



7094 Cottonwood Tree Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80927

Phone: 719.570.0075 - Fax: 719.522.2900 Email: BoardBLRA@blracademy.org

Mission Statement:

Create a safe, positive environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and a thirst for discovery where students and staff succeed through exceptional programs

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 15, 2022 AT BANNING LEWIS RANCH ACADEMY at 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

1.1. Heather Zambrano called to order at 6:03pm

2. Roll Call

2.1. Board Members: Deann Barnett, Krisell Creager-Lumpkins, Alexandra Tomei, Heather Zambrano

2.2. Planned absent: Matthew Pacheco

3. Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance

4. Reading of the Mission Statement

5. Approval of Agenda

5.1. Krisell Creager-Lumpkins motions to approve the agenda, Deann Barnett 2nd d

5.2. All approve, motion carries

6. Approval of the Minutes

6.1. Approval of the previous Regular Meeting Minutes January 18, 2022

6.1.1. Krisell Creager-Lumpkins motions to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from January 18, 2022, Deann Barnett 2nd d

6.1.2. All approve, motion carries

6.2. Approval of the Special Meeting Minutes, February 1, 2022

6.2.1. Krisell Creager-Lumpkins motions to approve the Special Meeting Minutes from February 1, 2022, Deann Barnett 2nd d

6.2.2. All approve, motion carries

7. Positive Observations

7.1. Heather Zambrano spoke on the enrollment window that just closed. Had a phenomenal turn out – there is a gap in registrar but many going in without some information. The entire team (admin, Accel, BOD) came out and showed up to support. Had another lottery and time to start a waitlist again. What an exciting place to be!

7.2. Alexandra Tomei hi-lighted Jenna Bell and her work going above and beyond with the MTSS program, literacy week, etc. She is creating amazing things to support our students and increase culture and it is amazing.

7.3. Deann Barnett spoke on the academic awards ceremony – the stands were full with parents and the kids getting their honor roles and academic letters and it was so fun to have a celebration night.

8. Public Comment - *Speakers are limited to 3 minutes and must sign in at the beginning of the meeting.*

8.1. Matthew Harding signed in to speak about board elections and charter review

8.1.1. Parent of 7th 5th and 3rd grader. Over the last few months have not been able to find proof of election or appointment of any sitting board member. Please show us if it is available. We desperately want excellence. As pointed out in the D49 charter review, BOD elections are not an evident process. If there is not proof, please consider that all current sitting members be given an appointed term of one year and elected positions filled – then an election to fill other positions. Charter review hi-lights 22 pages of BOD misconduct – feels that all negative positions of this Charter review can be tied back to the BOD. As members of this BOD you are all responsible for the review and making changes. It takes our entire community to make our school excellent – solicit stakeholders.

8.2. Guin Leeder signed in to speak about board elections and charter review

8.2.1. Middle schooler and high schooler at BLA and the chair of the SAC. Want to echo concerns raised by Mr. Harding. Charter review was very informative – quite a few kudos to our community and outstanding hi-lights. Encourage the community to review that document. Looking forward to hearing your BOD perspective and how we can move forward together. Concerns about declining academic growth and retention of administrators. This has been a continuing concern from staff and teachers and parents. Need to work together to improve student outcomes. Need to review governance policies – encourage us to reach out to other sanctioned organizations like SAC and PTO. Of note – the upcoming election. We need to understand as a community the candidate application process, how community can vote, and verification process. Not sure how we would do that if we completed a vote. Not clear how this happens. Need a timeline and something to consider putting it out. Charter review gave us a lot of material to work on and hope we can all pull together.

9. Program Highlight

9.1. 5th Grade Houses –

9.2. House of Rich

9.2.1. Liam, Romeo, and Knox presented

9.2.2. We created community through our houses; we get points by being on task and see who has the most points. House of Rich won last month – we got a free dress day, got to do announcements, and a party. If any house is seen doing well, we earn points and it encourages us to make good choices. We give back to the community – our house tied blankets for Children’s Hospital last month!

