

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE BMIS BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE LIBRARY ON 27th MARCH 2012

PRESENT

N. Airey	NA	Chair
J. Carstens	JC	Board Member
E. Hausi	EH	Board Member
V. Beza	VB	Board Member
J. Brown	JB	Board Member
K. Pauw	KP	Board Member
S. Donker	SD	Board Member
H. Banda	HB	Board Member
N. Bishop	NB	Director
P. Harrison	PH	Head of Secondary
J. Johnson	JJ	Head of Secondary
S. O'loughlin	SM	Secondary Representative
Y. Garside	YG	Primary Representative
W. Horea	WH	Business Manager
H. Schievink	HS	PTA Representative

APOLOGIES

D. Pinto	DP	Board Member
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ABSENT

V. Beza	HB	Board Member
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The meeting was called to order at 18.38 pm by the Chair, NA.

The Chair informed the meeting of an email that the school had sent out to parents regarding a tragedy involving the mother of Fatima, a year 7 student, who was brutally murdered in her home. She explained that the school was being vigilant and had been in touch with the American Embassy on the current security situation.

NB added that the school's first and primary concern was with Fatima's family and that nothing was going to be done without their blessing. He said clarity was only after Sally Elliott and Olatokunbo, the College Counsellor went to visit the family. He advised that in the event that parents voice out, it should be explained to them that first priority was the family and there was need to understand who the immediate family member was.

1. AGENDA

The Agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Open Session of the BMIS Board meeting held on 28th February, 2012 were approved as a true and correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1 School Uniform

NB reported that the school now had good options of bringing in bulk good quality embroidered polo shirts of different sizes and after a survey, it was clear what sizes were needed. He said prices would come in at just under K1800 and around K2,000 – K2,500 as sell price.

3.2 Tuck Shop Plans

Plans had been put out to tender and the process was progressing well. NB thanked all staff particularly PTA for holding the International Day which brought in a bit of money.

3.3 Year 6 Building

The Board was informed that the process of looking at architects was going well and it was expected that building would start during the first term of next academic year.

3.4 Network Software

NB made a presentation on the new network system and explained how this system will help the school in its quest for an IT development.

3.5 Policy Priorities

JC reported that work on policies was still continuing and going well.

3.6 Local Hire Staff Contracts

The Board learnt that Policy Committee was able to solve some of the terminology in the contract.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

4.1 Maintenance and Security

4.1.1 Storage Building

Work on the storage building had been completed. More information had been provided in the Administrative report.

4.1.2 Tuck shop plans

NB reported that the position of Tuck Shop Manager had been advertised in the local press and applications were being received.

4.2 Staffing and HR Issues

4.2.1 Recruitment

NB presented the Primary and Secondary staffing for next year. He said the allocation was pretty much full, only the PE positions for both Primary and Secondary were still vacant. He explained that the key thing was to find people that are willing to come to Malawi. He said he had been brutally honest about the situation in Malawi.

4.2.2 Morale

NB informed the Board that he was a little bit concerned that staff morale was at a difficult stage due to the current socio-economic climate. He explained that morale of staff and high spirit was crucial and he would therefore like to keep that as much as possible.

4.2.3 Flights

The Board learnt that problems to do with flight availability and spiraling costs had caused the budget to overshoot.

5. CIS ACCREDITATION

The Board went through the process of synthesizing results of the Governors' personal views from the online CIS Standard C Governance and Leadership survey in order to come up with

consensus of opinion and agree on areas that still needed to be targeted. It was agreed that the results would be used to come up with a synthesized statement.

6. PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT

6.1 Number on Roll

JJ reported that primary number on roll was currently at 456.

6.2 Staffing

All vacant positions in the primary school had been filled except for the PE teacher position. JJ said she was reviewing some applications and would soon come up with a short list. She said it was a good team with a nice mixture of teachers. **Action: JJ**

6.3 Reception Class Parent Introductory Evening

The planned Parent Introductory Evening schedule for Tuesday 22nd March had been postponed to 12th April due to the recent civil unrest.

