



MINUTES

Board of Trustees Meeting

March 16, 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
78 Teachers, Parents & Support Staff

Val Jacobson, Head of Ops
Mary Kenny, Minutes Transcriber

1. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. Ms. Putz welcomed everyone.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Mr. Rivera made a motion to approve the February 23, 2021 minutes. Ms. Gaffney seconded. All were in favor.

3. ACADEMICS

Academic Update

Mr. Bashir presented information about the Black History Month Essay and Art Contest. Students submitted original prose and art pieces. Mr. Bashir played a recording of the first place winner, Katherine R's reading, "Society's Clouding." Entries will be shared online. On March 25 and 26 virtual parent/advisory meetings focusing on graduation and attendance will take place. Mr. Bashir will provide the Board with more information about MAP testing offline. There are credit recovery options available for seniors in need. Students will be able to attend night school to recover Trimester (T) 1 credits. T3 check-ins will begin in early May. Students are continuing to struggle in T2. 175 out of 250 students are on track to graduate, 75 are off track, and 28 are off track but have potential to graduate. 18 students who were off track are now on track to graduate. All seniors have been assigned mentors to monitor the students' progress. 139 students have applied to college and the school has been notified of 28 acceptances.

Reopening

Mr. Bashir presented contextual factors and methodology used when discussing and planning reopening. National studies confirm that remote learning is increasing the academic learning gap. The New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) is reopening on March 22. There are currently June Regents in core subjects. School has been predominantly remote for one year. Academic leadership considered space, student performance and staffing. Leadership surveyed students, parents, and staff regarding their comfort in returning to school for T3. Leadership, Board members, and the school counsel discussed survey data, updated COVID data and information, and various factors affecting our community including academic and social emotional wellbeing. Survey data indicates that there is substantial interest in returning to the building for at least one day a week. A variety of options were discussed.

Mr. Bashir presented the proposed reopening plan. Phase 1: WCHS will reopen on Wednesdays beginning on April 28. Teachers and staff will return on April 21. The daily schedule will remain the same. Students will receive extra help and meet for office hours. Remote learning will occur on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Phase 2 and Phase 3 initiation dates are to be determined.

There will be an all-staff meeting on Wednesday, March 17 to discuss additional reopening considerations and the T3 accommodations process. Parents will be provided with a T3 Selection Form. Families will have the option to continue learning remotely or sign-up for in-person instruction. Students and families can select remote only or in-person options.

- John Witherspoon made a motion to approve the recommendation of the administration to go from fully remote to a four day remote learning and one day in-person learning program starting April 28 with teachers returning April 21, 2021. Kathy Gaffney seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Software

Mr. Bashir asked the Board to authorize the purchase of Canvas Learning Management System in order to facilitate and improve remote and hybrid learning. The Board compared bids from other vendors and discussed the ESSR Grant money. Mr. Bashir explained the advantages of Canvas: information would be on one platform and organized and stored for future use. Class materials could be replicated for other teachers to utilize and grading would be easier. Additionally, parents would have access to work, assignments, teacher feedback and professional development. Ms. Eagen commented that students would become accustomed to a system that is used in college. Mr. Bashir plans to look into Canvas trainings for staff. Ms. Jacobson explained that Powerschool would still be used for attendance data.

- Ms. Gaffney made a motion to accept the recommendation of the administration to purchase the Canvas Learning Management System. Mr. Witherspoon seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Proposed 2021-22 Bell Schedule

Mr. Bashir presented a proposed bell schedule for the 2021-22 school year. The proposed schedule would extend the day by adding optional periods before and after school for students. He anticipates that this would likely be a non-material change. The Board can approve the change pending approval by the Charter School Office of the Regents.

- Mr. Witherspoon made a motion to accept the 2021-22 Bell Schedule. Mr. Morales seconded. All were in favor.

4. OPERATIONS

Ms. Jacobson stated that report cards and incompletes are being mailed home. She and Mr. Bashir are working on a School Improvement Plan which will inform the budget planning for 2021-22. Outreach for attendance continues. There has been improvement with 9th grade attendance, it recently reached 89%.

Ms. Jacobson discussed technology and E-Rate planning for 2021-2025. The estimated E-Rate allocation is \$167 per student. WCHS receives an 85-90% discount on eligible equipment and services. Ms. Jacobson is currently accepting bids for upgrades to accommodate 1000+ simultaneous users that would include high density wireless access points (up to 100 users each), increased bandwidth for streaming, switches, routers, filters, and licenses. To accommodate the 1:1 technology program by August 2021, the total project cost would be approximately \$180,000 to \$200,000 as some items are not fully covered by the E-Rate allocation. The school must select vendors and accept bids by March 27 for installation on July 1. Ms. Jacobson also reviewed the laptop inventory at the school.

5. COVID SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Ms. Manion stated that there have been a small number of COVID cases within the community. Vaccination information is not being formally collected yet. Recent information indicates that will be provided to the State via local health agencies and not schools.

6. SAFETY AND FACILITIES

Mr. James reported that there have been no NYPD issues or cyber incidents this month. COVID temperature screening is conducted daily. Students have come to the building to pick up laptops and senior sweatshirts.

