



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
December 20, 2016

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

PRESENT

Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair
Marcenia Johnson, Trustee
John Witherspoon, Trustee
Charles Hobson, Trustee
David Fier, Staff Rep
Evans Barreau, Parent Rep

GUESTS

Tanishia Williams, Principal
Donny Brusca, Staff
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber
Kathy Fernandez, Staff
Princess Barimah, Staff
Roberta Smith, Staff
Ms. Docimo, Staff

Ellen Eagen, School Attorney
Raymond James, Staff
Kate Manion, Staff
Darnell Pierre, Staff
Valerie Jacobson, Staff
Paul Leleck, Staff

EXCUSED

Lourdes Putz, Chair

1. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:13pm. Mr. Rivera started the meeting and welcomed everyone. Ms. Eagen asked to amend the Agenda to add “Board Makeup” under #7.

2. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Ms. Williams opened her report with a presentation from Ms. Docimo, a music teacher. Ms. Docimo shared holiday music recorded in-house in the Wolverines Recording Studio. She explained that the students are creating their own record label and thanked the Board for their support.

Burning Flame Award

Ms. Williams awarded Charisse Johnson with the Burning Flame for the month of December. Ms. Williams stated that she is an amazing asset who has been with the school since the beginning. Ms. Johnson thanked Ms. Williams and the Board.

Student Support

Ms. Smith reported:

- There were eight suspensions in November and one impartial hearing with no expulsion. The student with the impartial hearing received restorative justice interventions. The Counseling Department is talking about drug awareness during Advisory.
- The SNAS Department has completed 16 Annual Reviews and 57 meetings.
- 181 CUNY and 108 SUNY applications have been submitted. All students took the PSATs in the fall and 211 graduating students took the SATs. Two students have received acceptance letters, one with a full scholarship. Mr. Rivera asked about college awareness amongst students and Ms. Williams assured him that the topic is embedded in all Advisory classes.
- Honor roll students received a special party to celebrate.

Staff Development

Mid-Year Evaluations are underway and 20 have been completed. The WCHS staff are grading themselves through a self-reflection form and providing evidence of their scores in an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio). Ms. Williams will provide feedback.

Teacher Observations

Two consultants are conducting formal observations. The average score is 2 in all domains (based on a 1-4 rubric). Teachers will be observed informally by Ms. Williams.

Professional Development

Teachers have been given the option to choose their professional development sessions. Subsequent sessions will be aligned based on needs identified in their observations.

Academics

Student Assessment System

Ms. Williams presented three bids for student assessment systems that would test students in English and math using norm-referenced assessments. Ms. Eagen noted that new system would help place students in remedial or AP classes and would be beneficial for collecting data for charter renewal. The Board reviewed the timeframe, budget, and practicality of the resources offered. The Board agreed to move forward with Renaissance/STAR, a new system that would cost approximately \$11,000 for 12 months.

Student Information System

Mr. Brusca presented three bids for student information systems that would help teachers and staff maintain data (grades, transcripts, gradebooks, LMS, parent/student portal, attendance, discipline, etc.).

Mr. Brusca compared the three bids and spoke about data migration from Blackbaud. Ms. Fernandez stated that the Blackbaud contract has been renewed for one year, which would allow Mr. Brusca time to integrate the systems. The Board agreed to move forward with PowerSchool, a new system that would cost approximately \$18,000 total for the first calendar year, \$9,000 of which will fall in the 2016-2017 school year, and \$9,000 in the 2017-2018 school year. This does not include the learning management system (LMS) module, which the school may consider again at a later time.

- Ms. Johnson made a motion to add Renaissance/Star Assessment. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. All were in favor.

Operations

Ms. Jacobson reported:

Mock Regents started December 5. Progress Reports went out and the team has set up electronic portfolios. Eight fire drills have been completed.

Parent Outreach

Holiday food baskets were assembled for ten families at the school. The American Red Cross presented information about planning for emergencies at the December meeting.

3. FINANCE

Ms. Fernandez gave an update.

The total money spent this year is \$5.1 million. The school has a surplus of \$142,000 for revenue over expenses. The school underspent on substitute teachers and salaries. Cash on hand is \$5 million as of December.

Ms. Eagen said she consulted with Mr. Leleck about setting \$4 million aside from the cash on hand to use for rent in coming years as she reminded the Board that the rent schedule increases. She also would like to pursue raising bonds and received permission from the Board to raise the issue with the landlord.

