



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
April 28, 2020

The meeting was held virtually via Google Hangouts.

PRESENT

Lourdes Putz, Chair
Samuel Rivera, Trustee
John Witherspoon, Trustee
Manuel Morales, Trustee
Karl Richards, Staff Advisor

GUESTS

Lester Samson, Head of School I.A.
Ellen Eagen, Attorney
Jahi Bashir, Academy Leader
Tara Richards, Student Support Manager
Katie Manion, Accountability Manager
Kathy Gaffney, Prospective Trustee

Val Jacobson, Head of Ops
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber
Bao Nguyen, Academy Leader
Kathy Fernandez, Finance
Staff and Parents

EXCUSED

*Charles Hobson, Trustee (deceased)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Lourdes Rivera-Putz welcomed everyone and expressed her sincere appreciation to all the staff, students and families for continued support during this difficult time. She stated that safety is the school's top priority and that WCHS will continue to look to New York State for guidance on re-entry planning. Ms. Putz said that leadership is meeting frequently to develop plans.

2. ACADEMICS

Jahi Bashir, Rhonda Creed-Harry, and Ann Leghorn presented qualitative and quantitative data about our remote learning platform. Survey data of teachers indicate varied levels of student engagement in the COVID environment.

UPDATE TO REMOTE LEARNING PROGRAM

Mr. Bashir presented revisions to the remote learning program. Daily engagement questions will continue to be posted in all of classes for regular teacher-student contact, but will no longer be required as a grade in PowerSchool. Students will be given more time to submit assignments and teachers will have increased flexibility in the number of assignments posted weekly to Google Classroom. The original remote learning program did not require a weekly overview or have mandates for weekly calendars of assignments and expectations. In the revised learning program, teachers will post weekly academic overviews of assignments with explicit directions, due dates, and connections to the larger unit. Teachers are encouraged to use instructional videos or audio. Finally, the original remote learning program mandated teachers to give weekly formative assessments. The revised remote learning program mandates teachers to give formative assessments every two weeks. An internal calendar of assessment weeks by department was created to alleviate simultaneous assessment requirements of students (no more than 5 per week). Mr. Samson said he and Mr. Bashir would solicit feedback in department meetings and then roll out to all teachers.

UPDATE TO TEACHER EVALUATION PROCESS

Mr. Samson and Mr. Bashir made the following adjustments to the teacher evaluation process in response to the COVID-19 school building closure and switch to remote learning:

- Announced observations (2nd round) will not be completed due to the remote learning environment.
- Scores and data from the unannounced (1st round) observations will be used to determine continuation of contract for 2020-2021 school year.
- All teachers (certified and uncertified) who received a 2.0 or higher on their unannounced (1st round) observation will be eligible for contract renewal for the 2020-2021 school year. Eligibility for a contract renewal has been adjusted from 2.5 to 2.0 in consideration of the unforeseen COVID circumstances and changes to evaluation process.
- All teachers (certified and uncertified) who scored below 2.0 on their unannounced (1st round) observation will not be eligible for a contract renewal for the 2020-2021 school year.
- All teachers will receive a letter detailing their employment status by May 15, 2020.
- All teachers (certified and uncertified) are expected to continue their professional duties for the remainder of the school year. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions including probation and termination.

Mr. Samson reported that Safety Officers have been repurposed to provide additional support for students and families. The 2020-2021 Master Schedule is in development. Instructional recruitment is ongoing. Staff Appreciation Week will be held from May 4-8. Students completed world issue assignments over the Spring Reprieve.

GRADUATION PROJECTIONS 2020

Ms. Richards reported that 183 students are eligible to graduate out of 215. 49 students are expected to graduate in August following participation in summer school. 7 students from the 2019 Cohort and 2 students from the 2018 Cohort are on track to graduate as well.

Ms. Eagen reminded the Board that we are still awaiting guidance regarding Regents testing. Ms. Putz and leadership have been meeting with our CSO liaison regularly to understand the situation as best possible.

