * We main stream almost 40% of the kids and they are fully main streamed in exploratory classes
   * Pete Dolan is now acting as the city safety officer.

* All of the walkie-talkies and cameras are due to his efforts.
  + All teachers now have key cards so the doors can be locked
  + We have cameras in every hallway
  + He can now monitor the school after hours from home.
* The Mayor would love to keep him full time.
* We already have every safety measure that the state is recommending.
  + One of our STEM teachers is at WPI for Project Lead the Way Training
    - We are waiting for the infrastructure and equipment to set the room up.
    - The PTO is going to paint the room
    - The Electrician is ready to go
    - We will have Design and Modeling for grades 7 and Robotics for grade 8.
    - The program has curriculum that goes to grade 2. When we get more funding, we will add the program to the lower grades.
  + The Ferryway school was selected to have privatized custodians during the evenings.
    - We have a new custodian.
    - He will be getting the work schedule of what the private company will do and make sure the same work gets done at our school.
    - He is going to purchase a power washer. He wants to see the bathrooms power washed on a regular schedule.
    - We now have six custodians. Two work during the days. One starts at 1pm. The rest work at nights.
    - Now the cameras will show what is going on after hours and ensure that all the work is getting done.
  + Uniforms
    - Sparks offered to sell us all their remaining stock.
    - The PTO took them on consignment and will be selling them for $5.00 per piece.
    - We will also hold a uniform swap.
  + Franklin ask how we were doing with this year’s MCAS
    - We went up in some things and down in others.
    - Flat line over all. No huge drops.
    - ELA dropped a little
    - The data we get from Baystate Reading Program and ANET is a good indicator of how we will do on MCAS
    - The scores will be public in September.
    - In a couple week will know if we still have a level 1 rating
    - 70% of our students had a rating of proficient or better. For comparison, 45% of Salemwood students are at proficient or better and they are level 1 as well. The scoring is based on improvement not numbers.
    - The District Capacity Team surveyed the teachers to ask questions about communication, comfort level of speaking with administration etc.
      * Richard Bransfield said he read the results and understands it
      * Susan Terban said it was meant to be about communication between everyone. And morale and comfort with communicating with colleagues.
      * Moral is different across the building.
      * 90% are proud of working in Malden
      * Richard Bransfield says he struggles with anonymous surveys. He won’t change how he leads. He will always put kids first
    - As a board need to learn to communicate better
      * We tried to do things via consensus but need to improve understanding of how it works. If not done well, it could create a rift instead of goodwill
      * There shouldn’t be us an us against them mentality
      * We also need to exercise using executive sessions properly. Some items that are discussed in open meetings should not be discussed publically due to contracts and privacy issues.

1. Old Business
   * Non-profit status update
     + It still needs some work, but is moving forward.
   * Role of the Governing Board
     + Franklin Shearer reiterated that there is a difference between management and governing. We need to clearly define the boundaries.
     + Richard Bransfield’s conversations with the school committee during the budget cuts were more in line of what we should be doing. He reminded them what our innovation status means. We have the decisions for the building. Not the school committee.
     + The cuts should have been a board decision but those decisions need to be made quickly. Rachana Gray suggested that we use the subcommittees for these fast decisions, they can have emergency meetings when these items come up.
     + Richard Bransfield stated that he was disappointed that no one on the school committee reached out to the principals to discuss their thoughts on issues that affect the schools. John Froio said he thought the co-chairs had spoken to them and was surprised to be mistaken..
     + Franklin Shearer said we need to tell them that they can’t make decisions without checking with the board.
     + Richard Bransfield said that going forward he would include the school budget in his updates
     + We no longer have foreign language. We need it but something had to be cut. That should have been a board decision.
       - One idea is to maybe offer language during the afterschool program, but then that would not be available to the students who don’t attend the after school program.
       - Conrad Mitala suggested we have many parents who speak languages fluently, perhaps we could get parent volunteers.
     + Laura Degelmann suggested we should create a form for staff to present change ideas to the board. The changes need a goal statement and some basic information so that the board can make informed decisions.
   * Election Transitions. We shouldn’t have a meeting without an executive board. We should come up with a plan for transition for next year.
   * Discussion on potential committees for next year
     + - After a long discussion, we decided that matching the committees to the goals that the staff is reviewed on, would make the most sense and would encourage staff to participate in the sub committees since they will be able to use their participation on their reviews. These categories are; Curriculum and Instruction, Management and Operation, Family and Community engagement, and School culture
     + All of the other topics we discussed would fit under one of these categories. Examples:
       - Curriculum and Instruction
         * Selection of text books
         * Curriculum decisions
       - Management/ Operations
         * Scheduling
         * Budget
         * School Policies
       - Family and Community engagement
         * Fundraising/ Grant writing
         * Communications