9.3. House of Grimaldo

9.3.1. Caleb, Mikayla presented.

9.3.2. What is our community outreach and what is the purpose? Our class goal is to start a public library so others can get new books and share books they already read. Points and achievements are happening in the classroom and in the halls. I believe when we work together we really do our best to win. Celebrated House of Rich who won last month. Explained the house colors – galaxy theme. Our logo is a snake. We can earn points in many ways – like having integrity. Any adult in the school can give the house points. Houses have helped us collaborate and make new friends –

they were really welcoming and I got a lot of new friends. I feel comfortable in this class and like I am respected and have friends!

9.4. House of Moore

9.4.1. Malia and Bella presented

9.4.2. We have a new house system. This is helping us prepare for 6th grade. The assembly we had helped celebrate a student from each class who is doing well. Our class did Valentine's cards for a nursing home and will be doing a canned food drive for those less fortunate than us. Another thing that this helps us prepare for is transitioning between classes.

9.5. House of Marquez

9.5.1. Jericho, Kaliani, Evan, and Brody presented

9.5.2. Our house colors are neon pink, black, and purple. Neon black is a color – don't question it. I love that the houses are getting me ready for middle school and the astronomy club. Our class mascot is Beethoven – sadly he has gone missing. If anyone finds him, please go to classroom 161. The reward is -1 tax dollar. Our house community project is assembling craft kits for children's hospitals and Ronald McDonald house. My favorite part of 5th grade is switching classes to get ready for middle school. It is important for us to get ready – although there is room for improvement I do like having mascots!

9.6. For the house orders – those are their homeroom class. Each homeroom class is their same house

10. Sanctioned Organizations - *Speakers are limited to 3 minutes when presenting in person*

10.1. PTO – sent an email; staying busy. Not sure if the same board will be available next year. Ensure succession plan.

10.2. BLA Booster Club – sent an email; working on new logo with athletic department

10.3. Boy Scout Troop 228 – no email sent

10.4. Cub Scout Pack 228 – sent an email; finished pinewood derby and starting service projects for spring

10.5. Civil Air Patrol – questions about whether they will be a sanctioned organization long-term as they found another squadron. Discussed the policy and read the policy available on the board website. Was very clear that they desperately want to remain associated with the school and per the policy they should remain a part of the school. They didn't switch, went to a combined squadron to give kids more resources. Want to be saturated in our school. Service area is still Banning. If it is serving one kid or 100, there is a purpose for them being here. It also serves as our ROTC program. Desire to use the track for the PT test seldomly – we do need to exchange needs. Desire to color guard at assemblies.

10.6. Girl Scout Troop – still working on finding a place

11. Standing Committee Reports *Speakers are limited to 10 minutes when presenting*

Finance Committee Report

Chair: Matthew Pacheco

11.1. Deann Barnett presented in place of Matthew Pacheco

11.2. Financials are running fine – couple of line items due to being pre-paid look wonky but it is only because it is pre-paid.

11.3. Looking at some of the admin lines to get clarification

11.4. Wanting to look at the budget moving forward to examine items for next year.

11.5. Will have to do another amended budget for 21/22 – word in the grapevine is that we may get more PPR. Don't know when or how much – but this could be an upward adjustment to the PPR which would require another amended budget.

- 11.6. Questions about prom and other stuff to add in – may have to roll in with the amendment if we get word that is being adjusted.
- 11.7. Process for FY23 budget has been ongoing – now getting down to more and more of the details
- 11.8. Worked out all the details for misc. admin – email going to Athena before meeting is over
School Accountability Committee (SAC) Chair: Guin Leeder
- 11.9. SAC met on Feb 7
- 11.10. Bi-annual review of the bylaws and will be working on a draft for next month
- 11.11. Will be sending 2 requests for policy sub committees for spouses to be present and to be able to approve their own by-laws to match other schools in the district
- 11.12. Looked at growth in many academic assessments and discussed how the SAC can support
- 11.13. Surveys every other month; next one coming out will be a culture survey.
- 11.14. Reviewed safety and security subcommittee survey results – will be meeting soon. For the most part people felt safe and various opinions about security personnel on site. Some differences between staff and parents.
- 11.15. A lot of people don't know how they can comment on safety and security in the school
- 11.16. Looking at parent engagement and how we can increase parent engagement; ways we can give them access and to pull in information from them
- 11.17. Principal feedback being looked at; district has not given guidance for how to do this
- 11.18. In our remarks to the BOD, want to make sure we are part of the process to look at the charter review and come up with solutions from their recommendations. Request to have more documentation posted to the website – strategic plan and charter applications specifically mentioned.
- 11.19. Next regularly scheduled meeting is in April – may look at another meeting in March to look at charter review and other topics.
Election Committee Deann Barnett, Alexandra Tomei, Heather Zambrano
- 11.20. Kicking off election season, we have 4 seats available, 2 open, 2 natural expiration. Last 2 months we have removed the elections process and policies and cleaned up language and widened eligibility. Policies are on web for review. Election timeframe will be determined first, then start working backwards.
- 11.21. There has been a long time since there has been an election due to non-interest or an insubstantial number of applicants. Explained election vs. appointment process and historical experience with interest.
- 11.22. People need to be prepared to take office July 1, but unofficially start onboarding process earlier. This will be standing line item on committee reports. We can plan to have timeline announced at March Regular Meeting.

