

(read from bottom up)

From: B.I. [mailto:brooks@forethought.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2008 12:22 PM
To: John Bleich; Michelle MacEgan (allstarmommy@netzero.com)
Cc: 'jayme'; 'Michael Anthony'
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

Dear John and Michelle,

Re: your observations below and comments on the blog, I thought the meeting was pretty marginal, not much of substance was resolved, a few people carried on interminably about items important to themselves and few others, everyone's still tiptoeing around the simplest of controversial questions like should we even have a high school, and of course it was a free-for-all at times where everyone spoke and no one listened. I'm not blaming anyone for this, perhaps it's the nature of the beast, however I won't be painting any lipstick on that pig.

I tried with no small effort two weeks ago to get a discussion started about the high school build out and met a stream of discouragement from John, silence from Michelle. This week, the upshot of that effort was as if it had never occurred and now I'm the bad guy for pointing out the emperor's new skimpy outfit.

The last time a future planning committee met it was all about facility expansion and the present school is the result of that process. Now it appears the rubric for future planning is "just about anything that might happen in the future" and facility expansion is a sub-committee.

Fine. I will continue to do what I have been doing which is publishing facts about how this school is run. I still think this school is run by a group of staff who definitely do not want oversight, yet oversight is exactly what they need most. I will contribute whatever meager talents I can muster to the build-out effort, but I have a lot of complex things already going on in my life, all of which are anxious for my flawed attention, [and] I cannot in good conscience cut out time where I'm not appreciated as I am. In the future, if you keep your personal judgments about me to yourselves, I will be glad to afford you similar consideration. Sorry, there I go being blunt again.

Good Day,
Brooks

From: John Bleich [mailto:john_bleich@mho.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2008 7:00 AM
To: 'B.I.'; 'Michael Anthony'
Cc: 'jayme'
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

Brooks, I do not wish to be your enemy. All I was saying is real feedback does not have to be phrased in a totally negative way. Have you ever heard the phrase "a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down"? If you feel something is not working and you believe you have an idea of how to make it work better, then say something. But if you learn to point out the things that are positive along with the negative, and possibly blunt the way you impart the negative, then your negative criticism will be accepted in a much more positive and cooperative way. Phrasing it in the way you did will only serve to put people on the defensive and when that occurs, you might feel better about saying it, but nothing will change. Nobody will be open to constructive criticism if they are too busy defending against an attack.

For instance, you could have accomplished a very similar message without alienating people with the following (as opposed to the way you phrased it):

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I felt in the last FPC meeting that many good ideas for improving public relations, Curriculum expansion and methods of obtaining classes along with many ideas for social interaction for the high school students to feel like they are a part of a community were discussed. All of these areas are of vital importance to making the high school a top notch integrated part of the school. They are also a necessary part of making our high school a desirable option to attract more of our students to continue up through graduation with Legacy Academy. While these are all good areas for the committee to explore, I did feel we may want to work on making the general meeting of the whole body of the FPC a place where the subcommittees report a summary of their meeting outcome and not hold a detailed discussion for each. The entire FPC group is too unwieldy in size to effectively hold detailed conversations on each topic in a reasonable amount of time. If we were to approach it in this way, I believe the general meetings would be shorter and we would not run out of time before the agenda is completed as happened this time. I was disappointed that we ran out of time before getting to the facilities discussion especially after the flurry of ideas that we experienced after the last meeting. I feel it would have been a very productive discussion and was looking forward to it as I hope many others were as well.

Good interpersonal skills are so important when working with people. It is possible to give constructive criticism without giving it in a destructive (blunt) way. If you learn to phrase your constructive criticism in a more positive manner, I believe more people will start listening to you. I cannot guarantee that everyone will agree with you or even that everyone will listen to you, but I can guarantee that you will have a much better chance of success. By your own admission, your way has not worked over the last few years of trying here at Legacy Academy. I have the feeling you might find that what you have been experiencing is not prejudice, as you said, but defensive posturing as a result of a perceived attack by you. Whether the attack was really intended as an attack is not germane, perception is reality in these situations. Why not try my suggestion for a few months and give it a chance, you just might find that you get better results and, being the intelligent adaptable person you are, actually adopt it as your own method in the future. If it does not get better results then you can always go back to your method. Just think though, if it does work better, you have taught yourself interpersonal skills that you can use to your advantage for the rest of your life. What do you have to lose?

Brooks, you have ideas and knowledge that are going untapped as a result of the methods you use to convey them to others. It is a shame for all of that to go to waste just because of the method you choose to communicate.

Sincerely,
John

From: B.I. [mailto:brooks@forethought.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 10:58 PM
To: 'John Bleich'; 'Michael Anthony'
Cc: 'jayme'
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

John,

You've never liked my blunt approach. Fair enough. I think you try to please everyone. Meanwhile, what about the disconnects between board leadership, administration leadership, teacher leadership and students? Maybe you're not getting as much cooperation as you think. If everything must be spun positively than how does anyone know something's gone wrong? Some substantial number of school staff, perhaps board members too, like that the school community is disconnected from real feedback. I don't and never have because real feedback is necessary for adaptation, growth, health, survival, basically most things that make life worth living. Cooperation is nice but useless if not based on a solid foundation.