With businesses

With Parents

With the city

* + - * Culture
* Staff Morale
* Staff Communication
  + - Sarah Boswell brought up that fundraising is very different from grant writing and we need to do more of it. She would be happy to help with this since she has experience with it.
    - Franklin suggested we should hold annual events such as galas where could involve the whole community and raise funds at the same time.
    - Each sub-committee would need a chair person and set up their own meeting times. At least once a month so that they can report back to the full board.
    - Richard Bransfield clarified that culture doesn’t mean diversity it is more about the culture in the school. How we do things and how we expect people to behave. Examples are open door policies, speaking respectfully, listening to ideas etc.
  + Updates for the By-Laws
    - Rachana Gray said she has not yet received the latest updates.
    - Jocelyn Ken said she will email them to her.
  + List of new staff so we can send welcome cards

1. New Business
   * Ideas for some sort of thanks for past board members
   * Area of Focus for SY 14-15
     + Goals - specific things we may want to accomplish;
       - We brain stormed ideas.
         1. Science curriculum
         2. Arts
         3. Math intervention at the middle school
         4. Technology
         5. Expanded access to afterschool
       - Richard Bransfield mentioned he is looking at a grant from Project Adventure
         1. They will train 14 people over 3 days
         2. They teach kids how to be successful beyond the games they play
         3. One method they use is called Rubber chicken – it shows that you might not be good at baseball but maybe good at rubber chicken
         4. The PE teachers will be trained
         5. The incorporate classroom games
         6. It could incorporate a ropes course or traverse walls
         7. It builds a culture with things that can be done in class.
       - Richard Bransfield said we need to back our teachers with what they feel is best for our students. If this means going against the district for certain things like the amount of time needed for specific subjects.
       - Sarah Boswell brought up that Sweden and Norway have more breaks so that when kids are in instruction time they focus more after the breaks
       - Richard Bransfield said we can madate any change if we have data to support that it can be as good or better than what we have. It must be based on research
     + Our goals need to be measurable so that we can see that they are accomplishing what they intend.
     + Franklin Shearer felt we should find ways to incorporate the afterschool program.
     + Sarah Boswell agreed there are so many ways to we could include the afterschool program in our curriculum.
     + Conrad Mitala felt we need more physical time in afterschool, Sarah Boswell agreed.
   * Discussion on potential committees for next year
     + Was already discussed earlier
   * Substitute Teachers -
     + It was decided this was not a board decision. Rachana Gray will speak to Richard Bransfield about it outside the meeting.
   * Use Google list for mailing lists
     + Pushed to next meeting
2. Next meeting date
   * Next year’s monthly meeting day and time
   * 3nd Monday of each month unless it falls on a holiday. Then the meeting will be the 4th Monday of the month.
   * Sept 15th at 5:45pm in the library will be our first meeting
3. Board Members’ Comments
   * There were none.
4. Adjournment
   * Richard Bransfield motioned to end the meeting.
   * Sonia Miller Seconded it.