



**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**The meeting was held at:** 198 Varet Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206

**PRESENT**

Marcenia Johnson, Trustee  
Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair  
Charles Hobson, Trustee  
Akil Bello, Trustee  
Gabriel Perez, Faculty Rep

**GUESTS**

Saniqua Green, Staff  
Tiffany Pratt, Staff  
Steve Dor, Staff  
Katelyn O'Brien, Staff  
Rabenette Flowers, Staff  
Ryan Lee, Staff  
Nathaniel Robinson, Staff  
Greg Gershowitz, Staff  
Eddie Moreno, Staff  
Elizabeth Parr, Staff  
Alissa Koerner, Staff  
Larry Balthazar, Staff  
James Casella, Staff  
Sol Kang, Staff  
Earline Cooper, Staff  
Alberto Cruz, Staff  
Mariella Mercado, Staff  
Kaylan Corr, Staff

**GUESTS (cont.)**

Kathleen Gaffney, Principal  
Ellen Eagen, School Attorney  
Raymond James, Staff  
Princess Barimah, Staff  
Kathy Fernandez, Staff  
Tamika Johnson, Staff  
Roberta Smith, Staff  
David Fier, Staff  
Matthew Formichelli, Staff  
David Plougman, Staff  
Matt Miller, Staff  
Natalie Bar-Levy, Staff  
Casey Snepar, Staff  
Daniel Robinson, Staff  
Michelle Portillo, Staff  
Irina Kagan, Staff  
John Ballantyne, Staff  
Mara Levi, Staff  
Graham Earle, Staff  
Shante Martin, Staff  
Shaun Logan, Staff  
Allison Wikiwski, Staff  
Andre Sandford, Staff  
Curtis Jacquemain, Staff  
Kentia Coreus, Staff

Darnell Pierre, Staff  
Bell Madera, Staff  
Patrick S. Kern, Staff  
Kyle Patterson, Staff  
Manny Morales, IT  
John Bissey, Staff  
Paul Leleck, Building Hope  
Martha Kelly, Staff  
Dena Levin, Staff  
Typhani Harris, Staff  
Robert Turner, Staff  
Frank Zambrano, Staff  
Stephen Dukofsky, Staff  
Joaquin Colon, Staff  
Errol Chase, Staff  
Matt Temme, Staff  
Jamie DiMartinini, Staff  
Arlenis Almonte, Staff  
Cheryl Fleming, Staff  
Natasha Robinson, Staff  
Kathleen Guzman, Staff  
Nector Santiago, Staff  
Samir Ibrahim, Staff  
Ricky Brown, Staff

**EXCUSED**

James Lema, Trustee, Robert Shea, Trustee, Gabriel Perez, Teacher Liaison, Joseph Cardarelli, Trustee, Lourdes Rivera-Putz, Trustee

The meeting was called to order after 4:30 after a meet and greet with the Board.

**1. WELCOME**

Mr. Rivera opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Each person Board member introduced themselves to the attendees. Ms. Eagen discussed the board governance structure of charter schools and the Open Meetings Law as it applies to charter school governance. Ms. Eagen mentioned that the governance of a school is only as good as the participation of its constituents and encouraged faculty and staff to attend, question and comment. Ms. Eagen also discussed that the Board agreed to have meetings at 4:30 every third month to encourage participation by the faculty and staff.

**2. APPROVAL OF JUNE 16 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

This item was postponed until the September Meeting.

### **3. IT INFRASTRUCTURE**

Manny Morales, of Orion Consulting Services, is working on the infrastructure of the IT. The internet is faster than it has been but is still operating at below adequate speeds and experiencing temporary failures; this will slowly improve. David Medina put in for funding for higher internet access. We had 50 megabyte and now will have 1000 megabyte although speeds are still relatively slow in the case of individual users. We are going to increase megabytes and will have faster service within a year's time frame.

When the internet crashes, Mr. Medina can reset in ten minutes. A teacher asked if it would be possible for the School to change the wireless password prohibiting students from joining the network, and Mr. Morales stated that it is not currently possible given how the system was initially configured.

Mr. Morales mentioned that we are gaining more access and soon will be able to see the people accessing the internet and we will be able to view their search and usage history; Board stated that before we obtain this capability we need to notify the teachers and staff; Ms. Eagen noted that the School need to update its electronic usage policy but that this is already referenced in the teacher/staff handbook. In other words staff and faculty do not have an expectation of privacy.

Morales asked everyone to turn off Wi-Fi access when you are in the building and password should be limited. The objective is to limit overall data usage school-wide unless necessary to support instruction or the business operations of the School.

Mr. Brusca stated that the School has migrated data to an externally hosted web-based site to ensure the sustainability and proper storage of all data recorded at WCHS.

