

**Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association  
Board of Directors Meeting – Official Minutes - Draft**



Date: Sept 9, 2013  
Starting Time: 5:30 pm Ending Time: 7:30 pm  
Benson Library

**ATTENDEES:**

Guests Roger Edwards, class of 1963; Curtis Wilson, Benson Principal; Connie Mar, Class of 1990 Graphic Communications; Chuck's wife Patricia, Lisa Wilke: parent of student, working on Archival project; Franklin Johnson class of 64, Engineering Major.

Mike Landstrom (ML), Rob Johns (RJ), Ken Bakke (KB), Josh Piper (JP), Joanne Stainbrook (JS), Chuck Heil (CH), Don Wear (DW), Wayne De Vore (WD), Dick Spies (DS), Max Baker (MB), Neal Galash (NG) and Dale Bajema (DB).

**MINUTES:**

- Curtis Wilson introduced himself, giving some of his background.
- Sports issue:
  - Curtis: The principals wanted the district to move to 5A, a little lower level. Now the district wants to be 6A. The big schools are too big to compete at 5A. Easier to combine smaller schools. Curtis is working on cracking the cap so we can get up to 1000 students. Realistically they aren't going to just lift the cap. But he thinks they might push it up to 1000. The proposals were just proposals. It's never going to happen to close down Benson sports. Those proposals are off the table. Now the question is which sports will we have? Need to field three teams. Meeting with football coaches, basketball and track. Soccer, volleyball, cross country, etc. are in question.
  - Lisa: they aren't paying for coaches, so if moving to 6A, who pays?
  - Curtis: They are asking for volunteers or they are going to split the stipend between coaches. Those conversations are starting now. There is a meeting **September 18th 6:30 - 8PM. Franklin H.S.** Media will be there. If we can get enough parents there, the district will listen.
  - ML: Why three teams necessary, not two?
  - Curtis: You need to push back at the meeting. If you only have two, the larger schools have three, that extra team won't have someone to play.
  - MB: Can the specialty school kids that meet here play on Benson sports teams?
  - Curtis: Possibly alliance. A few hundred?
  - DB: Can you be out for a year and back in, if enrollment goes up and down?
  - Curtis: Yes, you can. But I'm pushing that if you drop to 2 levels, you can't drop the sport. It affects too many kids.
  - RJ: There is someone from the industry speaking for us for 3 minutes today at the school board - focus to lift the cap. Also, Donna Brown (admin assistant to Brad Avakian)'s daughter is going to speak tonight.

- SB498 Grant: RJ
  - We are also working with PPS people on the grant. Trip and RJ and Jeanie Donovan working on 2 grants. Min 200,000 for Benson, 300,000 for the rest of the high schools. That is the current conversation. I met three of the 10 people on the 498 advisory board, met with unions. If you (Curtis) can continue to ask Trip how they are doing writing the grant, Due Oct 23rd. Connie on our side is helping. We are hoping if there is enough pressure PPS will come through. SB498 is the name of the grant: CTE Revitalization Grant. In 2014 and 2015 the money is dispensed. This is seed money for self-sustaining systems. One of the ideas is to have Concordia teaching here as part of their practicum for their Master degree. PCC would focus on a night school idea, OIT also would have a presence. Cliff Davis, International Brotherhood, will be there. Advisory board structure with Kevin Jeans-Gale.
  - DW: Just received list of unions to contact them about apprenticeships.
  - RJ: We're going against everyone else in the state for this grant money. Rural districts will go for 100,000 here and there.
- Franklin Johnson arrived. He introduced himself: class of 64, Engineering Major. OSU. Civil Engineering, worked for the Government in Information Technology. DS: Franklin and I ran track together. We were just talking about keeping sports here.
- Grant discussion continued:
  - RJ: When we talk about bringing back architecture, transportation, etc. with some of this grant money, I point out that the space we need for these programs is being used by outside groups the district has allowed to take Benson space.
  - Curtis: Let's say we win it \$200,000 to us. If the issue becomes space, how do we get the space back?
- Space at Benson:
  - RJ: The space is so valuable for CTE; that is the better purpose for this space.
  - Curtis: There's a new security guard. I wanted to give him an office. I spent half a day last week trying to find one man a cubicle to have a computer, phone and locker. I ended up taking it from a secretary in the counseling center. Then I gave it back. There's a cop that is never here, so I went to him to ask to share the space. So, once we start talking about major space, we need a lot of people at the table.
  - RJ: District talks about us as 'The Benson Campus', not Benson Tech or Benson Polytechnic. I think that takes away from the uniqueness. Possible areas for growth are the spaces occupied by DART and Reconnections.
  - Curtis: Reconnection is a part of Alliance. They merged. Expanding into the DART space would be the easiest. The International Program has taken over a few classrooms upstairs. They only have 9 kids now, not the 45-50 they expected. We might get those back. I haven't met the DART kids, but I saw them walking in a straight line with security in front and in back. They are the only ones that can't go anywhere without adult supervision. Winning this grant may further this conversation.
- Long term development:

