

**Ben Franklin High School Association  
Meeting Minutes  
January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Dennis Kay.

Principal's Report

Dr. Rusnak reported that the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights contacted the school to say that a law suit has been filed against several charter schools in the New Orleans area, including Benjamin Franklin High School. The law suit alleges discrimination in the school's enrollment policies. We do not know who filed the suit. The Office of Civil Rights was reminded by Ben Franklin's Administration that the Office of Civil Rights approved Ben Franklin's enrollment policies.

Dr. Rusnak suggested that the school have a "platoon" of parents who are willing to respond when accusations are made against the school in the press.

Rusnak also addressed the recent article in the paper regarding the school's charter being put on a one-year probation by the Orleans Parish School Board. He assured the Association that our school's financial issues have been addressed. The school's most recent audit was "unqualified," with two minor findings, which is an excellent rating. One philanthropic group, after reading the most recent audit, approached the school to give us a \$10,000 grant. There is concern that the probation is being used against the school to dissuade students from enrolling.

On February 1, two Administrative staff will join the school. They will work under the Chief Financial Officer and be used to collect data used to respond to required reports and grant applications. The Development Office is also getting an assistant.

Development

Dr. Rusnak and Development Director Christy Read are attending the Case Conference on Fund Development in New York City this week. They also have an event scheduled with alumni living in the NYC area. Their most recent trip to promote the school was to Houston, TX.

Read reported that this year's donations to Ben Franklin are ahead of last year. Last year we collected \$24,000 and this year \$41,443 has been donated to date. There is a 19% participation rate from families.

The BFHSA will not call parents for membership until Development has finished with their drive. After Development is finished is a window of opportunity for the BFHSA to contact families regarding membership. The Alumni Association is doing a mailing but the feeling is that there will not be much overlap in the two groups to be contacted.

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Parent Liaison

Parent Liaison Rachel Becker is on leave but sent word that the German program is in need of host homes for German Students. The German-American exchange will take place from February 6-28<sup>th</sup>. The visiting students need their own room.

Treasurer's Report

Dennis Kay reported for Treasurer Leslie Clark. YTD, we have \$7,364.50 in income revenue, \$1,200.00 in Expenses and \$3,159 in allocations (\$315 bank charge, \$2075 directory and \$769 new parent Social). Our current fund balance is \$6,666,50.

There was a complaint that the dues checks from the fall have not been cashed. Kay announced that parent Denise Barnett will be cross-training with Leslie on the duties of the Treasurer.

An accountant is looking at our paperwork for materials needed to show compliance with the 501c3 status and cannot find the necessary paperwork. Dr. Rusnak asked if the BFHSA needs to continue as a 501c3 since we have more control over our money now that the school is a charter. Our charter says that all private money remains with the private organization. Josie Everly suggested that we draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the school and the BFHSA as to how BFHSA monies will be used. The school has an MOU with the Ben Franklin Alumni Association.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Secretary Libby Black asked for approval of the meeting minutes of November 7, 2009. Annette Figueroa made a motion to approve the minutes and Josie Everly seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Fundraising

The Frühlingsfeier Spring Festival is scheduled for Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> 2010 at Deutes Haus. We are also looking at using an auction service, TISM, to do an online auction in conjunction with the fair. TISM is owned by a BF parent. All parent emails have been combined and an email asking for donations to the silent auction will be sent. Popular items from last year's silent auction include wine, restaurant certificates and teeth whitening. Art does not do as well because people want to get art at a low price.

Alumni Association

Min Yang suggested that the Alumni Association advertise at Frühlingsfeier. The Association is interested in helping with the fair or sending a letter to solicit donations. He also suggested that each graduating class could have a representative make fundraising calls to that class.

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The Alumni Association will be sponsoring an Antiques Road show-style program on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. People will pay a nominal fee to have their “treasure” valued by a professional. Ideas discussed included selling food and drink and having an auction to coincide with the show.

The Alumni Association sponsored a party for Benjamin Franklin’s Birthday at the school. It was well attended by the students.

The H1N1 vaccine will be offered at the school on Friday February 26<sup>th</sup>, from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Parents must be present in order for the student to receive an immunization.

Kay asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Rusnak made a motion and Everly seconded it. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.