

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**November 24, 2015**

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

**PRESENT**

Lourdes Putz, Chair  
Marcenia Johnson, Trustee  
Akil Bello, Treasurer  
David Fier, Staff Rep.  
John Witherspoon, Trustee  
Evens Barreau, Parent Rep.

**GUESTS**

Kathleen Gaffney, Principal  
Ellen Eagen, School Attorney  
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber  
Princess Barimah, Staff  
Kathy Fernandez, Staff  
Patrick Kern, Staff  
Samir Ibrahim, Staff  
Justin Morris, Staff  
Seth Faiella, Staff  
Raymond James, Staff  
Christin Douglass, Staff  
Amanda Haight, United We Stand

Paul Leleck, Building Hope  
Natalie Bar-Levy, Staff  
Mara Levi, Staff  
Kentia Coreus, Staff  
Donny Brusca, Staff  
Kate Manion, Staff  
Belnardina Madera, Staff  
Belkis Sosa, Staff  
James Tully, Staff  
Darnell Pierre, Staff  
Melissa Wade, Staff  
John Ballantyne, Staff

**EXCUSED**

Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair; Robert Shea, Trustee; James Lema, Trustee; Charles Hobson, Trustee; Joseph Cardarelli, Trustee

The meeting was called to order at 4:15pm.

**1. WELCOME**

Mr. Bello welcomed staff and students.

**2. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 19<sup>th</sup> BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

This was tabled for next month's meeting due to lack of quorum.

**3. LIBRARY UPDATE**

Mr. Ibrahim, Operations Aide, said that WCHS received a grant from the Walentas Family which allowed the School to purchase Kindles pre-loaded with educational books and materials. He also reported on a successful social worker's workshop as well as a productive meeting with the Director of Library Services of NYC, during which automating the library was discussed.

**4. ACADEMIC REPORT**

Ms. Gaffney reported:

- The School is continuing to fill vacancies in Math, Special Education and Biology.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences were very beneficial, especially with the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade.
- The School hired 30 new teachers since August who are now receiving support from instructional coaches, AP's and Department Leaders.
- New teachers have been observed and are attending mini-workshops held by instructional coaches, as well as receiving support from the "Buddy Program".
- She held a "Learning Walk" on November 6 where she visited every class.
- Ms. Pierre did a wonderful job hosting a successful WCHS Open House.
- The promotional videos created in the 2014-2015 school year have been highly useful for recruitment.

- Mr. Brusca is compiling data for the Board and Ms. Gaffney is looking into consultants.

Ms. Barimah also discussed the national teacher shortage and incentives WCHS is taking to retain teachers.

## **5. HR REPORT**

Ms. Barimah continued with her report and spoke about the holiday party on December 4. She is attending fairs and posting all vacant positions. Ms. Barimah is also in contact with the NYC Teaching Fellows Program.

## **6. FINANCE**

Mr. Leleck reported to the Board on WCHS's first quarter ending October 31:

- WCHS is collecting funds for General Education and Special Education. There is an excess of \$212,000. While the School has cash on hand there is some concern over enrollment.
- Although the School is generating revenues, Mr. Leleck cautioned that rent will continue to rise 3% every year.

Ms. Johnson asked for written financial summaries in the future.

## **7. DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Mr. Ballantyne, Social Studies Teacher, addressed the Board about Officer Steven McDonald, who spoke to students about gun violence and relationships with local police. He asked the Board to consider donating to the NYC PBA Widows and Children's Fund and said he will continue to collect funds from students at the School. Mr. Ballantyne hopes Mr. McDonald will return to speak to other grades.

Mr. Kern then reported that the New York Charter School Center is interested in hosting the 2016 Charter School Fair at WCHS in March. Visitors would include parents, students, teachers and other charter schools from across the city. The Board discussed potential costs and agreed it would be a great opportunity for the School.

## **8. ACCOUNTABILITY & COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

Ms. Manion reported that she worked with administrative, operations, and teaching staff to complete BEDS IMF submission; met with Director of Student Data Management, Director of Human Resources, and Human Resources Associate to plan BEDS EMF submission due January; and oversaw the submission of November 2, 2015 DOE deadline, which included the Annual Independent Financial Audit, NYSE Annual Report Appendix A, Staff Fingerprint Clearance Screen Shot from TEACH, and Fire and Bus Drill Dates.

## **9. ENROLLMENT UPDATE**

Ms. Pierre reported that enrollment is 951 with 5 matriculated students and 8 at zero attendance. Registration is ongoing and the School just received two students the week prior. Ms. Eagen remarked that this means the School is below budget and brainstormed ways to increase enrollment in the higher grades, such as widening the School's recruitment efforts to housing developments in the Lower East Side. Ms. Pierre said forty families attended the WCHS Open House and that the Guidance Counselor Breakfast was productive as well.

## **10. FACILITIES UPDATE**

Mr. James reported that he will be painting the building over break; he reduce building violations from eleven to two as most were from unwarranted alarms, such as the welder setting off a fire alarm. The Board discussed training and budgeting for two fire marshals in the future. They also discussed hiring an attorney with an expertise in permits.

The Board discussed space usage for United We Stand. Ms. Haught from United We Stand addressed the Board. She described their history and their need for space. Ms. Haught explained the company is a non-profit resource center servicing parents and students. Ms. Eagen spoke on behalf of concerns addressed with Ms. Gaffney such as fingerprints, visitors, bathroom access, and internet use. Ms. Eagen spoke with Ms. Putz and all of these issues have been addressed: staff will be fingerprinted; visitors will be escorted; and UWS will use their

own internet. Mr. Bello said that in principle, the Board agrees to move forward with a two month temporary plan and that the School is addressing any concerns that the DOE might have.

**11. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

December 16, 2015 at 6PM

**12. EXECUTIVE SESSION**