I didn't belittle the Anthony's. If anything, you did when you didn't trust them to fend for themselves in seeking the committee chair.

From: John Bleich [mailto:john_bleich@mho.com]
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2007 8:15 AM
To: 'B.I.'

(read from bottom up)

Cc: melanie@forethought.net
Subject: RE: FPC

Sounds good, have a nice vacation...I will be contacting all of the FPC volunteers given to me at the last meeting after the new year and let them decide amongst themselves who should chair...Jayme Anthony who I corresponded with a day or so ago on another topic asked about it and said she might not mind co-chairing, but did not feel like she was qualified to chair alone.

Thanks Brooks, Merry Christmas,
 John

From: B.I. [mailto:brooks@forethought.net]
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2007 8:03 AM
To: John Bleich
Cc: melanie@forethought.net
Subject: FPC

Dear John,
 We'll be travelling through Jan 9th. I am interested in working on the FPC and my preference would be for the FPC to choose its chair from among those who volunteered. We're leaving today for Asia and I have no time left to write my views about the direction for the FPC, but I'll try to get something written after I return.
 Merry Christmas,
 Brooks Imperial

And now you're working on me. Fine. You win. I've got more than enough to do already.
 Brooks

From: John Bleich [mailto:john_bleich@mho.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 7:29 PM
To: 'Michael Anthony'; brooks@forethought.net
Cc: 'jayme'
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

Makes sense to me Brooks, nobody has more ideas than you about how to generate or borrow the money to finish the addition to the school. I would be very happy to have you volunteer to show everyone the right way to get this important issue resolved. Your knowledge is certainly unmatched by anyone else on the committee.

On another subject, I feel I must add that I am very disappointed in the way that you stated your comment about the meeting and feel that you were very unfair as well as being condescending in your remarks. Mike and Jayme graciously volunteered to chair the FPC and I felt your remarks belittled not only them but everyone in that meeting. Just because what was discussed in that meeting was not high on your priority list is not a good reason to belittle the rest of the committee. If your intent was to alienate as many people as possible early in the process, you are well on your way to success. I have tried reading your comments over and over in order to try to read them in a positive light and am so far unable to see it although I confess, after reading them; I am not in a state of mind to look for a possible positive interpretation. I sincerely hope everyone else who reads them will grant you the same grace or this is going to be a very long process. This is far too important a committee to the school to set everyone at each others throats this close to the beginning of the process. In the future I respectfully ask that you make an attempt to phrase your comments in a more positive way, I believe you will find that you will get much more cooperation from everyone you come into contact with.

Sincerely,
 John

From: B.I. [mailto:brooks@forethought.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 9:13 PM
To: Michael Anthony
Cc: jayme; john_bleich@mho.com
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

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Hi Mike,

I appreciate your reaching out to me and the vote of confidence. You know that I engaged with John in writing a couple weeks ago on the high school build-out. I came away from that exchange pretty convinced that this particular mission of the FPC has already been capped, at least in his mind. That the entire subject wasn't even broached at the last meeting probably confirmed this.

I'm an independent business man, and one reason for that is I don't work well in de-motivating circumstances. The circumstances around this mission rise to the level of a perfect storm of de-motivation. The board doesn't think the high school build-out is feasible right now, the chain-of-command at Legacy is dysfunctional, and half the staff and a large number of parents object to either the high school or the build-out or both, and won't admit it in public.

On the one hand, the nuts and bolts of the build-out puzzle seem solvable. On the other, I've battled prejudice on many occasions over the years at the school and prejudice won out every time. Since last summer I've taken a data-centric approach to school matters with the intent that people who become informed will give up their prejudices, but it's kind of mercurial how people cling to their preconceptions.

Anyway, it seems that before anyone can succeed with the build-out mission of the FPC, some substantial precursors need to be in place. What are your thoughts on how to do this?

Sincerely Yours,
Brooks

From: Michael Anthony [mailto:michaela11@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2008 5:37 PM
To: brooks@forethought.net
Cc: jayme; john_bleich@mho.com
Subject: RE: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content

Brooks,

I wanted to let you know that I read the blog entry - and certainly agree with the gist of your comments. We really need to do a better job of keeping the sub-committee's comments to a brief overview of their meetings and to quiet all the side discussions that tend to occur.

With regard to the facility committee - as you pointed out - we did not discuss it - as we don't currently have someone to head that important sub-committee. As the facility is a key charge of the FPC - we want to make sure we have someone good in that role.

Jayne and I discussed it - and we both agreed you would be perfect to head up that area.

We know you certainly have the interest and passion and intellect to investigate and seek out creative methods of funding and planning for future facility expansion - whether it is through bonds, grants or a rich benefactor.

So - Jayme and I would both like you to consider this - and let us know of your decision.

Regards,
Mike Anthony

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From: jamilyna@msn.com
To: michaela11@msn.com
Subject: FW: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content
Date: Wed, 27 Feb 2008 18:23:18 -0600

Jamilyn Anthony

From: brooks@forethought.net
To: LegacyAcademy@yahogroups.com
Subject: 2/26/08 FPC meeting content
Date: Tue, 26 Feb 2008 22:43:27 -0700

- [2/26/08 FPC](#)