A five-year fire suppression test is being scheduled with FDNY. Two heating units were repaired. One violation was issued on March 15 for an unwarranted alarm due to the faulty heating unit. Ms. Eagen reported that the Board has been exploring the idea of creating a gymnasium and is looking into the facility next door. An architect is creating blueprints. He will visit the building on Thursday.

7. RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in Powerschool and ATS is 972. The FTE is 959.79. The Data Coordinator is in the process of filling out the next invoice and billing documents. There were four graduates in January and one is still pending. 16 students have 0 attendance.

There are currently 392 applications for 2021-22. There was an open house on March 16. 18 people attended. There will be additional open houses on April 17 and May 1. The Charter School Fair will be held on March 20 and the school will have a virtual booth with flyers, tours and speakers from the Special Education, English as a New Language, Data, and Operations Departments. On March 2 an email blast was sent in English and Spanish to 356 families on the WCHS email list. The school participated in Daily News integrated email news blast to advertise the lottery deadline. The news blast was sent to 63,957 recipients on Day 1; 12,000 follow-up emails were sent to those who opened those emails; and it made 50,000 Facebook retargeting impressions. The news blast was targeted to 15 local zip codes. Bus advertisements in English and Spanish are currently running locally on 25 bus tails and 10 bus sides. The school also purchased a number of Google, YouTube, and Facebook and Instagram ads specifically promoting our Special Education, English as a New Language, and bilingual programs.

8. FINANCE

As of February 28, 2021, the collected revenue is \$11,573,999. Total expenses are \$10,116,861. The excess of revenue over expenses is \$1,457,138. Total assets are \$21,100,000. The total liability is \$16,000,000, which is primarily the rent of \$10,297,699.

The school has collected per pupil funding and Title I monies. The Board discussed the CSP grant application for \$49,000. Mr. Morales said he will continue working with the bank regarding PPP Loan forgiveness.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES

Ms. Manion presented additional FSA fund offerings available to staff as a result of the December stimulus. This would include mid-year election changes, fund carry over, and extension of benefits for terminated employees. None of these would be a cost to WCHS.

10. ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Manion presented Benchmark 9 enrollment data from 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 to highlight that WCHS has been under-enrolled in the Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English as a New Language (ENL) categories. Ms. Manion also presented a table showing where our enrollment currently is. The goal is to enroll at least 80 additional ENL students and 29 additional SWD students. Several digital marketing efforts are underway to improve our ENL and SWD enrollment. Ms. Manion created ENL and SWD pages on our website advertising the school's current program, photos of class activities, and photos of all staff. The Board is invited to attend the virtual lottery on April 12 at 6pm. The SED spring check-in is scheduled for June 14. The school authorizer asked leadership to resend parent, student, and staff surveys. The new deadline is Friday, March 26. Accountability submitted the SED Monitoring Summary Assessment Survey on March 12 which will inform SED's appeal to USDOE regarding the administration of the spring 2021 State assessments. The August 2021 Regents Exams have been cancelled. If the USDOE waiver is denied, only four June 2021 Regents Exams will be administered in June: Algebra I, ELA, Living Environment, and Earth Sciences. Accountability may be submitting a non-material change request pertaining to the use of NWEA Map assessments per SED's Local Assessment Initiative. Ms. Eagen explained that the recommendation has not been made yet to the Board and that she and Ms. Manion will first review the charter.

11. DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY

Ms. Manion stated that the Title I Family Meeting was held on March 4 at 5:30pm as part of a town hall. She created Parent Feedback Forms and Parent Right to Know Forms to make parent engagement easier. Ms. Mercado is translating several documents to Spanish. She also created a "Featured Student Work" section on the website to display BHM contest winners and future student projects. Agency Charlie used school space on Sunday, March 7 from 7am-5pm to film scenes for a documentary about The Homework Gap, the digital divide, and how students and teachers are being impacted during COVID-19. Their donation covered the costs of operating the building and provided some additional money for senior scholarships. They also offered to come back to the school when it is reopened and take complimentary professional photos. More info to come. A former WCHS teacher Taru Thompson has generously created a scholarship fund that will support WCHS and his other former employer, Rockaway Collegiate. CSBM is working on our Title I,

Title II, and Title IV carry-over submissions and is waiting on SED to reopen the portal in order to submit the Title III application. Ms. Manion is working with Ms. Martin and Ms. Johnson for in-person or virtual graduation locations. Hunter College is not hosting events. Reached out to Prospect Park, Central Park, Kings Theatre, Brooklyn Steel, Pioneer Works, BK Venues so far. Considering other parks as well (McCarren, McGolrick, etc). Central Park was responsive but costly (\$20k more than the school spends typically). Brooklyn Bridge Park does not permit for large-sized events. Prospect Park does not allow for amplified sound. Brooklyn Steel cannot host large events yet.

12. PARENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Ms. McFadden stated that the next Parent Leadership Council meeting will be on March 18, 2021 at 6:00 pm and it will celebrate Women's History Month. Special guest will be Girls Who Code and there will be raffles.

13. ADJOURNMENT

No Executive Session was held.

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