Based on recommendations from the auditors, Mr. Leleck said that if approved, two people should be on the account and that the process should begin and be in place before the next meeting.

- Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to approve setting aside money in an account for the rent. Ms. Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

4. FACILITIES

Mr. James reported.

- Facilities

Two out-of-service heating units activated the fire alarm. This was addressed. The Facilities team also took care of broken furniture, added fly zappers, and made a few wall modifications. Over the winter break debris will be removed and the floors will be waxed.

- Safety

The 90th Precinct came to the school for three issues and EMS responded to four. A meeting was held with the 90th precinct on December 13. Present at the meeting were Deputy Inspector Gardner, Sergeant Harris, Tamisha Johnson, Raymond James, Roberta Smith and counsel was on the phone. At this meeting 90th precinct essentially said that it is up to the school to determine whether or not to call police on any specific issue. This sparked a vigorous discussion about the law and the overall welfare of students. Ms. Johnson mentioned that she would consult her husband, an ex-policeman about the matter. Ms. Eagen is looking into the legalities of the school relating to law enforcement. The School will continue to communicate with the 90th Precinct to ensure that all parties are working together for the benefit of the children.

- Rent

Ms. Eagen spoke about raising bonds to buy the building. The next step would be to reach out to the landlord, Mr. Grossman, to see if he is willing to sell the building. If not, the rent bubble must be addressed. It will cost about \$10,000 to investigate raising bonds. The Board agreed to have Ms. Eagen talk to the landlord.

5. ENROLLMENT

Ms. Pierre reported that enrollment has been evening out around 950. Five new students will start in January when the new semester begins. Mr. Brusca adjusted scheduling in order to accommodate up to ten more freshmen in the second semester. Mr. Dukofsky suggested assigning new students a mentor or guide in order to help them settle into the school. Ms. Pierre stated that seven students may graduate in January. 200 students have already applied for the 2017-2018 school year already. She also attended her first middle school tour. Ms. Pierre commended Ms. Manion for keeping the school's social media pages up to date with positive press.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES/TEACHER VACANCIES

Ms. Barimah reported:

- There are three teacher vacancies. There is one CTE teacher pending. The other two vacancies are for science. Ms. Williams noted that teachers have stepped up to cover classes.
- Eight certifications are pending.
- She will be attending upcoming job fairs and hosting an open house.
- Mr. Fier asked whether there will be a payout for unused sick days this year. Ms. Barimah will look into it. Ms. Eagen encouraged the Board to have this item on the Agenda for January's meeting.

Ms. Williams spoke about changing the 2017-2018 calendar. Teachers who accept payments August 1 and leave for another school during the month of August could be vulnerable to liability but in the past the School

has not taken a stance. The question is whether the Board wants to aggressively pursue these claims. Mr. Fier and Ms. Eagen discussed the practicality of spreading out payments and starting the school year later as the DOE does. Ms. Johnson asked Mr. Fier to get a feel from the teachers. Mr. Fier suggested giving teachers who stay with the school a bonus.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Manion worked with Mr. Kern, Ms. Williams, and Ms. Fernandez to submit Title I and Title II applications. She assisted with outreach for Giving Tuesday and sent out holiday cards on behalf of the school. Ms. Manion mentioned that she helped a student create social media pages for the Wolverine Recording Studio. She also noted that the Annual Comprehensive Review will most likely be released in the beginning of January.

Board Make Up

Ms. Eagen suggested an amendment to the Board bylaws which would allow trustees with mid-year term expiration dates to stay the the length of the year should they chose to.

- Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to amend the bylaws. Mr. Hobson seconded. All were in favor.

Climate Survey Update

Ms. Eagen discussed the Principal 360, a ten-question survey regarding leadership in the school. She mentioned that some responses included extensive narratives suggesting the time and investment of the staff and teachers in WCHS. The Board will be sent survey for their review and it will be included in the January meeting. At this point (with about 80% participation) the majority of the school population supports the new leadership and feels as though school is moving in a positive direction.

8. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Johnson made two changes:

- Add “Ms. Green” after “social worker” on page 2
- Add “notify 311” under Facilities on page 2

Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to accept the November 2016 Board Minutes. Ms. Johnson seconded. All were in favor.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hobson seconded. All were in favor.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Personnel Issues