

MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 19, 2017

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

PRESENT

Lourdes Putz, Chair (*via Beam*)
Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair
John Witherspoon, Trustee
Manuel Morales, Trustee

GUESTS

Tanishia Williams, Principal
Kate Manion, Staff
Shante Martin, Staff
Lester Samson, Staff
John Ballantyne, Staff
Matt Carezza, Staff
David Medina, Staff
Melissa Wade, Staff
Joe DeMarco, Staff
Kelly Thomas, Staff
Darnell Pierre, Staff
Ryan Puller, Staff

Ellen Eagen, Attorney
Raymond James, Staff
Kevin Morris, Staff
Yahaira Alcantara, Staff
Gonzalo Romero, Staff
Seth Failla, Staff
Bryn WorriLOW, Staff
Laura Rackmill, Staff
Bryce Nielsen, Staff
Kathy Fernandez, Staff
Noah Barnes, Staff

EXCUSED

Charles Hobson, Trustee, David Fier, Staff Rep.

1. WELCOME

Staff in attendance introduced themselves.

2. BURNING FLAME AWARD

Rosa Yenque, Operations Associate, was awarded the Burning Flame Award for September. Ms. Williams thanked her for efficiently completing a variety of tasks.

3. ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION LAB

Gonzalo Romero familiarized the Board with the offerings of the new Alternative Learning Lab. It currently provides the following services: Alternative Learning Environment, In-School Suspension/Detention, APEX (online credit recovery), Study Hall, and Access to Social Workers. The Learning Lab Library and Resource Room provide valuable resources for students. Mr. Romero cited a recent example of how a student was able to meet with a social worker while in In-School Suspension in the Lab. Ms. Eagen asked how the Lab keeps track of students. Mr. Romero assured her that they use a log which requires students to state why they are there. Ms. Eagen said the log should be electronic and Mr. Romero said the Lab uses both Google Sheets and handwritten logs. Mr. Morales asked if the Lab is a model for a regular class. Mr. Romero said that the Lab is not a regular class and that is a small model which could be expanded at a later time. The Lab currently holds 12 comfortably, 24 max.

4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Williams reported that school opening went well. There were a lot of students on the first day. Schedules were successfully disseminated. Mr. James ensured all books from the book room were properly distributed throughout the building. There have been two major classroom observations for all teachers. Ms. Williams thanked the Academy Leaders for assisting with this. Teachers are receiving informal feedback at this time. The DOE is scheduled to visit the following week. Ms. Williams said that the School will be hosting Curriculum Night on Wednesday, September 27. The premise of Curriculum Night is to expose parents and/or guardians to the teachers' instructional knowledge by participating in mini lessons. She reported that 90-100% of curriculum maps and syllabi are complete for all classes. Ms. Williams also said that there were 10 summer graduates and some Summer Regents passes.

5. ACADEMY REPORT

Underclassmen

Kelly Thomas reported the following:

- 225 out of 260 families attended Freshmen Orientation. Polos were distributed, ID photos were taken, and a Q&A was held. Ms. Thomas thanked Ms. Pierre for all of her assistance.
- 216 students participated in STAR Testing for the Class of 2021 in ELA and Math. These students have been placed in new Literacy and Math classes that will serve as supplementary classes. Students can test out through STAR Testing.
- Freshmen participated in Summer Intensives which allowed them to bond and prepare for the new year.
- The Class of 2020 and 2021 Assemblies and Underclassmen Mingle have been successful.
- The PSAT is scheduled for October 11, 2017. Prep packets will be utilized during Advisory periods over the next few weeks. Students are also participating in Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) during Advisory to help with reading skills.
- Students were allowed to advocate for themselves if they believed they were in incorrect science classes. Some students tested out already.

Mr. Morales asked how many students attended Summer Intensives and the Academy Leaders stated they would return with the official number. Mr. Ballantyne said that about 50% of Summer Intensives were comprised of Freshmen. Subject areas included recording, painting, fashion design, and math. One project included redesigning the subway system. Students received 0.5 credit for a 2 week course and teachers were able to teach outside of their normal curriculums.

Ms. Eagen reminded Leadership that the School needs to be cautious about using the word "tracking". Ms. Thomas stated that supplementary courses are not tracking. Ms. Williams said that current testing speaks to the needs of students by offering support. The School is not scheduling students for the rest of their careers. Ms. Eagen said it is important that teachers absorb that language and to develop conversations around this. It is also important to note that the DOE pays quite a bit of attention to differentiation.

Upperclassmen

Ms. Alcantara presented the following on behalf of the Upperclassmen Academy Leaders:

- During the Class of 2018 and 2019 Assemblies academic expectations were delivered to all students. Academy Leaders met with a pull-out group of students to discuss summer school classes they did not

pass. The same group also met with Justin Morris (Social Worker) and Larry Balthazar (Counselor) for further support.