- DS: Another aspect is the long term development committee. Working with Lincoln to build a case for both schools to be considered for next round of schools for major re-visioning. Money in the bond measure that passed is there for planning for the next round of schools. The district can begin using that money for planning now, and I suggest under your leadership we need to work hard to develop the vision of Benson moving forward. Use that as a platform to go to the board and get in that next round of schools. If it gets board approval then you can make some global decisions about what happens to those pieces of the school that are no longer Benson focused. The focus is on the Nov 2016 ballot; money may be available for a brand new school. Similar to Grant. With the right story, Benson has a great chance to be on the ballot: job opportunities, incredible grad rates, age of school, industry connections. That's the work we should be doing in tandem with SB498 work. We need to pursue multiple strategies to get to our vision.
- CH: It has to be a comprehensive high school. Restoring not only CTE but also academics.
- DS: Magnet program. Four year, CTE totally integrated into academics. The introductory experience the first two years is critical.
- MB: the integration is important. In English your assignment is related to what you are learning in automotive. That piece is unique here and makes each subject more relevant.
- DS: It takes those kids that are disenfranchised with the process and gives them the connections they need to understand how education is important in their lives.
- DW: There is a much greater understanding of the connection between academics and skills and jobs.
- Franklin: When I look back I understand how Benson prepared me for everything I did later. I didn't know how much that mattered at the time, but I did learn how both the academics and tech skills were so important. I never understood how important writing was. It wasn't until later that I understood how writing would help me do my job later.
- Curtis: I am seeing a good balance. I spent a lot of time with the CTE teachers before school and during the 1st week of school. Rich Webber at the Benson House and figuring out what is going on. High school kids out there building the house. I was familiar with the academics - seeing kids at the desk working. Rich made it clear - the house is the classroom. Spending time with those teachers let me see what CTE means to students.
- Franklin: And the intellectual component - reading and writing to understand building codes and applying for permits.
- Curtis: the teachers said they are working together. Carol worked hard to bring them together.
- RJ: Because there's no architectural program now, DS designed the last house.
- DS: I'm on the education committee of the Architectural Foundation of Oregon Board. We conduct seminars for teachers. 2-3day symposium where they come up with a design, then the emphasis is how can you take this design model and use it in the classroom. We're trying to figure out how to take that

model and broaden it. Another way to use CTE methodologies in the classroom.

- Curtis: pictures in my office 1942, 51 etc. from the different learning areas. These tell the story.
- Franklin: The beauty of the school is merging academics and hands-on skills.
- DS: Eight of us graduated in architecture and went to U of O. The profs said we had the Benson Advantage. MB: same for me at OSU. Print shop said: you went to Benson? You have a job. CH: I teach Physics. When I graduated, I knew how to build a house, fix a car etc. Benson gave me the confidence to do that.
- MB: The fact that everyone takes those orientation classes is important. You had people of different races, different backgrounds, different focuses that made strong connections in those intro classes.
- DW: Connections are made across classes too, because of the shared major.
- RJ: We need choir/music back too.
- DS: Art also. Art is integral to drafting and design.
- WD: This is the first year there are no students that took band here. We do have an alumni pep band that plays at some of the athletic events.
- DW: There is a plan to repaint the band room, now that school is going on, we could get started on this.
- Franklin: We all have a lot of ideas, but we need to prioritize. The socialization aspect was really strong here: teachers who weren't necessarily our own teachers cared about us. How are we supposed to behave, how do we present ourselves? Again, I did not appreciate this until I was interviewing college students for internships that were not prepared. That's when I realized we'd gotten those building blocks here. Benson prepared the whole person. Not just academically or with job skills, but socially. This was a significant advantage. I think Benson has been at a disadvantage because we're not a neighborhood school. I'd like to talk about using the Alumni Association to help with reunions. I'd like an evening back here at the school to get them refocused on the school: what it did for you and how can you help it do for others?
- DS: That's an important piece. Curtis, we're giving you just a glimpse of the tip of the iceberg. Benson alumni are everywhere - government agencies, industry everywhere throughout the nation. We can rally some important players to move ideas forward.
- RJ: Dale and Dick have worked really hard on the 5 year plan. It has to get in front of PPS and we have to define our community as alumni and everyone in the greater Portland area.
- Curtis: I just got the parents' list of all parents. I sent a hello to parents. Do you have an alumni list?
- JP: we have about 6000 alumni contacts, spread across hard mailing and email. Monthly we email to roughly 2000 alums about what's happening. We only do hardcopy to dues paying members, around 100-120 people, once a year.
- DW: And I just got a union contact list. Working on apprenticeship library.

- Curtis: It's a lot of information. What I'm thinking is, what can I move on now? **I need the alumni at Franklin high school on the 18th at 6:30, wearing blue and orange.** They need to know how much support we have, no matter what they decide to do. My major focus of the last two weeks - Benson will not lose sports. Now focused on what we do if there's not enough kids to field three teams - how do we keep the sport going? Also focusing on the grant, and how to get space.
- Lisa: we need to get the word out that sports are not going away. As a parent I did not get your email. At the game on Sunday people are saying there won't be sports, some coaches said Benson is becoming a 2 year school.
- Curtis: I talked to the coaches today, I will email the parents.
- RJ: Get your info to Josh and he'll get it out. Franklin needs to dispel the bad press he created with his proposals.
- Curtis: Nicole Dunga is at the Oregonian. She was trying to find out what was happening at Benson. She ran with that memo even though it wasn't supposed to get out. She called me but we never connected. Mr. Haskins tried to dispel it last Friday at the press conference.
- KB: Jennifer Anderson at the Tribune broke the story. She's given us a lot of support.
- Curtis: As principals, we can't always respond. We have a PR person. Marshall can talk because they are his proposals. If you want to meet, I can set up a meeting with Marshall and Trip. I think the people on the 18th are Trip, Marshall, the principals, and the media. Not sure about Carol Smith. She was there last Friday.
- KB: Four years ago when we had the rally here, Carol came and it was tremendous. I think that's what turned their minds on closing the school.
- Curtis: The district wants to make sure we speak with one voice, which is why one person speaks for all the principals.
- Franklin: Suggestion. You may want to consider having someone get information out to rally the thinking, focus the PR effort. Trying to change the perception of people about Benson's future is important.
- Curtis: I'll send a notice out to the families. And after the 18th we'll be able to focus on the next steps of teams.
- Franklin: the value of teamwork and sportsmanship is really important. It's part of the complete person focus that needs to happen.
- DS: When you are settled, I want to chat with you about the Long Term Development Committee.
- Curtis: Great meeting everyone. It will be an uphill battle, but I'm energized and I like a good fight. The 18th is critical. Get as many people there as possible in the colors. Probably in the cafeteria.
- Curtis was excused.
- DB: Can someone check and see if PPS has a place to comment for the 18th for people that can't make it? There's usually a link for providing comments on a specific issue or for a specific meeting. The alumni should also send a one-page letter.

- RJ: Josh, please figure out the link on PPS site. I will draft a letter and send it to the board for approval.
- PTSA:
  - CH: PTSA has its first meeting on the 24th 7PM at the Benson Library with election of officers. There weren't enough members to vote at the last meeting at the end of the last year. We need to get more parents out there. I spent all registration time talking with parents talking up PTSA. I will send a note to Curtis that he should get the PTSA meeting out in the parent letter. This is very critical.
  - Sue is staying on the board but is not going to be the president. Bob Brown just quit the PTSA.
  - Rob: try to get Doug Wells and Paul Anthony.
  - CH: I would like reimbursement for the candy I purchased to give to the freshmen at registration. \$117.
  - WD moved that we reimburse Chuck. DS seconded. All approved. Motion passed.
- Career Center:
  - DS moved we pay \$600 for design work for the career center and up to \$200 for supplies. WD seconded. All approved. Motion passes.
- Membership:
  - JP: there were new memberships at the picnic but they haven't been counted yet.
  - KB: probably 10 new members. Update at next meeting.
  - JP: Usually the people that pay at the picnic get membership through next year. Nov/Dec we will ask for renewals.
  - CH: Is there a way of finding out if we are current?
  - JP: I will send an email out to people that aren't current.
- Treasurer: \$2374.65 before the check to CH.
- Benson Community Picnic:
  - MB: Great. Smaller space made people interact.
  - CH: Class of '56 reunion at Oaks Park was nice. That would be something to explore. In case it doesn't work at the school.
  - Try to get more reunions there!
- Partnerships:
  - RJ: 25 union/labor/education came for walk through. NW Natural gas etc. Curtis came and got his walkthrough. Lew Fredericks was there. Talked about re-evaluating the enrollment cap. I pressed for this because we need this for SB498 - we need commitments. We have another meeting at 5:30 on Wed 9/11. There are about 8 people lined up for an hour tour of the school, then cold drinks in the library to talk about what we want to talk about.
  - CH: signs on the poles - 2 hour limit on parking around the school.
  - RJ: I don't think it's a problem for this.
  - ML: Homeowner's association president Tom Kelly would be good for the tour.
  - RJ: Great, invite him.
- RJ: Approval of minutes postponed until next time.

