

MINUTES: Board Meeting on April 16, 2020

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Bronx Charter School for Children was held virtually on April 16, 2020 via Zoom.

Present: Denise Alexander (Ex-Officio), Brigitte Bentele, Joanne Carris, Hayden Chan, Bruce Greenwald, Krista Hammond, Paul Libretta, Jane Ehrenberg Rosen, Nicole Schmidt, Suellyn Scull, Larry Slous

Absent: Sydney Blair, Mark A. Samuel

Guests: Candice Manzano, Director of Operations and Development

Larry called the meeting to order at 4:33pm. The minutes of the virtual March meeting were approved as amended.

Head of School Report: School closure

Denise indicated that we are doing pretty well with academic program. Families of students who were not participating online were contacted. There are reported cases of sick family members. Teachers are doing an amazing job. Family support team is reaching out to families. Related services cannot do these services with zoom. The DOE has asked schools to transition from zoom to google suites, but the State Charter School association are not sure that charter school need to make these changes. The DOE has cancelled all vacations. Instead of the scheduled May vacation the Academic Leadership Team is considering having an extended weekend vacation for teachers while students are given a project designed by grade teams. There are no formal evaluations, but teachers are getting feedback by having school leaders join their virtual classes. Jane commended Candice on the great job that she did with the lottery from her own home. Candice reported on student recruitment. She is making calls to let parents know that we are doing online registration, using redacted form from previous years. Bruno Marchand is reaching it to current 5th graders. Teacher recruitment is done virtually. Four people were hired, including a Spanish teacher, all but one of whom had visited the school. One teacher voluntarily is not returning; two teachers are not being asked to come back.

Academic Committee

The committee met virtually before this meeting to discuss plans for Middle School curriculum. The ELA team decided to use My Perspectives Pearson. The benefits are that it is teacher-friendly program, assessments are built in, allows for parent communication, has a student online portal and diagnostic assessments before each unit, is aligned with the NY Standards. For mathematics it had been decided to use Open Up Resources Illustrative Math. This program is used by a large variety of schools, public and private. The Regional Development Manager of Open Up Resources has directed Kristin to a Facebook Community User Group that has thousands of members, including coaches, who are willing to share their experiences. The program is aligned with the NY Standards and incorporates various populations, students with disabilities, second language learners and high achievers. Bridget Murphy who will be teaching math to class 6 students is enthusiastic about the program and realizes that there will be

accommodations that she needs to make to meet the needs of the students, many of whom she'll know from having taught them in class 5. Questions remain about materials for Spanish, Life Sciences, and Social Studies. Denise will send the committee curricular materials for these subjects. These subjects will be done departmentally. Kristen is looking at programs for advising.

Development Committee

Krista had sent out a development update before the meeting. NYC Charter School Center Application was sent; Robin Hood Covid-19 fund application will be submitted soon; NYC Covid-19 Response & Impact Fund was submitted; NYCT application is pending. Jane will reach out so that there is full board support of the Annual Appeal which has raised \$41000 from 67 donors. Mark and Hayden were not yet approved for the Board since they weren't able to get fingerprints. The site visit for the Charter School Growth Fund which is a MS seed funding request has been postponed until July or August. There is no change in grants since last time. Seed funding for MS. A letter to donors with highlights of what is happening during school closure will be sent (A draft was included in the update). The board decided unanimously to offer the position of Director of Development to Bethany Goldszer. HuiWan has been hired for two more months and may continue to transition Bethany to her new position.

Finance Committee

Bruce reported that the March expenses are trending the same as before, but he has not received the report from Jo. They were developing the budget for 2020-21, but it isn't clear by how much the per pupil amount is being reduced. The budget takes into account Denise's thoughts about staffing: assumption with school closure is that students will not necessarily be prepared for the next grade level, particular in K-2 because of reading skills. Therefore, 1st and 2nd grade classrooms would be same configuration as K, with two lead teachers in the classes that don't have ICT setting. Budget has place holder for LS principal but Denise is reconsidering the leadership positions. For salary compensation, we want to try to be competitive with DOE, but may suggest a freeze to 2% increase. It's expected that there will be 2% increase in expenditures. When the budget is drafted, it will be presented to the Finance Committee and then to the full Board. Alpine Capital Bank will make an application for a program put in place by Federal Government, Payroll Protection Plan. This loan is waived if we retain a certain percentage of employees. We must certify that the current circumstances result in challenges and that we are prudently planning for future. The Board voted unanimously, with the exception of Bruce who declined to vote since he has financial relationship with the bank, to give authority to the Finance Committee to move forward with this application.

Governance Committee

David Frank sent a letter about closure. Charter schools are not under the same restrictions about closure as DOE schools, but it may be prudent to follow their decisions about school closure.

Facilities Committee

Nothing to report.

Middle School Report

Human Resources Update: Leadership

Before closure Denise was in the process of looking for K-5 leadership but has put that on hold.

Denise reports that the school is on track with everything that was included in action plan.

Recruitment and hiring of staff; work on schedule continue; time line for purchasing of curriculum in question since there is no access to the building. Denise is rethinking the organizational structure so that there are clear lines of supervision, management, support.

Suellyn offered to work with Denise on organizational structure, which will be finalized by next week and sent to board members. In place of a Summer Bridge Program, if the building isn't available, there might be sleep-away camp.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte Bentele