6.4 The 5 Day Cycle

JJ reported that she had only received feedback from nine parents mostly from the Muslim community. She said out of the nine responses, six were concerned about both the later finishing time and the longer lunch hour. They felt that the year 1 and 2 children would be very tired while others felt their children would be late for Islamic school whose starting time is directly impacted by the later end time. As for the longer lunch hour, some parents felt the play-time was too long and children would get over-tired. Positive feedback came from two parents who were happy that the 5 Day Cycle had returned.

JJ explained that the kids do need a play time, even a rest time when they can just read a book. NB suggested that the school comes to an agreement with the Madrassa teachers. He said he was in discussion with them but needed more data from them. It was agreed that the issue be kept as proposed for now as was put in Tikambe.

6.5 Homework Procedures and Guidelines

JJ reported that she had looked at a lot of guidelines from other schools to see what parents can do to help with homework. A draft document, which will be reviewed by a committee of teachers, had been prepared revising the guidelines and procedures for homework in the primary school. She said this document will be an addition to the parent handbook next year and will be sent out to parents during term 3. **Action: JJ**

6.6 PYP News

A recent Year 2S account about resolving the problem of achieving world peace which was recently featured in Tikambe is now being submitted to the IBO to be considered for possible inclusion in their Journal for Schools September issue.

6.7 Parent Workshops

JJ reported that the workshops held on 7th March were well attended by teaching staff, however, the rain kept many parents away. Parents were interested to know more about the school's approach to the teaching of Mathematics. She said Primary School had gone back to developing criteria for each year group and this was in its final draft stage. She was hopeful that it will go out next term.

EH informed the meeting that some parents felt that there was not enough drilling in the basic numeracy skills and they have had to engage part-time teachers when the children are moving to other schools such as Kamuzu Academy. JJ explained that BMIS was trying to make sure the children understand the concepts and they are ready.

6.8 International Day

JJ said the day went very well and proved to be a thought provoking and interesting day for students, staff and visitors. She thanked the organizing committee and John Bray in particular who made the day a special one.

6.9 Environmental Day

The Board learnt that the environmental day organized for the years 3 and 4 as a CAS activity by the Year 13 was very impressive. JJ said that she would be writing individual reports for all of them. She said a lot of learning took place and they day was full of fun.

7.0 World Water Day

The day was celebrated with activities which developed an awareness of the importance of water in our lives. T-shirts with the World Water Day logo were on sale to primary students and the money raised would help buy water pumps in some Malawian villages.

7. SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT

7.1 Number on Roll

PH reported that the number on roll was 267.

7.2 ISA Testing

PH presented the analysis of the ISA test results received in December. He explained that last year BMIS was categorized as a Group 3 school but this had now changed to Group 2. He said he and JJ were now getting better at understanding the data. Individual reports for each student who took the test went home. Every individual test was barcoded and returned. He said the school does not teach the test but uses the information from the results of the test.

JJ added that some of the results from last year's testing have allowed the school to look at some of its policies such as the language policy. She said BMIS has a number of students that do not come from an English background. The information therefore is being used to identify areas of improvement as well as identify resources to address problem areas. **Action: PH/JJ**

7.3 IGCSE & IB Diploma Evenings

PH reported that he, together with John Bray were in the process of analyzing Year 10 and 12 student subject choices for August. He said the option pattern will be finalized and built into the timetable. Most forms were in and they had started to make plans of what they will look like next term. **Action: PH**

7.5 2012-13 Timetable

The proposal for the new school week was presented to the Student Council and feedback received from Secondary so far had been favourable. They expressed some concern about longer lessons, particularly the length of double lessons and also suggested longer first break and shorter second break. PH thanked the Board for reminding him to go to Student Council.

7.6 Reports

The Board was informed that progress reports for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 would be sent home on March 29 and a parent conference had been planned for Thursday April 19th. Final reports for Year 13 would be sent home on Friday April 20th and those for Year 11 on April 27th.

