

**MINUTES**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**October 24, 2017**

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

**PRESENT**

Lourdes Putz, Chair (*via Beam*)  
Charles Hobson, Trustee  
Samuel Rivera, Vice Chair  
John Witherspoon, Trustee  
Evans Barreau, Parent Rep.  
Manuel Morales, Trustee  
David Fier, Teacher Rep.

**GUESTS**

Tanishia Williams, Principal  
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber  
Shante Martin, Staff  
Vianey Camela, Staff  
Lester Samson, Staff  
Julia Slaff, Little Bird  
John Ballantyne, Staff  
Kaari Aubrey, Staff  
Valerie Jacobson, Staff

Ellen Eagen, Attorney  
Kate Manion, Staff  
Raymond James, Staff  
James Stovall, Little Bird  
Kevin Morris, Staff  
Yahaira Alcantara, Staff  
Vianey Camela, Staff  
David Medina, Staff

**1. WELCOME**

The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm. Mr. Rivera welcomed everyone. Ms. Eagen stated that she would be facilitating the meeting and asked staff and visitors to introduce themselves. The agenda was amended to move “Board Capacity Interview Update” to #4.

- Mr. Morales made a Motion to accept the agenda with changes. Mr. Hobson seconded. All were in favor.

**2. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES**

- Mr. Morales made a Motion to approve the September 19, 2017 Board Minutes. Mr. Rivera seconded. Mr. Hobson Abstained. All were in favor. The approved Minutes will be posted on our website.

**3. BURNING FLAME AWARD**

Ms. Williams honored Karl Richards with the Burning Flame Award this month for going above and beyond in helping various departments. Mr. Richards is a new hire and filling a new position as an associate in the technology department. Mr. Medina spoke about his accomplishments. He stated that he and Karl are preparing staff surveys in regards to a five year tech improvement plan.

**4. BOARD CAPACITY INTERVIEW UPDATE**

Mr. Rivera, Mr. Morales and Ms. Putz traveled to Albany as part of the process to transfer authorizers. Mr. Rivera said they had an excellent two-hour meeting of productive conversation. The application will now go in front of the Board of Regents if recommended by the Charter School Office. Ms. Eagen said that Mr. Frank is a thought partner with schools and it would be an honor to have his office as our authorizer.

In that vein Mr. Morales said that Mr. Frank was transparent about his concern regarding our fluctuating graduation rates. Mr. Morales echoed that the School should strive to trend up, even if only by a handful of students. He encouraged staff to keep an eye on this. The Board reviewed graduation data for Cohorts 2013 through 2017 and discussed projected rates for 2018, which should be trending up at 83%.

**5. ENROLLMENT**

The September enrollment number was 966 but the number has decreased to 936 in ATS and 937 in PowerSchool. Ms. Pierre stated some reasons for this including the transition from Blackbaud to PowerSchool caused errors in accuracy. In addition, 27 freshmen never showed. Long Term Absences (LTAs) and transfers out of school also caused problems. Some of these transfers were students moving out of state or to other schools, and some students were moved to YABC.

Ms. Williams discussed ways the School has been working to rectify the abovementioned problems. She stated that attendance is being monitored aggressively, phone calls and home visits have been made, and a mass mailing will be going out. Ms. Williams also said that an enrollment verification process will be initiated in 2018-2019. Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Pierre expanded on some of the system migration data issues and both stated that they believe that the problem has been rectified. Ms. Eagen mentioned that it is important the the number reported to the Board with regard to enrollment is accurate. For now, the Board must learn the PowerSchool and ATS number and the Per Pupil number which takes into account children for whom we only get partial monetary allowance.

The Board discussed YABC enrollment, the use of the waitlist, and how the start of school impacted numbers. Ms. Pierre echoed that she is calling home, emailing, visiting DOE centers, and utilizing advertising across social media platforms. She believes that there will be an influx in enrollment in January. Ms. Eagen encouraged teachers to notify Ms. Williams if they hear of any issues surrounding student disgruntlement and stated that this message should be relayed in a professional development.

## **6. FINANCE**

Ms. Fernandez explained how Special Education enrollment impacts money received. The numbers that were projected for special education on the budget were not accurate. Ms. Eagen cautioned that Mr. Brusca, Ms. Fernandez, and Ms. Wade should all be involved in the process for accuracy going forward. Ms. Eagen also stated that if students are not receiving all of their required services, their parents need to be made aware, and need to sign off on it. Ms. Williams stated the issue was caught early in the school year and moving forward Ms. Fernandez will provide this data monthly.

Ms. Fernandez reported that as of September 30, total revenue for three months is \$3,975,540 and the total expenses for three months are \$2,940,000. The excess of revenue over expenses for the period is \$1,035,261.

Mr. Rivera gave an update on the audit. He submitted the signed letter and reported that the auditors provided a positive and complimentary review of the School.

## **7. STAFF VACANCIES**

The School currently has the following vacancies: 2 SNAS, 1 Health, 1 Physical Education, and 1 Literacy. Upcoming demos for applicants are scheduled. Ms. Williams explained that some teachers have agreed to teach a sixth class to fill the vacancies, which prevents substitute costs. Ms. Eagen stated that those teachers will need addendums to their contracts.

## **8. HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSITION**

Mr. Stovall and Ms. Slaff, both from Little Bird, introduced themselves and explained the services they provide to the School, which include ad posting, healthcare advice, contracts, and payroll. The three areas they are concentrating on are fingerprinting, certification, and auditing the school's 403b plan. They have completed a top to bottom audit of these areas to make sure the School is in compliance. Mr. Stovall will discuss his findings at the next meeting. He believes the HR Department is in a stable place.

In response to a question, Ms. Eagen said that Little Bird provides advice but will not change any of the School's policies or rules without the Board's input. Ms. Fernandez said that the auditors confirmed that the 403b plan is in compliance but that the School should encourage more employees to join.

Ms. Williams asked to amend the approved school calendar to condense November parent conferences (11/9 and 11/10) from two days to one (11/7). November 7 is Election Day and no students would be in attendance. The Board discussed the ramifications of the change and how it would affect parents and staff. Ms. Williams agreed to leave the calendar as is.

#### **9. FACILITIES AND SAFETY**

Mr. James reviewed facility updates, including ventilation in the Art Room, HVAC proposals, and locks for windows. He stated that there has been an increase in student altercations, a Safety Officer resigned, and that there are no new FDNY violations.

#### **9. ADJOURNMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING**

Mr. Rivera made a Motion to adjourn. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. All were in Favor.

#### **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**