- The Upperclassmen Mingle will occur on September 20.
- The Academy Leaders are searching for internship opportunities for Seniors during holes in their schedules to bolster Career Readiness. They are also monitoring Seniors who are On Track vs. Off Track.
- 35 Juniors currently have the Regents required to graduate, 41 will have them in January.
- The team projects that at least 80 students will have Advanced Regents diplomas.
- Over 100 students attended summer school, only 5 of whom failed one course.

6. ENROLLMENT

Ms. Pierre reported that Enrollment is in the process of norming PowerSchool. She is contacting students who have not attended school yet and is locating students for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades to make sure the School's number is something administration is comfortable with. Enrollment will attempt not to over-enroll. She is addressing "super seniors" in order to norm numbers. Ms. Eagen asked how the School went from 999 enrolled to 966. Ms. Pierre reported it was due to: Long-Term Absences (LTAs), students not showing up since the first day of school, students choosing not to come mid-summer, students pulled from our system, i.e., students in-school physically but not in ATS, as well as complications with PowerSchool. Ms. Eagen stated that students can be enrolled at WCHS as well as in the District. Ms. Alcantara confirmed this, stating that DOE schools trump Charter enrollment. Ms. Eagen asked if starting school the same day as the DOE helped with attendance and Ms. Pierre stated that it helped but did not rectify completely. Mr. Brusca stated that this is the first time the School has had over 80% attendance the first week of school. Ms. Williams asked what percentage the School had last year. Mr. Brusca said it was good, but he knows it was not 80%.

7. FINANCE

Ms. Fernandez reported that as of June 30, 2017, the total revenue for 12 months is \$16,028,114 and the total expenses for 12 months are \$15,840,000. The excess of revenue over expenses for the period is \$187,366. She also reported that all requested files have been submitted for the 403B audit. The general audit package was submitted last week and the auditors will be sending a list of pending items for review. In addition, eRate will audit as of September 26 for the 2016-2017 school year.

8. DATA

Mr. Brusca reported that the PowerSchool implementation over the summer migrated all essential data from Blackbaud into PowerSchool. All teachers and staff have access. Allan Ambris (Data Manager) updated accounts in other systems such as Hero and STAR. Mr. Brusca created a student schedule template; transcripts and report cards are next. Karl Richards (Equipment and Supplies Associate) has contacted School Messenger to begin the process of integrating the system with PowerSchool. This may take a few weeks. Mr. Brusca stated that other integration projects, including Hero, STAR, and SchoolMint will follow.

Mr. Brusca presented August Regents Rates and reported that they were pretty good for August. Mr. Morales asked how Regents scores are tracked from the beginning to the end of year. Mr. Rivera asked if there are metrics from prior years. Mr. Brusca said that Guidance Counselors monitor that. If a student fails Algebra Regents then they will receive additional help. Mr. Ballantyne stated that students were given Mock Regents in November and April and that data provided additional analysis.

Ms. Williams said that a conversation rolled out with teachers this week involved grading. It was discovered that a lot of grading included percentages, with one class having as high as 30% for a conduct grade. Because this muddles grades and doesn't show academic success, teachers are now being asked to pull out data for a Citizenship grade. This will be available for parents and students on report cards. It will show purposeful intention and true signs of academic achievement. Ms. Eagen asked if the GPA will include both grades. Ms. Williams responded that Citizenship will not be included in the GPA. Ms. Eagen said that it will be interesting to see how parents and teachers respond.

Ms. Eagen said that NYSED doesn't focus on how many times a student takes the Regents and fails, as long as they ultimately receive their diploma. Data should be collected to see how many times WCHS students need to take the Regents to pass. Ms. Eagen asked if students are asked to retake the Regents if they get a 75 or higher. Ms. Williams said it hasn't been pushed in the past but it's being rolled out with Freshmen. Mr. Samson said that messaging was pushed out to parents at Freshmen Orientation. Ms. Eagen was excited to hear that WCHS is attracting students who want to achieve.

9. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Rivera made an amendment to the agenda to vote on the minutes. It should be noted at last month's meeting Mr. Rivera read from a hand out that transposed the revenue and the expenses. Mr. Rivera voted to approve the August 29, 2017 minutes as moved. Ms. Rivera and Mr. Morales approved.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES

Noah Barnes reported on behalf of Little Bird. He updated the Board on the status of onboarding and contracts. There is a triage in figuring out systems from the former Human Resources Department. They are looking at contracts and documentation and ensuring that everyone is enrolled in benefits. Mr. Barnes, Ms. Williams, and Ms. Eagen have a shared spreadsheet denoting status of contracts. Mr. Barnes believes they are in a good place. He stated that there are a number of gaps in how systems talk to each other and that if something gets dropped via human error, triggers are not setup to alert other systems. The manual process is something that leads to issue. He is impressed with staff's patience and thanked Finance for helping with historical knowledge.

Mr. Rivera asked what Little Bird recommends for the master platform, and what the timeline looks like. He reminded Little Bird that the Board needs quotes. Mr. Barnes said it should be happening now.