Action: PH

7.7 Intentions

Parents of years 6 to 12 will be asked to make known their intentions for next year through a letter that would be sent out a few days after the Board meeting. The information, which will be collected at the beginning of term 3 will be used to finalise class numbers for each year group for August. **Action: PH**

7.8 Calendar

PH reported that the leadership team was developing a draft calendar of key Secondary dates. The calendar will be available to teachers for further discussion and development. PH said it would be published to parents towards the end of Term 3. **Action: PH**

7.9 IB Diploma and IGCSE Examinations

PH informed the Board that plans were well advanced for the external examinations in May and June. IB Diploma examinations will run from May 2nd to May 22nd with one examination taking place on Saturday May 5th. IGCSE examinations will start on May 8th and end on June 13th. All examinations will be in the hall.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

8.1 Finance

8.1.1 2010/11 Audit

WH reported that the Audit report was supposed to be in on Friday but it did not come. Regarding the land issue, WH said the Finance Committee agreed that it was not worth the while as it would prove to be costly.

8.1.2 Taxation of Income for Schools formerly under DSB

The Board learnt that MRA had still not yet replied to the paper presented to them on 21st November 2012 by schools formerly under DSB. EH wanted to know if the school had been in touch with Saint Andrews. WH explained that St Andrews was actually one of the schools that put the paper together.

8.1.3 Investment of Excess Funds

Due to the need to pay a substantial amount of house rentals at the end of March and FBT in early April which had been overlooked when it was suggested that K30,000,000 could be invested, no further funds were deposited in the 7 day call account.

8.1.4 Debtors

WH reported that the debtors figure was standing at K5.4million as of Monday 27th March representing 1.7% of the total invoiced for the term. He said this includes invoices for three families who opted to be invoiced for the whole year.

WH noted that with the judicial strike now over, there should be movement on the cases that were referred to the School's Legal Counsel.

8.1.5 Payroll Loan Facility

WH said that Standard Bank had requested for additional documents and is yet to submit a final version of the agreement with BMIS for signing.

Regarding the need to sensitize staff on prudent financial management before accessing the loans, WH said a company called Greenroot Finance had submitted a proposal to conduct that training although as of reporting time they had not yet submitted their charges.

8.1.6 Forex Payments

The Board learnt that in order to deal with the current difficulties in making foreign payments, suppliers were being advised to split their invoices into amounts that were less than \$50,000 for quicker processing by the Reserve Bank.

WH said a medical cover payment of \$51,466.44 whose application was submitted in November 2011 had just been approved by the Reserve Bank. Another application was submitted in February and this has not yet been approved. He explained that invoices totaling 72,597.41

Pound Sterling to Mallory International had been re-submitted to Standard Bank two weeks earlier.

8.2 Human Resources

8.2.1 Staff Appraisals

WH said this exercise was going at a slow pace because people who are engaged in the process are not always available at the same time. He expected the process to pick up pace during the 2nd and 3rd term recess.

8.2.2 Maintenance Supervisor/Handyman

Matthews Changwa, the new Maintenance Supervisor/Handyman commenced duties on 19th March 2012.

8.3 Security

WH said no major security incidents around the school campus had been reported during the month of March.

8.4 Buildings and Maintenance

8.4.1 New Storage Room

The Building was finally handed over to the school. However, the Finance Committee asked for more time to look at and analyse the price fluctuation claim of K2,687,083.60 made by the contractor as per clause 47 of the contract. The six month defects liability period started on the 1st March, 2012. **Action: Finance Committee**

8.4.2 Tuck Shop

The project has been put out to tender.

8.4.3 Year 6 Classroom and Administration Block

WH said two architects, Messrs Tione Mughogho of Zingano Associates and Asawitswani Chalamanda of Samsai Designs were asked to submit their quotations in their personal capacities. The quotations have since been received and they are K215,000 and K250,000 respectively, exclusive of scrutiny fees to the Lilongwe City Assembly. JC enquired if a provision had been made in the tender for someone to supervise and confirm price fluctuations. WH explained that last time it had been said that for small projects this would be expensive. NA suggested that there was need for the school to get quotations from prospective supervisors who could manage the whole project and liaise with NB and KP. **Action: NB/WH**

8.4.4 Fuel Storage

WH informed the Board that DP had delivered a 3,000 litre tank with a pump/filter mechanism already attached, to the school on 20th March. He said the pump has already been mounted on the slab that was prepared for the same, to be used for storing diesel. He expected the tank to cost around R5,000.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21.09 pm. The next open session of the BMIS Board will be held on 24th April, 2012 at 6.00pm.

Signed:..... Date:.....