12. BLAF, Fundraising and Marketing Updates *Speakers are limited to 10 minutes when presenting*

- 12.1. Representative: Heather Zambrano
 - 12.1.1. Just closed the window – seats are full. Waitlists across many grades.
 - 12.1.2. Feb 1 – developed enrollment caps during work session and public meetings. All families have been notified if they have a seat.
 - 12.1.3. Be able to fill if attrition happens with waitlists
 - 12.1.4. Top Golf event covered 100% by a gracious donor. Get to team build and have a good time outside of the school building

13. BLA Admin Reports *Speakers are limited to 10 minutes when presenting*

- 13.1. Supporting documentation BLA Admin Report
 - 13.1.1. Email report sent
 - 13.1.2. Athena Rehorst reported on BLPA High School
 - 13.1.2.1. High school awards assembly went very well
 - 13.1.2.2. Middle school had a pizza lunch for students rewarded with academic and character achievement
 - 13.1.2.3. Filled some of the open positions – including a 9th / 10th grade counselor. 8th grade math. And a long term sub.
 - 13.1.2.4. Working with many from Accel and the teachers counsel to find some J1 VISA applicants to teach math and science – really great program
 - 13.1.2.5. Job fairs and pounding the pavement to find the right people
 - 13.1.2.6. ELL – shout out to Jesse Mavel for his new teacher academy; supporting others and overwhelmingly positive feedback and very beneficial
 - 13.1.3. Rick Dahlman reported on BLPA Middle School
 - 13.1.3.1. American Heart challenge fundraiser going well
 - 13.1.3.2. Middle of year adjustments on MTSS and gifted education came out – adjusting and resetting groups and supporting students in the classrooms
 - 13.1.3.3. Systems approach to teachers who are not traditional teachers coming into our building with the support of various others and Jesse Mavel
 - 13.1.3.4. Assemblies are so much fun and engaging
 - 13.1.4. Cassie Prosch reported on BLRA
 - 13.1.4.1. Very strategic about hiring season to ensure we are fully staffed for next year. Already filling expected open positions and filling with great candidates
 - 13.1.4.2. African drum circle coming to visit and perform for 2nd graders – coordinated by 2nd grade team
 - 13.1.4.3. Raised over 16k for American Heart Association – huge support from Coach Dossman and Coach Brooks as well as Jenna Bell for their huge support
 - 13.1.4.4. 5th graders are doing well in their houses and celebrating achievement
 - 13.1.4.5. Still waiting on first round of technology – bringing in new screens that allows for increased ease of access for teachers and substitutes; can be completely wireless; kids can connect from their laptops – bringing the whole class together using technology
 - 13.1.4.6. Kinder is having celebration night virtually – recording tomorrow and going out to families Friday
 - 13.1.4.7. Literacy week is fantastic – Jenna Bell is doing amazing work. Ribbon cutting for March 4 on little library.
 - 13.1.4.8. MOY data presented – will be going to district on Friday.
 - 13.1.4.9. Staff is very excited for Top Golf. Thank you to Heather for helping facilitate that and thank you to the donor who is supporting this.
 - 13.1.5. Scoreboard is up; waiting on some shortages on electrical issues to get it hooked up. New quote for the bleachers – need to figure out who signs the quote for the quote. 7-8 months to get installed / delivered.

