



MINUTES
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 23, 2021

The meeting was held virtually via Google Meets.

PRESENT

Lourdes Putz, Chair
Samuel Rivera, Trustee
Manuel Morales, Trustee
Kathleen Gaffney, Trustee
John Witherspoon, Trustee

GUESTS

Jahi Bashir, Head of School I.A.
Ellen Eagen, School Attorney
70 Teachers, Parents & Support Staff

Val Jacobson, Head of Ops
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber

1. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm. Mr. Rivera welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Ms. Gaffney made a motion to approve the January 19, 2021 minutes subject to further review by legal. Mr. Morales seconded. All were in favor.

3. ACADEMICS

Mr. Bashir provided a Special Education Department update. There is a new SPED case management system. Each teacher has a set number of students and will be the point person for IEP meetings. Staff are undergoing SPED training in IEP writing and conducting meetings. The SPED Department has 173 students. Mr. Bashir will have updated data on incompletes soon. Once a month parent meetings are beginning and will be running through June. Parents may discuss issues and ask for support during these meetings. Mr. Bashir mentioned that he is interested in pursuing CANVAS Learning Management System and NWEA Map testing. He will be providing the Board with more information soon. The bell schedule has been created for next year and will be presented to the Board for review. Summer planning is underway for summer school, Summer Bridge Program, student orientations, and sports camps. 121 senior incompletes have been completed and updated. Ms. De Lyon and Ms. Martin will follow up with students who did not satisfy their incompletes. Mr. Bashir said he will have a more accurate on-track to graduate number soon.

4. OPERATIONS

Ms. Jacobson stated that planning for Trimester 3, summer school, and the 2021-22 school year has begun. She is also working on the School Improvement Plan and is planning for 2021-22 technology.

Attendance outreach continues with daily calls, emails, and texts; weekly letters; biweekly team meetings; and, advisory outreach, which include daily reminders and wake-up calls. There has been an attendance increase in all grade levels. Grade 9 attendance reached 89.6% the week of February 5. Ms. Gaffney thanked everyone for their efforts to increase attendance.

Parent surveys were distributed. Parents were asked about their comfort towards sending students back to the building for Trimester 3. As of February 23, 179 parents have responded. 50.8% said “no” they would not be comfortable and 49.2% said “yes” they would be comfortable. Common concerns are about social distancing, travel to and from school, COVID testing, childcare and access to vaccines. Parents in support of returning to school want socialization for their students and/or have stated that distance learning wasn’t working for their students. WCHS leadership will continue to monitor positivity rates and will survey students and staff. Additionally, they will explore additional and safety mitigation measures such as routine testing and strengthen the remote learning program. The goal is to open for a combination of in-person and remote instruction per the WCHS COVID Safety Plan as soon as safely practicable. The

Board discussed Governor Cuomo's Executive Order pertaining to the collection of staff vaccine data. Mr. Rivera said that he understands that the subject is complicated and he thanked Ms. Jacobson for presenting the data.

Ms. Jacobson presented a technology update. There are 1,125 laptops in inventory. 600 are lent out and 482 are in stock. 36 laptops are broken. A laptop order is still delayed. The Board discussed ways of ensuring laptops are in the hands of students who are reluctant or unable to pick them up on weekdays. Ideas included personally delivering laptops to homes, mailing them, and/or opening the school on weekends for additional pickup.

5. COVID SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

Ms. Manion created a vaccination information page on the website at www.thewcs.org/vaccine-information/. The page will continue to be updated.

6. SAFETY/FACILITIES

Mr. James reported that there were no NYPD issues this month. COVID temperature screens are conducted daily and students are continuing to pick up their laptops with no safety issues.

An elevator safety test was conducted and accepted by the Department of Buildings on February 17. One heating unit motor was replaced. Two Fire Safety Director certifications were updated.

7. ENROLLMENT/ RECRUITMENT

Ms. Jacobson reported that enrollment is 975 in Powerschool and ATS. The FTE is 959.79. There were four January graduates and there are two students pending discharge.

