

NBFA Board of Directors

October 18, 2016

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Board Members: David Schlakman, Claire Foerster, Paul Myerson, Christine King, Mary Humphries, David Hunter, Kevin Knight (Via Phone), Margaret Walker(Via Phone), Rachel Gordon

Absent: Melissa Jenkins, Mylena Teixeira

Staff: Ronelle Swagerty, Xiomara Martinez, Ajumoke Nathan, Luis Cartagena, Quentin Ball, Aggie Compare, Valore Turner, Katherine Habansky, Millie Morales, Lauren Seymour, Diane Canevari, Candice Dorman, Marissa Munch, Laura O'Shaughnessy

Guest: Jill Shahan, managing director, Northeast Charter Schools Network

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 pm by David Schlakman, president.

Public Comment:

Marissa Munch, a 3rd grade teacher at NBFA, shared positive feedback about this academic school year including the introduction of teddy bears and feeling charts as reflective techniques that help children learn. Each NBFA student received a teddy bear, which serve as a source of comfort for those managing toxic stress. Ms. Munch mentioned that one of her students disliked reading last year and now reads to her teddy bear. She stated that she has seen a huge difference from last academic year to this one with the implementation of Emotionally Responsive Practice (ERP).

Laura O'Shaughnessy, a 7th and 8th grade ELA teacher, has been with NBFA for 3 years. She expressed that implementing ERP has resulted in a noticeable reduction in behavioral incidents. She said that even her older students are utilizing the bears to self-regulate.

Action Items:

1. Motion to approve 08/09/2016 meeting minutes: Paul Myerson 1st, Mary Humphries 2nd, Unanimous
2. Motion to update authorized signers for child nutrition programs : David Hunter 1st, Paul Myerson 2nd, Unanimous
3. Motion to add Claire Foerster, Vice President, as an authorized signer on the Peoples United Bank account: David Hunter 1st, Mary Humphries 2nd, Unanimous

Discussion Items:

Guest Speaker: Jill Shahan, managing director from Northeast Charter Schools Network

Jill Shahan informed that the state is threatening to cut \$11 million dollars from charter schools to help close the state's deficit. She explained that the function of boards as fundraising entities has become increasingly important. NECSN offers board training and strategic planning. Jill, who says she has worked with about 114 charter schools in New York and Connecticut, offered to participate in NBFA's November Development Committee meeting.

Discussion Items:

Mission Statement: Ronelle Swagerty surveyed parents and teachers concerning the mission statement. She received about 80 responses, most of which agreed with the mission: *"New Beginnings Family Academy provides its students a quality education through experience-based learning while developing critical thinking and relationship building skills."* Swagerty shared one of four alternative statements received. David Hunter suggested a deeper discussion on the committee level. Hunter, David Schlakman, Claire Foerster, Kevin Knight and Rachel Gordon volunteered to serve with Mrs. Swagerty on the Board's *ad hoc* task force on this subject.

Grievance Procedure for the CEO: The Board approved the following complaint protocol to be added to the NBFA Handbook. The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, equitable solutions to grievances brought by the CEO to a Board member, which may arise from time to time. These proceedings shall be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any level of procedure.

1. Level One: The Board President or Board Vice President

The CEO shall first discuss a grievance or dispute with the Board President or, if that is not feasible, with the Board Vice President, with the objective of resolving the matter informally. The CEO may bypass Level One to complain of inappropriate or unlawful conduct by the Board President.

2. Level Two: The Governance Committee

All matters not resolved at Level One may be processed to the Governance Committee, in writing, by the CEO.

3. Level Three: The full Board of Directors

If the CEO is not satisfied with the disposition of the grievance at Level Two or if no decision has been rendered within 30 days after initially filing the grievance, the CEO may send a written request to the full Board for their attention to this matter. The Board will render a decision on the matter, in writing, within 30 days after the grievance is filed.

Development Report: This year's fundraising goal is \$1.5 million. NBFA is currently at 27 percent of this goal. Quentin Ball explained how important it is for the Board to be more involved in fundraising. Mr. Hunter suggested that there should be a strategic fundraising plan for the board. Discussion ensued.

Video: Quentin Ball presented three new video vignettes to be used to bolster marketing efforts. The videos answer the questions: Why a progressive model? What is progressive education? And, How did NBFA prepare to implement a progressive model with Emotionally Responsive Practice? Paul Myerson suggested that subsequent videos feature various practitioners at NBFA.

2016-2017 Goals: Mrs. Swagerty presented five goals this year in the areas of 1) Academic Achievement; 2) School Climate and Culture; 3) Long-Term Outcomes; 4) Financial Viability; and 5) Human Capital. Swagerty explained that the leadership team looked at 2015-2016 benchmarks to determine goals for this year of implementing progressive education with ERP. Discussion ensued on whether the academic goals were aggressive enough; the effectiveness of NBFA's alumni outreach efforts; how the Board might assist in raising \$300,000 of the school's \$1.5 million funding gap; and attracting and retaining the best teachers.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. by David Schlakman.

Respectfully Submitted,

Xiomara Martinez,
Recording Secretary