14. Discussion Items

- 14.1. Charter Review

- 14.1.1. D49 completed their charter review on the last 5 years of the school. This included management company, school and their employees, and the BOD.
- 14.1.2. Very useful and informative.
- 14.1.3. Great recommendation slide at the D49 meeting that gives a synopsis – available publicly on D49 website. These were all read aloud during the meeting
- 14.1.4. If there are findings that support the recommendations, they can be found in the charter review itself.
- 14.1.5. BOD, top leadership and Accel, SAC, admin have reviewed the report in it's entirety
- 14.1.6. Went line by line with Accel recently to ensure understanding and determine next steps
- 14.1.7. Next step is to have dialogue with the SAC in 2-3 weeks to formulate (once a plan is in place and Accel has put a plan in place with admin) plans for improvement.
- 14.1.8. A lot of work to do. Put plans and objectives in place to make it better.
- 14.1.9. Desire to align these recommendations with the strategic pillars so we can hold ourselves accountable.
- 14.2. Colorado State Alignment and Blitzing for the 22/23 Academic Year – Dr. Chad Carr
 - 14.2.1. Executive VP of Accel schools presented
 - 14.2.2. Worked very closely with former leaders and as the BLA campus has grown
 - 14.2.3. We have great facilities, great teachers, doing great things in the building
 - 14.2.4. We need some focus
 - 14.2.5. Would love to see the CDE come out and see the involvement of parents, teachers, students, BOD, etc. and judge us based on this. However, they focus on test scores
 - 14.2.6. The blitz – we want to begin competing academically
 - 14.2.7. Just what these students were saying – we are competing academically and behaviorally
 - 14.2.8. Measurement group and instruction piece. Whatever they do over 2 weeks, they do an assessment. Fantastic class observed in middle school today
 - 14.2.9. We want this assessment to look exactly like the CO state test; we will be able to guide the instruction and determine how effective our instruction was
 - 14.2.10. Data walls outside of every classroom – but is confidential
 - 14.2.11. Principals on a daily basis could give an estimate of where the school is as a whole
 - 14.2.12. End of the year – right before testing – divide into teams and every classroom is a team. We saw teams today competing to do better in 5th grade tonight
 - 14.2.13. Ultimately, they are playing for rewards (many businesses will donate rewards)
 - 14.2.14. Want to make sure everyone wants to do this and introduce in the summer
 - 14.2.15. We have proven this in many other schools – want to spend our summer doing
 - 14.2.16. Question raised on SPED and other students who have other needs
 - 14.2.16.1. Alert early on that the student needs in August rather than later in the year; can target them for enrichment early and do diagnostic assessment
 - 14.2.16.2. Can place them immediately in IEP or other accommodation groups and get those quickly
 - 14.2.16.3. Earning points often end up helping those students who were having discipline issues or behavioral issues end up being the leaders in the classroom. Behavior goes away and they are having fun and don't have time to get in trouble.
 - 14.2.16.4. For ELL, we have done this. Need to introduce power verbs to students that match how kids their age would naturally speak. Jumping 12 performance points very quickly
 - 14.2.16.5. Have seen it work everywhere that it was done correctly.

14.3. Approved Vendor – Logo / Gym Wall

14.3.1. Booster club is looking at adding logos and stickers to the wall

14.3.2. Sent images of the logo to the BOD

14.3.3. Stallion busting out of the wall – slightly different than our current logo but similar

14.3.4. Making sure that we have an approved logos on spirit wear – so need to approve this as a logo for multiple reasons

14.3.5. Vendors – do need to approve vendors through the BOD. Looking at doing a vinyl application. We have approved vendors that are allowed to use our logo – don't have one yet for this type of material so would need to approve them as a vendor

14.3.6. Placement discussed with various logos and words; concerns about refinishing gym floors with the logo on the gym floor

14.3.7. Booster club has worked with administration and Accel marketing department – all 4 entities have agreed to what is presented. BOD needs to determine if we approve it as a new logo and approval of a vendor. Then placement approval.

14.3.8. This was first discussed over the summer

14.3.9. We do update it every year but do not refinish floors every year – would be an expensive undertaking

14.3.10. What is the symbolism behind the stars? Would love to understand the thought process behind the other visuals so we can tell the story

14.3.11. Eventually want sponsor banners, accolade banners, etc. If we paint the walls with other logos, where will that go. Want to hi-light the lineage of kids that have attended here.

