

# **The Bronx Charter School for Children**

## **Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 16, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Bronx Charter School of Children was held virtually on December 16, 2021, at 4:30pm.

The following members of the Board were present:

Denise Alexander (Ex-Officio, Executive Director), Brigitte Bentele, Joanne Carris, Bruce Greenwald, Paul Libretta, Jane Ehrenberg Rosen (chair), and Nicole Schmidt

Absent were: Sydney Blair, Hayden Chan, Mark A. Samuel, and Larry Slous

Guests included Richard Gonzalez (Middle School Principal), Bruno Marchand (High School Coordinator), Anastasiya Rosenbaum (Director of Finance), and Carmen Umpierre (Elementary School Principal).

The meeting was called to order at 4:34pm.

### Principal Highlights

Richard Gonzalez reported that report cards for the end of trimester 1 were sent out in backpacks and to parents. There were too many D grades. Teachers were not grading in a timely way, giving false positives; Richard will now have access to the grade books. Teachers need to enter grades every week. There will be two progress reports per trimester. Every parent of a student who received D or below has been reached. Grading in the Middle School uses A, B, C, D and F; Elementary School uses Beginning, Developing, Secure. Moving forward, teachers will give weekly quizzes created by Richard and Ms Francis. The data from these will be used in the TLC meetings. The 6th grade advanced math group taught by the Interventionist is working well. In order to do the same for 7th grade, Bonnie Halloran is working with a small group. The summative data was disappointing. Teachers need support for planning how to use the 2-hour blocks of time, incorporating reteaching or clarifying misconceptions. In terms of climate and culture, there have been behavior problems in the 6th grade. Building on positives is encouraged. Teachers want to have a detention period during lunch, particularly related to homework issues. They will monitor it, enter data into Kickboard, follow protocols, and talk with student and parent.

Carmen Umpierre reported that the focus in Elementary School has been on math where the core instruction period has been restructured with two teachers in grades 3-5. An additional 45 minutes has been added to math time. Quizzes have been added. Carmen is spending time developing teachers.

### Middle School Mission: Getting Our Scholars to HS

Bruno Marchand reported on the work being done to prepare students and parents for high school entry. Only 4 parents attended an event so he is following up with a letter. He sent out an interest survey in September and plans to meet with each parent. He is also meeting with graduates, some of whom will volunteer to do a presentation at school and he is showing a video where graduates talk about their high schools. Bruno wants to raise the excitement level. Students will fill out mock applications. He plans to be interactive with the scholars about what

they are doing to improve. He is helping scholars who want to go to art schools develop portfolios. There is a data base of graduates, but we loose them after Middle School. He has tried getting graduates to find other graduates, especially the ones who are in college now. Since there has been such a large turnover of staff, graduates have a problem identifying with the school.

### Trimester 1 Dashboard Review

Denise Alexander used her screen to go through the Dashboard which she had sent to the Board (attached). As for school wide goals, this year is considered year 0, from which progress will be measured. The middle of the year NWEA results should be important data points. We're losing SpEd students; four students are in progress; there is one student in 12-1. Since attendance data on SpEd and MLL students is done manually, it hasn't yet been recorded. The target is 95%; averages in K and grade 1 are low. It's important to learn whether the absences are excused or unexcused. Scholar attrition before September is primarily the result of scholars choosing a school where a sibling is enrolled. Summative assessments are color-coded. Suspension data is part of the performance framework. Attrition of staff is primarily in the Elementary School. Development data is trimester-based and does not include federal money. Teacher informs the Family Support department about concerns. The ACS numbers come from outside the school; the school only reports educational neglect to the ACS if a student has not been in school for 10 days in a row. Bonnie Halloran is taking over the work of the dashboard. It was suggested that data related to Covid be included. Grade 5 is currently fully remote because of Covid cases among teacher and students. There are also cases in grade 3, the main office and grade 1. Is there a plan B if the DOE decides to close schools? A number of students were vaccinated at a pop-up site.

### Academic Committee

The committee had its monthly meeting last week. In addition to what has already been reported by Richard and Carmen, Brigitte Bentele reported that two speech providers are coming in. Marie Fornes is working with teachers in ICT classes to consider different models for collaborating. Nedra Bowers is making a big push for language development. There is a bilingual program in grade 2 to help scholars fill gaps. There are still unfilled positions, resulting in great challenges.

### Development Committee

The committee met with Hui Wong to discuss the job description of a Development Director. The focus of the new position will be on grant writing. Other work that needs to be done is community engagement, website development, maintaining connections with existing donors, newsletters, celebrating scholars and teachers, building the image of the school. Marketing and development are not the same skill set. A challenge will be how to manage the expectations of the director. It was suggested that we collaborate with a firm or a group that other schools are using. To begin the search for a Development Director, Denise has contacted two search firms and Bethany Goldszar has listed the position on her LinkedIn page.

### Finance Committee

Anastasiya Rosenbaum reported that in November revenue was under budget and spending increased, mainly due to an increase in instructional salaries and recruitment expenses. IN DEED membership charges for applications; there are 12 vacancies, with 3 positions filled and beginning work on January 7. Assuming all positions are filled and the number of students

remains the same, a loss of \$530,000 is predicted by the end of the year due to facilities expense increases, with janitorial and security services in two locations. The cash position is enough to cover 5.5 months of expenses.

Governance Committee

Paul Libretta interviewed a new candidate, Maria Avelito, for the Board. The Governance Committee will interview her and then she will be presented to the Board.

Facilities Committee

Bruce Greenwald is waiting for a response from the landlord of 388 Willis about adding or reconfiguring space. A development organization is acquiring a building at 151 street and 3rd which could be developed into a Middle School. We are offering a letter of intent. There is some risk since we don't have a good forecast of enrollment.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte Bentele,  
substitute for Hayden Chan, Secretary