

New York Quarterly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committee (NYQM M&C) 10.29.2020

20201029-QM M&C BFS ad hoc Committee Authorization

During the listening session of the October 28, 2020 New York Quarterly Meeting (QM) Friends heard the concerns expressed about Brooklyn Friends School (BFS) by Friends of the Quarter, BFS personnel, and BFS parents, students and alumnae and their community.

The NYQM Ministry and Counsel Committee (NYQM M&C) responds to the session's call for an ad hoc committee to be formed to bring clarity and unity to finding ways forward. As the QM has a responsibility of oversight of the Quaker nature of BFS, and M&C is its agency for such concerns, Friends are in unity to form the ad hoc committee under the care of M&C.

The Brooklyn Monthly Meeting (BMM) and the BMM Care Relationship Committee with NYQM's M&C will assemble the ad hoc committee members drawn from Friends invited from the BFS Care Committee, invited Friends from the BFS personnel-(administration, faculty and staff), and invited individuals with Quaker experience from the BFS parents and community. The ad hoc committee will report on a frequent basis to the NYQM's M&C.

The ad hoc committee is instructed to seek to create a safe space, to act in the manner of Friends, and to initially set aside all prior assumptions and to start with worshipful consideration of first principles and discerning the ways forward in a spirit-led process.

We offer queries to support spirit-led guidance as the process begins:

1. What is needed for a Quaker school to be authentically Quaker, beyond professing "Quaker values"?
2. How does a Quaker school balance and maintain a self-aware and intentional Quaker perspective as it interacts with the social and economic expectations and requirements of the external society?
3. How does a Quaker school balance and maintain its BFS colleagues and administrative roles in accord with the testimonies of equality, simplicity and integrity?
4. What support do Friends bring to support a Quaker school that is in their care?

From worshipful and spirit-led consideration, Friends' perspectives on the actual facts of the situation as well as the interpretations of events and personal experiences of people involved may emerge with tenderness and increased clarity, perhaps leading to unity on recommendations for future actions.

We need clarity about the needs for each aspect of our community of faculty/staff, administration, BFS parents, BMM-BFS CRC, BFS trustees, and our children. We need to ensure that all concerned have the resources and understanding they need to comfortably and capably work within Quaker processes.

In Light,
Steven Monroe Smith, clerk NYQM M&C Committee

Nancy Britton, clerk NYQM