Monthly virtual open houses are continuing. The next scheduled open house is March 6. The school is participating in NYC Virtual Charter Fairs and creating accompanying marketing videos and ads. On February 4 email blasts were sent out in English and Spanish. The Board agreed that enrollment numbers will probably decrease next year due to the pandemic. Ms. Jacobson proposed increasing the marketing budget by \$15,000 for expanded online advertising and bilingual program marketing. The increase would support Google Ad Words, YouTube ads, social media campaigns, and Outfront Media targeted mobile phone marketing and email blasts. Ms. Jacobson explained that the \$15,000 would come from the supplies line item, which has savings.

- Ms. Gaffney made a motion to use the supply line item for marketing the remainder of the school year. Mr. Witherspoon seconded. All were in favor.

8. FINANCE

Ms. Fernandez reported that as of January 31, 2021 the total collected revenue is \$10,053,016. Total expenses are \$8,869,763. The total excess of revenue over expenses is \$1,183,253. Deferred rent is \$10,250,149. Per pupil funding and Title monies have been collected.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Manion presented three FSA relief offerings that are available to the school as a result of the December 2020 stimulus package. They include mid-year election changes, carry-over, and extension of benefits for terminated employees. Mr. Rivera stated that he would setup an additional meeting to review the options in depth.

10. ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Manion stated that the school is embarking on a number of initiatives in order to increase ELL enrollment for the 2021-22 school year which include: digital marketing in Spanish (Google Ads, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), El Diario mailings, promotion of the ENL program on social media, creation of a movie ad in Spanish on YouTube, making short videos to post on social media with specific hashtags of immigrant service organizations, researching local churches, parochial schools, service organizations to present our Bilingual Program to at a virtual meeting, and bilingual bus ads.

A Niche Events Program Campaign was purchased for an additional push leading up to the lottery deadline: the Niche campaign should get roughly 75,000 impressions with a .30% Click-Through-Rate (CTR) on Niche, Facebook,

Instagram, Google, and across the internet to our Niche Audience.

The following school policies have been added as drop downs to our website:

- District-wide safety plan (<https://www.thewcs.org/safety-plan/>);
- NYSED-approved complaint policy (<https://www.thewcs.org/complaint-policy/>);
- NYSED-approved school discipline policy (<https://www.thewcs.org/code-of-conduct/>); and,
- Subject matter list of school records (for FOIL) (<https://www.thewcs.org/contact/foil/>).

These policies were already located on our website but were made more visible.

WCHS' authorizer would like to schedule another check-in for Spring 2021. Date to be determined. The USDOE will not approve requests for blanket waivers for state assessments. Schools will not be held accountable for the results. More information to come.

DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY

Ms. Manion compiled and submitted the WCHS NYS Grants Gateway prequalification documents. Prequalification status is required for CSP funding consideration. The CSP Grant application line items were compiled by Ms. Jacobson and Ms. Fernandez and the application was submitted by CSBM. The Title I Family Meeting rescheduled from fall will be on March 4 at 5:30pm as part of a town hall. Katherine R. and the National Honor Society (NHS) are leading another fundraiser to support "Casa Marianella", a nonprofit that provides shelter and support services to immigrants in Austin, Texas. The coat drive by Daelyn P. raised \$721.10 of \$600 goal. Ms. Manion is in the process of creating the NHS a new page to promote their campaign initiatives: <https://www.thewcs.org/national-honor-society/>. WCHS is now officially a charity on PayPal so the school can more effectively receive donations through the website. Ms. Manion is talking with a documentary filmmaker about using school space over the weekend. His film is about the homework gap, the digital divide, and how students and teachers are being impacted during COVID-19.

11. PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Ms. Hardy said that the next PLC meeting will be held on February 25 at 5:45 pm with a celebration of Black and Afro-Latino American excellence. The meeting will include guest speakers, films, and a presentation from NHS. Mr. Rivera thanked the parents for their work at the school.

Ms. Eagen added that this month is also the first year anniversary of Charles Hobson's passing. Charles was a treasured Board member and wonderful friend of our community - an inspiration for the Board. He was a groundbreaking force in media, not only documenting black history but making black history, forging a groundbreaking and Emmy Award-winning career in public broadcasting and film documentaries. She encouraged the school community to check out his biography and work.

12. ADJOURNMENT

- Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Gaffney seconded the motion. All were in favor.