Mr. Barnes also reported there are 8 outstanding vacancies in the following positions: Yoga, Health, SNAS English (2), SNAS Science, Math Literacy, Reading Literacy, and Geometry. Mr. Rivera asked if there are prospects and Ms. Williams, Ms. Thomas, and Mr. Ballantyne stated that interviews are happening now. Mr. Rivera asked how this compares to last year and Ms. Williams said that last year there were 12 outstanding vacancies during this time.

11. TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Mr. Medina ordered and received 350 Chromebooks. Mobile carts and cabinets are being placed into intervention classrooms. Computers are setup and being used for STAR testing. Receipt of charging carts has been delayed due to recent storms. Mr. Medina ordered upgrades for networking equipment as well as fiber modules to increase bandwidth. He will take care of this over the four day weekend. He also has purchase orders for additional wireless access point licenses which will eliminate dead spots. Mr. Medina also plans to

get additional switches. One current pinch point is on the Mezzanine. Another switch needs to be added due to the increase in computers.

Mr. Morales asked what the time frame is for phasing in Chromebooks. Mr. Medina said that 200 are in carts and another 150 will be in intervention rooms. He is awaiting conversations with Facilities and Ann Leghorn regarding placement. Ms. Williams asked if it could be done in three weeks and Mr. Medina assured her it would be done before that. Mr. Rivera said that the School should be diligent with inventory logs and that the investment should be assessed, for example, the School should keep track of how many Chromebooks were lost or damaged. Mr. Medina stated that this order is an education series. They aren't lightweight, have spill-resistant keyboards, and are tougher than the average consumer device. Ms. Williams asked if the devices work outside of school if someone steals them. Mr. Medina said he can limit external use and Ms. Williams stated that the School would message out that the devices do not work outside of the building.

Ms. Eagen requested a spreadsheet of all technology in the building and that it be shared amongst her, Mr. Witherspoon, and Mr. Morales. She also requested an updated technology plan for the next 2-3 years. Mr. Medina said that updated smart boards could be an immediate fix. Discussion occurred. Mr. Morales suggested identifying what other schools are doing before investing in further technology. Ms. Eagen said that teachers should be surveyed for short term and long term needs.

12. FACILITIES AND SAFETY

Mr. James reported the following Facilities update:

- During the summer a total of eleven classrooms were stripped and waxed in preparation for the winter.
- From November 22-24 and December 25-January 1 the remaining classroom will be stripped and waxed to prevent salt damage to tiles during in climate weather. Facilities requests that no staff be scheduled building during those times.
- Window locks have been purchased and are being installed in each classroom.
- All HVAC units except for Room 822 are operational.
- A new HVAC maintenance agreement is being prepared for the Board's approval which will save the school \$2,508 annually.
- The School is awaiting the Department of Buildings' approval for construction to Rooms 717, 708, 608, and 106. The delay is due to the State's increase in new construction.
- The Book Room (Room 203) was converted to a classroom requiring no change to the Department of Buildings' floor plan.
- An energy savings plan is still in effect as HVAC units are manually turned off at night.

Mr. James provided the following Safety update:

- There has been a decrease in Serious and Egregious Infractions for this time of year over the past two years, although there is still an issue with incidents off property.
- NYC Housing, Transit, and City Police have reported no major issues in the area that would impact the School. They are continuing to monitor the surrounding areas during dismissal. This includes subways.
- There have been no reports or complaints from neighboring businesses or residential properties related to the School.
- There have been 3 altercations this week.

Mr. Rivera asked if there have been any issues with the homeless shelter. Ms. Williams reported there haven't been any issues.

Ms. Eagen stated that the School is still in communication with the landlord about purchasing the property. The landlord says the cost of the building is closer to 60 million, rather than the anticipated 40 million, which it was two years ago. This is partially due to the amount of property being developed in the area. The School was prepared to cover costs of up to 57 million. The School will have to confirm the deal prior to renewal, as investors would be less likely to buy in if there was a level of uncertainty. A number of people are involved in the research and process of raising bonds. The School is still assessing it. Ms. Eagen stated that the School has a lot of cash on hand. If the School decides not to purchase the building, rent will have to be renegotiated because it will not be sustainable.

13. COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Mr. Nielsen reported that he is in the midst of building relationships with neighbors and increasing investment in the School. He is meeting with an Olympic boxing coach on Monday and has met with one of the owners of Ange Noir Café. Mr. Nielsen hopes to build the CDOS program through these relationships. He stated that internship hours can replace a Regents score and give an alternative track to graduation by providing a certificate rather than a diploma. Mr. Nielsen has also been assisting with the following partnerships: NYC Parks, VICE, and the District Charter Collaborative. He reported that the homeless shelter down the street is switching security and that he is awaiting response from the Walentas grant. Ms. Eagen reminded Mr. Nielsen that anyone who comes into the building needs to be fingerprinted.

14. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Manion reported that she collected documents for the October 2 DOE Accountability Collection; submitted nonmaterial changes to the School's Charter to NYC DOE; oversaw the reorganization of internal handbooks; managed the Title submissions; coordinated with Ms. Eagen to modify bylaws and handbooks to NYSED requirements; and assisted with fundraising for the Senior class.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION