

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**February 9, 2016**

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

**PRESENT**

Lourdes Putz, Chair  
Marcenia Johnson, Trustee  
Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair  
Charles Hobson, *via skype*  
Evans Barreau, Parent Rep.  
John Witherspoon, Trustee  
Belkis Sosa, Student Rep.  
David Fier, Staff Rep.

**GUESTS**

Kathleen Gaffney, Principal  
Ellen Eagen, School Attorney, *via phone*  
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber  
Kathy Fernandez, Staff  
Patrick Kern, Staff  
Kate Manion, Staff

Michelle Portillo, Staff  
Sarah Witthauer, Staff  
Klaudia Clifford, Staff  
Natalie Bar-Levy, Staff  
Frank Zambrano, Staff

**EXCUSED**

Joseph Cardarelli, Trustee; Akil Bello, Treasurer; Robert Shea, Trustee

The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm.

**1. WELCOME**

Ms. Putz welcomed everyone.

**2. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 19, 2016 MINUTES**

- Page 2, 5<sup>th</sup> Bullet: Add “charter” after the word “private”.
- Page 2, #4, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bullet: Change “our” to “are”.
- Page 4, Under SUNY Stimulus Grant: Add the phrase: “the contract”.
- Mr. Rivera made a Motion to Accept the Minutes as Amended. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. Ms. Johnson Abstained. All others were in Favor.

**3. ACADEMIC REPORT**

Ms. Gaffney reported:

- The School held a PD in February on enforcing uniform protocol and Ms. Gaffney has been impressed with how students have responded.
- Mr. James and his team have been keeping up with the snow removal process and have ensured the building stayed warm.
- The School hired a biology teacher but is still looking to fill other vacancies.
- Mr. Brusca sat down with teachers for a “Chip, Chat, and Chew” in order to resolve scheduling issues.
- Ms. Putz visited classrooms and was impressed and proud of the students and staff.
- All staff members and teachers have had their mid-year evaluations.
- Parent/Teacher meetings took place after report cards were distributed.
- Ms. Gaffney said that we have installed a new communications system, Student Messenger, which will improve parent outreach.

Belkis Sosa, Student Representative, updated the Board on student activities:

- Staff and students are working together to create the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor “Rooftop” Garden.
- There are a series of upcoming Black History Month activities involving a number of students.
- Ms. Sosa also mentioned Student Court, Charter Got Talent, Student Government Freshmen Elections,

recycling initiatives, Spirit Week, and positive murals that will decorate the hallways.

- Ms. Sosa invited the Board to participate in Pi Day by getting “pied”.
- There is an upcoming formal gala with dancing and performances.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Sosa to email the Board with this information and all upcoming student events. Mr. Rivera volunteered to help with the Student Court and asked about permits for the Rooftop Garden. Mr. Kern said the School has received permission from the landlord.

#### **4. FINANCE**

Ms. Fernandez reported:

- There is no financial update due to the short period of time between January and February meetings.
- The 990 report, which is based on the audit, is due on February 15, and has already been submitted.
- School Messenger will save the School \$600 a year, but may have additional costs in order to sync to Blackbaud. Ms. Fernandez believes it will cut costs in the long run because of unlimited usage.
- Ms. Putz asked Ms. Gaffney to put together a proposal for math consultants and coaches and forward it to the Board.

#### **5. HR REPORT**

Ms. Gaffney reported on behalf of Ms. Barimah:

- The 360 Surveys for supervisors were distributed and Ms. Barimah hopes teachers will embrace it as it is an anonymous, positive tool.
- Ms. Barimah believes the January Per-Session Payment and Care Time Policy approvals will help with teacher retention.
- Mr. Fier reported that during Regents’ week, he invited all teachers to submit ideas on how to increase teacher retention. He received 50 surveys and will now draft a semi-formal proposal to present to the Board at the next meeting. Mr. Fier also urged the Board to advertise the next meeting date early so that teachers can make plans to attend. He commended the Board on the two policy changes and said they were well received.

#### **6. ENROLLMENT UPDATE**

Mrs. Gaffney reported on behalf of Ms. Pierre:

- The current enrollment is 945.
- Over 400 applications have been received for next year.
- Ms. Gaffney said that once the 12<sup>th</sup> graders graduate, the School will be able to enroll more freshmen.

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

Mr. Kern reported:

- The Charter School Fair will be held March 5. The School agreed to help advertise it by dropping off flyers at various locations throughout the city.
- The SUNY Stimulus Grant will provide the School \$175,800 for facility updates. The funds need to be spent first and then the School will be reimbursed. E-Rate will cover costs of updating the internet. Ms. Eagen cautioned not move forward with any purchases until the School receives an official notice.
- Mr. Kern spoke about Ladders for Leaders, a 9<sup>th</sup> Period class which helps juniors and seniors construct resumes.
- The Board was invited to view the Ferguson art installation in the lobby. Ms. Putz expressed amazement with the piece and mentioned feeling dizzy after viewing it. Ms. Eagen stated that it is important to make sure the proper insurance is in place, as the School is liable for the safety of students viewing the piece. Mr. Kern stated that he would make sure this was taken care of. He also said the artist would like to hold a reception for colleagues and families to view the piece.

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

Ms. Manion reported:

- The School submitted the Annual Comprehensive Review as well as its Lottery and Recruitment Plans as part of the Department of Education's February 1, 2016 reporting requirement.
- The Per Pupil Invoice was completed.

## **9. FACILITIES UPDATE**

Mr. James reported:

- The Facilities team is preparing the 5<sup>th</sup> floor and the lobby for the March 5, 2016 Charter School Fair.
- The Health Department inspected the School and there were no new violations.
- Facilities repaired a leak in the Principal's office and will patch leaky areas on the roof over the summer.

## **10. TRUSTEE RESIGNATION**

Ms. Putz accepted the resignation of James Lema, who resigned in a letter to the Chairwoman.

## **11. NEXT BOARD MEETING**

March 16, 2016 at 4:00PM

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Witherspoon made a Motion to Adjourn. Mr. Rivera seconded. All were in favor.