

BEN FRANKLIN ACADEMY
School Accountability Committee Meeting Notes
November 2011

Members present: Ann Citrin, Chris Eubanks, Glenn Roper, Jennifer Gutierrez-Hughes, Kent Barwind, Robin Mendelson, Diana Simpson, and Laura Goldin

Tasks

Bylaws Committee

Ann Citrin mentioned the final draft of the SAC bylaws will be completed soon and will be posted on the BFA website under SAC.

SAC Goals Committee

The goal committee was tasked with helping to develop the SAC goals that will form the basis of the family survey distributed to the BFA community in spring. Several lines of discussion ensued regarding how those goals should be articulated as questions on the survey including:

- *Quantity:* How many questions are appropriate without overwhelming respondents? The concern is to craft a pointed survey that addresses pertinent issues without sounding too overwhelming. If the survey is too long, it could thwart parents from accurately responding. If it's too broad, families may respond too tangentially. Members determined that ten questions was a reasonable limit.

- *Wording:* Should the questions be closed or open ended? Several possibilities were presented including phrasing some questions more directly, but providing the opportunity for elaboration in the secondary portion.

- *Anonymity:* Concerns were addressed whether parents would be as forthcoming in the survey if their identity was disclosed, as opposed to the opportunity to remain anonymous.

As the form of the questions evolved, the discussion shifted to determining the criteria parents would be asked to respond to. Several ideas arose for possible survey questions including:

- *Teacher Effectiveness:* The concept of teacher effectiveness was discussed, along with how best to formulate parent's concerns about their child's teacher into objective survey questions. Moreover, the issue was raised if an appropriate feedback loop exists for parents to communicate their concerns about teacher effectiveness.

- *Class Size:* The optimal number of students per class was discussed as a potential survey question. The discussion included data corroborating that a smaller class size is most effective, and that a naturally occurring tipping point is reached at 23 students per class. However, budget considerations are a pressing concern with smaller class size and - considering the current economic conditions - operating under such a constrained margin may not be feasible, or fiscally prudent.

- *Academically Challenged:* Another potential survey question included whether parents feel their child is being sufficiently challenged academically.

Based on this discussion, the Goals Committee will formulate specific goals for the next meeting.

Policy Review Recommendations

The BOD tasked the SAC with providing a recommendation for each school policy as it comes up for review. Two policies were discussed.

-Enrollment: Brief discussion about the current policy included the fact that the policy was generally dictated by federal funding the school receives. SAC determine that they would recommend no changes to the policy.

- Uniforms: Since the school uniform is a contentious issue, the discussion focused on whether to recommend using an additional vendor. The considerations ranged from using the existing vendor for the shirts, but allowing another for the pants; as well as using a vendor with a national presence (ie, Gap, Lands' End, etc.). Ultimately, the SAC determined that the recommendation would be to add an additional vendor that would provide adequate customer service, ample inventory, an overall better product with a higher level of quality, an opportunity for lower prices via sales/coupons/base price, and would have a national presence.