- Foundation: no update.
- Saturday's cleanup:
  - KB: lots of bark dust. Trip was there wheeling bark dust. Carol was there for photos and then left.
  - CH: Everyone should congratulate Curtis on hitting the ground running - he got the grass cut and got people out for the cleanup.
- DS: We need to show up in force on the 18th to prove that we are there to support him.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- Bylaws amended from Aug 2013 meeting re moving annual meeting?
- What to do with postcards from Tech Show?
- Did we get the letter from Dale Lawrence Jensen (1945 graduate) up on the website?
- How can we support Curtis Wilson's goals:
  - Five year plan for Benson. With limiting funding, how can we continue to build the school?
    - Instruction, community, growth.
    - partnerships, community, students and family
    - growth: growing numbers, growing programs.
    - Making the connection between career and college.
    - Growing in the relevancy, changing instruction to fit industry.
- Committee for lawn mowing? Schedule and duties.
- Can we get a video for PR for the new construction design class?
- Formalize Benson tours for industry and others. Each room to have a student ambassador? RJ to talk to Curtis. Kathy Skatch is the communications teacher.
- RJ to follow up with Curtis about \$250 matching travel funds for kids to take the train to Kfalls for OIT open house.
- RJ to set up a meeting with the Labor Commissioner and DW about rules that would apply to Benson students trying to get internships.
- Interview Miranda Ryan, jobs coordinator, and put it up on the website? Video? Student project? CH will talk to Kathy Skatch about having students do that kind of thing, getting us the video to post on the website.
- Connie is working on marketing materials for the Foundation.
  - Who are we and what are our intentions? Trifold.
  - Curtis Wilson can have it on his desk - we can all have it to carry it around and hand out.
  - We need to put some things on the website also.
- We need two "Stay tuned for opportunities to participate." letters:
  - Portland Business community - businesses that have indicated interest in Benson.
  - Alumni.
  - We might be able to use some senior students in English or Communications to try and create the documents. A senior project?

- Can we pursue more one on one meetings with school board members?
  - CTE programs require more staffing - if you want us to be 850 kids, that's fine but we need more staff - not staffing at a conventional high school level. 5-18 students in a class for CTE is what is needed. Now it's 25-30.
  - Is Curtis going to push for nationwide searches for CTE staff?
    - We need to write the basic requirements for getting TSPC licensure. Basically about 18 hours schooling, and probably some hours of on the job training. You have 3 years to do it, and get funds to cover 6 hours per year.
  - CTE enhances and promotes academic the core: student see algebra, pre-calculus, writing and reading being used in CTE classes.
- 100 year celebration: September 2017:
  - What is the district doing? What is the school doing? What are we doing?
  - Good opportunity for publicity - community, Simon Benson etc. CH: There aren't many other HS that have the community connection.
  - Get the grandkids involved: Chet and Darcy.
  - JS: Can we cast a new bubbler? Original molds somewhere? RJ will send a note to Carol.
  - CH: The College I went to just celebrated the 100 year anniversary. DVD narrative. (Reed) He will try and get ahold of it - very interesting and informative.
  - Oregonian retrospective?
- Plans to communicate with students:
  - Utilize KBPS.
  - Can we get info into PTSA newsletters to parents? - end of year one would be great: don't lose contact, sign up now.
  - Could we even enter the classrooms in the last month of school? or pep rally to promote it, even maybe collecting email addresses.
  - Can we get senior class president to come to our meetings?
  - How do we talk to the lower classes?
    - Helping with student registration is a good start.
  - Can we get a few minutes in front of a pep rally?
  - Older generation had more insecurity about our personal information. This generation is more open - Facebook, etc. They will be more likely to provide us their email addresses etc.
  - Make sure the email address and website is at the bottom of the newspaper, principal's letter. etc.
- Band ideas:
  - Is Curtis interested in getting a music program going? Who will meet with her to talk about what they can do to get more student involvement?
  - Band information needs to be in the welcome packet for next year:
  - Should we be a band club? Spanish teacher adviser. This may solve contacting the kids issue for reminders about practices, etc,
  - What information: meeting times and place, possible events
  - JP: also could record practice tapes.

- JP: would the club status give us access to district instruments or music stands? Should check.
  - Give cheerleaders a tape and words for Benson Fight song, so they can learn a routine.
  - Need a base drum.
- We need a plan for collecting info about alumni job skills/employers, as a way to find new business partners for Benson:
  - DB and JP to meet on ideas to build out the alumni DB on skills and employers. DS: try and hook up with advisory boards for the CTE programs, which exist but are ad hoc. Graphics instructor said she had the advisory board but she was possessive about it. DS: If we go through Carol, then we could act as intermediaries.
  - Langley associates is property management group for properties in the Lloyd district. Dick has convinced them there is a strong relationship between what happens at Benson and their properties. They are excited about being involved, and can be a link to their tenants - other partners.
  - PGE is already helping with the technical drawing class curriculum.
- We need a plan for communication to talk with political figures at all levels: mayor, county, state. Lay out our vision of mixed use development and business partnerships.
  - Can we get the new Mayor interested in Benson?
  - Can we get industry to write a letter to the school board campaign?
- How can we make our board more diverse?
- How can we get Benson staff that are alumni involved with the board?
- Memorabilia: If the bond measure passes, a room or plan for what to do with this stuff should be part of that planning.
  - RJ: Senior projects - building display cases now to peak people's interest for long term plan.
- Need help coordinating PR releases to the Portland Tribune, Willamette Week and the Oregonian about what is currently going on at Benson.
  - JS met with a class of 2012 transfer student, who said he transferred out because they lost the architecture program. Said he would be interested in telling his story of missed opportunities. He was doing an office tour.
- Opportunities for alums to help:
  - Counselling center: volunteer to help kids with scholarship applications and essays, etc.
  - JS – There is a health Corps program funded by Dr. Oz. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Coordinator on campus is doing things to keep kids healthy, does classroom stretching, yoga during study hall, etc. She could use more support. Materials, time, garden.
  - JP – does internship framework exist? Dale: PWA does the internships. They present a framework with commitments to businesses, so they can evaluate it annually.
- Ideas of alumni support:
  - Ben Fleske OMSI – Josh to contact
  - OSU Extension – 4H support – Rob to contact

- NASA space camp scholarship for two students? Max to investigate
- Benson and the State of Oregon received the sustainable program grant and they've been working on the study for two years but haven't finalized it. Dale to contact Tom Thompson with the Oregon State Department of Education and Reese Lord, who was working for the Mayor but is now at Systems, a private group of Educational Consultants.
  - 7/2012: Sustainable program grant: DS says Tom Thompson still working on it. Still needs to be finished.
- We need to formalize the role of PTSA liaison.
- Once the Foundation has 501C3 status:
  - we could ask that it be listed as a flight miles donation option at various airline websites.
  - instrument and cash donations to the band will be tax deductible
  - we can consider going for the Bill and Melinda Gates grants
  - we could consider moving from the district funding the Benson house construction to the Foundation, that way profits from sale would be reinvested in the school itself.
- RJ: thoughts to recruit Alumni association members:
  - Dig deeper into matches of people with majors. Mission based approach to recruiting.
  - Engage with KBPS about getting alumni association information out there.
- Outreach and Partnerships - RJ
  - OSU not reaching back yet.
  - U of O is waiting on the results of their program with Jefferson.

Next meetings at Benson Library:

Because the next two 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays are Federal holidays, proposed is:

Mon Oct 7<sup>th</sup>, Mon Nov 4<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maj Britt (Max) Baker  
Secretary  
BPHS Alumni Association