3. HEAD OF OPERATIONS REPORT

TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

Ms. Jacobson reported that we received 540 responses from the technology survey. 79 families reported difficulty with home access to the internet/smartphone. 120 stated they lack internet access and 183 stated they lack access to a smartphone. Out of 386 Chromebooks and 8 laptop carts, 298 were distributed as of April 23, 2020.

Ms. Jacobson stated that the budget line for technology in 2019-20 was \$150,000. Ms. Jacobson requested that the Board utilize \$140,740 of the \$150,000 in the 2019-20 Technology Equipment Budget Line Item by purchasing 360 Chromebooks and 10 laptop carts from CDW and 100 wifi hotspots for 24 months from T-Mobile.

Ms. Eagen inquired about the budget line and Ms. Fernandez confirmed that the money is there.

The Board reviewed technology quotes. Mr. Morales stated that technology priority should go to students with the most need. Ms. Putz agreed that this is an issue that needs to be resolved right away, but with more discussion.

Ms. Jacobson stated that the virtual lottery held on April 2 was successful. 244 people attended. The event invitation was posted publicly and was recorded and transcribed. We received 647 applications, up from 629 last year. 64 families accepted the admissions offer and started online registration and 12 families accepted and fully completed their online registration on April 2. She stated that we will continue to hold open houses and recruit through ads and email blasts.

Ms. Jacobson reviewed our COVID-19 portal on the website which hosts information about our remote learning plan, technology for students, community resources, and other WCHS COVID-19-related updates.

4. FINANCE

Ms. Fernandez reported that as of March 2020, the total collected revenue for the period was \$12,833,913 and expenses were \$12,209,795 with a surplus of approximately \$624,117. Total Assets are \$15,100,000 with a deferred rent of \$9,752,042.

Ms. Fernandez said that she is expecting the per pupil funding in May. She is working on the 403b audit and the interim audit with our auditors virtually.

Ms. Eagen stated that we should expect a lower per pupil rate in 2020-21. Ms. Fernandez agreed to factor that and the potential financial effects of COVID-19 into the 2020-21 budget.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Manion requested approval of the December, January, February, and March Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes as well as the Special Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes from March 15 and April 14 pending review from School Counsel. Ms. Manion stated that these approvals were postponed due to the unexpected passing of Trustee Charles Hobson. John Witherspoon motioned to approve the December, January, February, and March Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes as well as the Special Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes from March 15 and April 14 pending review from School Counsel. Manny Morales seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Manion requested that the Board formally name her as the WCHS NYSED Data Privacy Officer. John Witherspoon motioned to approve and Manny Morales seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Eagen requested a vote on the extension of school closure through May 15 following guidance from Governor Cuomo. John Witherspoon motioned to approve and Manny Morales seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Manion stated that as part of a check-in site visit with the NYSED CSO, she would be facilitating the

Board of Trustees and parent focus groups with our liaison, Paula Orlando. The tentative date is May 26 so that Ms. Orlando can attend the May Board of Trustees Meeting afterwards as well. Ms. Manion is writing the self-evaluation that the school will be submitting for the visit.

Board Development

Ms. Manion introduced Kathy Gaffney, formal principal of WCHS. Ms. Manion stated that Ms. Gaffney is interested in joining the Board of Trustees and is in the process of completing her Board of Trustees application. Ms. Gaffney spoke about her experience at the school and said she was impressed with what she sees happening at WCHS. Mr. Rivera expressed his appreciation and said everyone who is not familiar with her will come to value her wisdom as part of the team.

Ms. Manion requested that the Board of Trustees approve Kathy Gaffney as a Board of Trustees member, following submission of her Board of Trustees application and approval from the NYSED CSO. John Witherspoon motioned to approve and Manny Morales seconded. All were in favor.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Rivera said that the Board continues to meet frequently and commended staff for remaining incredibly productive in this challenging time. He moved to adjourn. Manny Morales seconded. All were in favor.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION