

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

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

The following members of the Board were present: Denise Alexander (Executive Director), Paul Libretta (acting President), Mark A. Samuel, Sydney Blair, Joanne Carris, Bruce Greenwald (Treasurer), Maria Aveledo, Ken Blomster, Emily Conrath, Nicole Schmidt.

Absent were: Hayden Chan (Secretary).

Guests included Tina Maiuolo (Elementary School Principal), Bonnie Halloran (Middle School Principal), Candice Manzano (Director of Operations) and Jonathan Jimenez (assistant to the Board).

The meeting was called to order at 4:36pm.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The February 2023 minutes are still being reviewed and will be approved at the April meeting.

ED Report: Denise Alexander

Denise opened the floor to the committee to raise questions about the Executive Director Report. Denise mentioned the upcoming parent-teacher conference and gave information about expulsions and suspensions. She also talked about the Einstein tutoring enrollment program that is still going on. In response to a question raised on the high school placement results, Denise advised that the high school placement results were fairly good, with at least one student making it into a specialized high school.

There needs to be a more robust preparation program for our students that helps them get into programs like Prep for Prep. Mr. Bruno Marchan did an amazing job during the pandemic, finding ways to support the sixth graders. The organization is looking to create special summer, after-school or Saturday programs specifically geared toward students targeting specialized high schools or high-performing high schools. In support, money has been allocated through ESSER funds. Parents are encouraged to support advocacy for charter schools, and there are opportunities for parents to write their own letters and sign letters from the Northeast Charter School Alliance. Denise requested support from elected officials and for board members to attend and participate in the testing season.

Parents have expressed an interest in taking on positions to get the FSA, and ESL teachers are providing them with ENL services.

Before enrollment, a lottery is held every spring to determine seat placement for the following year. The lottery is audited, and the enrollment process is underway.

Principals Report: Bonnie Halloran and Tina Maiuolo

Bonnie reported that fifteen students have been accepted into top high schools in science; four have been accepted into Brooklyn, one has been accepted into Queens, and one has been accepted into a specialized high school. Additionally, twenty students have been accepted into their top program in district seven, with one student going to the most highly ranked Bronx High School, Lucas Ponce. In answer to the question raised about comparing the current year's statistics with those of previous years, Tina stated that this is the first graduating class for the school. In answer to the question raised about putting in a mechanism to track the students after they leave the school, Bruno was convening a program to track students after they leave high school. The student council for the middle school is working on a new composting program to teach students how to compost. This is an exciting venture, giving the students additional responsibilities and the student council hopes to attract several students to the program.

Academic Committee: Maria Aveledo

Maria provided feedback on the academic reports. In March, the committee meeting focused on the academic improvement plan and how it is using formative data. They discussed how some teachers are able to perform better than others in terms of bringing the content back to the students' needs and improving performance. They also discussed what's being taught versus how, and how it is really sticking with the students. Finally, they discussed the recent summatives the students have taken. The middle school has seen great results in math with the sixth grade. In the elementary school, positive results have been seen on their cumulatives and summative assessments. The committee is currently focused on understanding the economic improvement plan, diving into the use of formative data, and getting feedback on the curriculum being piloted.

Development Committee: Emily Conrath

Emily provided a brief update on the recent funding that has come in from Investors Bank Foundation (predecessor to Citizens Bank) as well as an additional donation of over \$500, bringing the total for this fiscal year to a little over \$40,000. There are currently six pending proposals with amounts ranging between \$500 and \$200,000. Additionally, Emily has been meeting with many of potential donors individually and getting ideas about how to improve the annual campaign and development efforts overall.

Finance Committee: Bruce Greenwald

Bruce said that the financial information for January and February has not yet been received. The global report shows that schools are slightly ahead of budget, which means that the projected deficit will be lower than what was anticipated, which is largely due to the filling of budgeted staff positions. The budgeting process for the next financial year has begun. The budgeting process takes all priority aspects into consideration. Once there is a draft in place, the Finance Committee will review it.

Facilities Committee: Bruce Greenwald

Bruce reported that there is an executed lease for the second floor at 138th Street.

The board **VOTED**:

Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and approved, the committee agreed to the approval of the lease.

Bruce mentioned that the owner's rep is in the process of engaging design consultants to assist with planning the build out. The landlord has given permission to use a separate team from LOCI Architecture, the architects of record for the building, as our design consultants.

The board **VOTED**:

Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and approved, the committee agreed to the approval of the LOCI team as our design consultant. A proposal and formal contract is to come.

Governance Committee: Mark Samuel

Denise provided an update on Pesak's consultation regarding charter renewal. The renewal of the charter has not officially started, but Denise has been in contact with Pesak for a progress update. The charter application is required by the August 15th deadline. It was requested that the July board meeting be postponed and rescheduled for July 31st to allow sufficient time for the charter application to get approved.

In the interim, Denise and her team will be meeting with the school leadership team every Thursday, beginning on April 20th. Paul has requested a draft of the charter application in the interim to allow the board to review and provide input prior to the June meeting. Denise will pose the question to the group working on the charter application for a response. Mark reported that a board retreat taking place with Terra Winston in Manhattan is scheduled for April 27th from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the retreat is to discuss communication among the board and the priorities of the school.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Hayden Chan, Secretary of the Board