14.3.12. If we do get another campus at some point – does the name change at all?

14.3.13. Would love to know what the budget is and where the money is coming from

14.4. Enrollment Policy

14.4.1. Brought to our attention we needed to clean up the enrollment policy especially with a lottery coming up

14.4.2. Priorities do not change

14.4.3. Definitions don't change

14.4.4. Fraudulent enrollment 2 years for investigating was removed – we weren't taking anything away but wordiness and standards that we are not upholding.

14.4.5. Changed old language from our prior management company to match current language

14.4.6. Changed K8 to K12

14.4.7. Added that without an exception to policy, if you declined you could enroll at a later date if a spot is available since we are enrolling throughout the year

14.4.8. Removal of language about after Oct 1 changes in enrollment

14.4.9. Enrollment process skipped around a lot from regular to lottery – cleaned it up with own heading and title

14.4.10. More specific on expectation process and a little less specific on timeline to turn documents in (i.e. 1 week to 5 working days)

14.4.11. Switched steps for early access; first step was to apply then to notify. To prevent automatic kick backs, switched the order so registrar could manually adjust the back of the system

14.4.12. Important to talk to the experts – very difficult for the BOD who is not in the operations to truly understand what is happening on the inside

14.5. Head of School / Executive Director Search Update

14.5.1. Natalee Long presented

- 14.5.2. Screened several candidates and identified 2 that have completed the first round with Chad Carr and Natalee Long. Moving both into the second round with stakeholders in March and goal is to have them seated by March.
- 14.5.3. Goal is still to have 3 candidates, only 2 have completed that first round so far.
- 14.5.4. Request for a job description – publicly available on CASE website. Recruitment team pulled together the job description.
 - 14.5.4.1. Desire to look for a very specific role that we have not identified specifics within that job description – need to identify what we want
 - 14.5.4.2. Boiler plate job description is very general – multi step interview process where we determine what qualities the BOD and other stakeholders are interested in
- 14.5.5. Ensure that the admin’s needs are being heard and searched for when we look for that person
- 14.5.6. Pieces we are requesting would not necessarily be in the job description but would be in the interview process
- 14.5.7. Request to make sure they have charter school experience
- 14.5.8. Need to decide what we even call this role / title
- 14.5.9. Restructuring is driven by needs that we have – we have not been focused on what this person needs to do for us
- 14.5.10. Concerns about if the job description is remote vs be in the building and what candidates might be perceiving the job to be
- 14.5.11. Ensuring that not only they have experience but experience that fits Banning
- 14.5.12. Encouraged to look at the Charter Review because that hi-lights where we need to grow and have leadership
- 14.5.13. In the past, there has been a rubric of questions where staff, community, BOD ask same questions and score. Not very effective – answering the same question 3x is redundant. Every group has very specific focus that needs to have very specific and important questions answered. At the same time – each group needs a summary of the answers in each group so we can all be aware of the answers.
- 14.5.14. Stakeholder input on the questions as well
- 14.6. Accel Evaluation
 - 14.6.1. We do this every year using survey monkey to get stakeholder input on the evaluation. Meeting on the 17th to create the actual survey that can be blasted out to all staff. Hope to have to publish and push by the 21st.

15. Action Items

- 15.1. None

16. Executive Sessions

- 16.1. None requested

17. Future Business

- 17.1. Charter Review – request to add a section in admin report to report back on where we are at with this
- 17.2. Blitzing as discussion / action eventually
- 17.3. Vendor / Logo / Location as discussion / action potentially
- 17.4. Enrollment Policy as discussion / action

- 17.5. Head of school as discussion and what questions BOD would like to ask
- 17.6. Accel evaluation as discussion for an update
- 17.7. Handbooks in April 1st read
- 17.8. Field Trips Update for potential post COVID – student culture / retention pillar

18. Board Member Communication

- 18.1. Alex Tomei may not be able to attend the March meeting – will do her best
- 18.2. D49 is willing to come in and do a SAC training for us (20-30 minute training and will take questions so estimate 45 minutes) – will push out communication to relevant individuals

19. Adjournment

- 19.1. Heather Zambrano adjourned the meeting at 8:12pm

DATE: February 15, 2022

//Signed//
Alexandra Tomei, Secretary