

The Bronx Charter School for Children Board Meeting Minutes February 16, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Bronx Charter School of Children was held virtually, on February 16, 2023, at 4:30pm.

The following members of the Board were present: Jane Ehrenberg Rosen (President), Denise Alexander (Executive Director), Paul Libretta (Vice President), Sydney Blair, Hayden Chan (Secretary), Bruce Greenwald (Treasurer), Mark A. Samuel (chair, Governance Committee), Ken Blomster, Jonathan Jimenez, Joanne Carris, Maria Aveledo,

Absent were: Tina Maiuolo (Elementary School Principal), Nicole Schmidt

Guests included: Bonnie Halloran (Middle School Principal), Emily Conrath (Director of Development), Candice Manzano (Director of Operations), Jessica Miranda (Director of Family Services)

The meeting was called to order at 4:40pm and concluded at 6:10pm.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The board **VOTED**:

To approve the minutes of the last Board meeting held on January 19, 2023, as amended

ED Report: Denise Alexander

The executive director highlighted that the MLL and NWEA testing have been concluded. The ELA state test is slated for April while the Math state test will be in early May. There will be changes to how instructions in curriculum and context to align with State testing. Both schools have DCI present working with them for teacher evaluations. The first evaluations and debriefs for every instructional staff member are nearly complete. Regarding Executive Leadership Team, the mid-year check in on their goals: are they on track to meet their targets, where do they require support for areas of improvement. Regarding professional development, our non-instructional staff members (Emily, Candice, Miranda) have attended or have been enrolled for external training. Suspension and expulsion rates have been very low; we have had only one expulsion as discussed last month. The suspension and expulsion framework from 2019 will be reviewed in our renewal process.

Maria Aveledo joined at 4:45 pm

Kindergarten level has the highest percentage of referral rates. Audit for the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds is still underway and should be ready before the March 15 deadline. Eighth graders are preparing for the regents exams and High School placement. The winter dance on Friday was successful. There will be another dance that will include sixth graders. End of year activities have been planned for the eighth grade - we have procured the Hostos auditorium for it. Eighth graders will also be going away for an overnight camp, some special activities and activities involving parents.

Governor Hochul, Mayor Adams and the new chancellor have been showing support for Zombie schools to get their Charters. There are 84 Charters available statewide, there is a movement to make more available. The school consented to hosting charter schools rally - set to hold in March.

A question was raised regarding the suspension of one scholar. The executive director clarified that it was related to vaping (prohibited at the school) by a group of students.

Another question was asked about math grades. The executive director stated that the grades for third to fifth grades are good but there is room for improvement in the sixth to eighth grade math. There was inconsistent teaching with sixth grade math, a departure of a teacher in November and a substitute teacher left as well. Weekly and summative data is looking better, hoping end of year data will improve.

Principal Report: Bonnie Halloran

Math DCI now supports the sixth grade classroom going forward. So far, learning has been consistent and more student have be proficient. Sixth grade hit their ELA goal, seventh grade homogenous group to focus on instructions and eight grade adding more Math instruction. We are planning our end of year trips for the eighth grade and a lots of other things with the Director of Operations. We had a Valentines Day dance for seventh and eighth graders. The sixth graders are going to have a spring fling in May. The student council elections for middle school have been concluded, and officers will be sworn in by the end of the break. In preparation for the regents, the eighth graders have been preparing in the lab every week. After the incident of the students caught vaping an illegal contraband, we are bringing in some people to talk about preventative measures. The family service department has been sharing information about the health hazards of vaping. We had students that competed in the National History Day Competition and two scholars made it to the second round.

Addressing Key Design Elements: Wrap-Around Services - Denise and Jessica

Joanne Carris joined at 5:10 pm

Wrap-Around Services will be supported by the family services department but it is a student centered approach. Our focus will be on the child, the child being a significant member of the family. Currently we have a total of 53 families that have current ACS cases from both schools and the family service department supports the families and guides them through getting the right support they need. The four counselors at the school are certified mental health therapist so they provide services for the children. We have an HRA portal, and we are the only school in the Bronx with an HRA portal, where we are able to apply and re-certify and submit documentation for our families. The only challenge with this is that it is prone to a lot of errors which leads to the closure of the case automatically. The family services department help undocumented parents to apply for their children born in the United States and helps families with domestic violence after an assessment.