### **4. ACADEMIC REPORT**

Ms. Gaffney reported on:

- The current school year's theme is "Failure is not an option."
- Ms. Gaffney is asking for a Teacher Center/Learning Center
- We have made positive schedule changes – including common planning time
- The instructional team has created a program to enrich parents, teachers
- We have lost 17 members of the staff; noting this is due to the aggressive approach of the DOE to hire more teachers late in the summer
- September 1 metro cards will start; this is before the DOE schedule; in the past we have linked the lack of metro cards to students not attending the first days of school prior to DOE starting; we will monitor but hope that early issuance of metro cards will increase student attendance rates prior to the DOE start.

Discussion was opened by Board asking staff to create a panel of teachers to help the School understand the factors that contribute to teachers leaving and to also consider factors that contribute to employees returning. Mr. Leleck asked if they had any thoughts on this point now. Teachers cited lack of pension, calendar issues (including start date, length of day and length of year) and salaries, especially for teachers who do not hold a "Master's degree plus 30" (which refers to teachers who hold an MA as well as an additional 30 credits toward an additional education certification or in an education related field).

Ms. Coreus stated that WCHS needs someone whose single responsibility is teacher recruitment. She made that point that the School should be frequenting reputable college education programs and trying to recruit young talent who are invested in being at a school like WCHS and have the correct mindset. Ms. Eagen suggested that a group of teachers be assembled to assist in new teacher recruitment. Ms. Coreus stated that WCHS needs to train Department Leaders to be able to recruit talent and work on bringing in more teachers to shadow current teachers for the day.

Ms. Levi mentioned that WCHS has improved in her time at the School and given her a platform to become a better professional. She cited both as reasons for returning.

### Enrollment

Ms. Darnell Pierre mentioned that there are currently 1002 students in the school, but enrollment numbers are in daily flux due to August graduates and students who are still on WCHS's roster but will not return. She will report more accurate numbers at the next board meeting.

With regard to next year, recruitment is already underway. Ms. Pierre will host an upcoming guidance counselor breakfast, will continue the School's Shadow Program, and host our second annual Open School Night.

## **5. FINANCE**

Ms. Fernandez is working on closing the books and working on the audit. Preliminary audit review is excellent. Paul Leleck from Building Hope mentioned that the auditors (Fruchter Rosen & Company P.C.) also look at HR, student records and other compliance issues. Ms. Eagen added that the auditors have been working with the School for a number of years and they commented that not only was working with the School easier but that the audit relationship (timeliness, responsiveness, work product) is one of the best of all of their schools.

## **6. HUMAN REASORCES**

Ms. Coreus, Ms. Gaffney and the Board have been handling filling the Schools current teacher vacancies while Ms. Barimah has been absent. Ms. Coreus expressed concern about the hiring process. Mr. Rivera said that the School would review the hiring process and expressed that Ms. Barimah's input was essential to this conversation.

## **6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH/FUNDRAISING**

Mr. Kern reported that WCHS's application for a grant from the Walentas Family Foundation was accepted. Samir Ibrahim will act as the he project coordinator; the scope of this grant is resources for the library and establishing the library as a resource center for parents and community members.

Mr. Kern reported on a request for proposal (RFP) from SUNY for stimulus money for capital improvement projects to the School's infrastructure. The deadline for the grant is September 18 at 3PM. The School is considering possible areas of focus for the grant, including IT wiring, floors, HVAC units, and more.

Several Board members including Mr. Rivera and Mr. Hobson have worked with Mr. Kern on an outreach letter for several nonprofit foundations; the letter has been reviewed by counsel and will be sent after Board approval.

Mr. Kern expressed appreciation to Building Hope for funding his travel and attendance at the National Charter Conference. Mr. Kern discussed seminars he attended which covered such topics as securing federal funding for food service and athletics programs, maximizing Board potential for fundraising, techniques for attracting long-term business partnerships for schools, approaches toward identifying quality Board members, and administrative governance and leadership within charter schools.

## **7. BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Ms. Eagen said that Mr. John Witherspoon expressed an interest in joining the Board. He has an IT background and will attend the September meeting.

Board needs to complete the 2014-2015 surveys for the Annual Report. Ellen appealed to Board to complete

meaningfully. A Board initiative this year is to provide resources to support Board development.

Matt Hernandez also appealed to Board to come into school and be speakers and to get friends and family to come and speak. He will send list of dates. The goal is to inspire the students with success stories from adults.

Ms. Eagen mentioned we need a parent representative to the Board and stated that Ms. Johnson had made contact with several parents who were interested.

Ms. Eagen asked Mr. Perez to organize teacher voting process for teacher representative to the Board which will happen prior to the September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

## **8. FACILITIES/SECURITY/IT UPDATE**

Mr. James reported that they have cleaned all of the floors, eight new rooms have new tiles, and new walls were erected on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor.

A new alarm system is in place and functional. This will allow personnel on the night shift to be moved to daytime duties only.

A recent IT issue was that the cooling units were not working properly, and as a result the server room was heating up, resulting in IT failures. The compressors on the HVAC's were failing so we replaced several of them.

All facilities certifications are up to date.

## **9. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next board meeting is September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 p.m.