- ACS Guidance
 - 53 cases - most families do not know the rights they are entitled
- Mental Health Services
 - In brown and black families are stigmatized
 - Families are now sharing more mental health needs, we help guide them to the organizations to support them
 - Families are more open to sharing now
 - Word of mouth positive family experiences are being shared
 - 2 elementary school and 2 middle school professional councilors, also supports group counseling
- HRA Guidance (Human Resource Administration)
 - Help with application online
 - Help with reopening case due to errors or missed appointments
- Immigration Services
 - Child born in US can apply for HRA
 - Partner with attorneys and charities to support these families
- Domestic Violence Assistance
 - These numbers continue to go up
 - Safe houses are provided in necessary, "Safe Horizon"

Process

1. Referral - new family intake (any grade when they enter)
2. Assessment - figure out what the lowest hanging fruit to tackle
3. Plan - Goals, strategies and formal services
4. Implementation of plan - monitoring. What is happening with the family, survey, stay in constant communication, flexible planning
5. Closure - once the goal is completed, a survey is conducted to follow up if additional services are required. Independent living plan.

Vision: One Stop Shop

- Housing services
- Medical
- Education
- Immigration
- Food Pantry
- Job Readiness
- Mental Health
- Safe Haven

The overall goal of the Wrap-Around Service is to be more or less of a one stop shop instead of sending our families out all the time. We have received support for the family services department and the Wrap-Around Services initiative may qualify for grants. We cannot pay for mental health services outside the school. Most services are supported by foundations and donations.

Academic Committee: Maria Aveledo

Last month was focused on reviewing the NWEA end of the year results to determine areas where performance was close to the goals and areas where it was not. The plan is for the principals to work closely with the teachers to identify what their needs are for the different levels for individual students. Overall, there are improvements and we are seeing better results.

Development Committee: Emily Conrath

The school was recently awarded a grant of \$50,000 from Ambrose Monell Foundation to support general operating. The school has sent out three fund proposals as well. The Director or Development is also working to meet with Ambrose Monell Foundation and to introduce herself to current funders as well as lapsed funders to see if they can recommit to the school. We almost reached \$40,000 from the annual campaign which came in from 50 different donors with gifts ranging from \$50 to \$5,000. The coming month will be focused on a renewal request to the New York Yankees and a report of activities for Van Amerigen due a week from the date of this meeting.

Finance Committee: Bruce Greenwald

January financials are yet to be ready, we recently circulated December financials. As of last count, we have a projected deficit of a little under half a million dollars for the year. We changed our primary bank from JP Morgan Chase to Citizens.

In the last 12 months Citizens gave us a grant of \$25,000 over 5 years courtesy of Larry Slous. We also received some funds from Investors Bank (predecessor to Citizens), specifically, from the investors foundation.

Governance Committee: Mark Samuel

Pasek Consulting will begin working on our renewal by March 15. In the following 2 years, they would also help us with strategic planning to figure out the direction the school goes in the next 3 to 5 years.

Pasek Consulting Contract

The board **VOTED**:

The motion to enter into a consultancy agreement with the Pasek consulting was moved, seconded and unanimously approved at 5:43 pm

Terra Winston will lead our board development meeting on the 27th of April. Bruce and Nicole have individually offered office space for the meeting. Dinner would be provided.

ED Goals

The board **VOTED**:

The motion to approve the goals for Denise for 2023 was moved, seconded and unanimously approved at 5:48pm

On governance, we have had two complaints from the same father this year - the same father made a couple of formal complaints last year. Both Denise and Jane have responded.

Facilities Committee: B. Greenwald and Candice Manzano

2nd floor 423 east 138th street Lease

- 6th and 8th grade on the 7th and 8th floor
- negotiated to take 2nd floor for office space and classroom, agreed to 3 year lease with option to opt out of 3rd year
- move 7th grade to this 2nd floor space
- help to coordinate academics and manage space
- 7th and 8th floor lease will expire in July 2024 with option for another year, need to provide notice to vacate

629 Courtlandt - UPC coordinate construction, construction has commenced.

- Estimated availability in July 2024

The board **VOTED**:

The motion to approve the Lease and Rider of 2nd floor, 423 East 138 street was moved, seconded and unanimously approved at 6:02pm

Close of Meeting Session

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at by Jane Rosen at 6:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Hayden Chan, Secretary of the Board

