

# **The Bronx Charter School for Children**

## **Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2022**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Bronx Charter School of Children was held virtually on March 17, 2022, at 4:30pm.

The following members of the Board were present:

Denise Alexander (Ex-Officio, Executive Director), Brigitte Bentele, Sydney Blair, Joanne Carris, Bruce Greenwald, Paul Libretta, Jane Ehrenberg Rosen (chair), and Mark A. Samuel

Absent were: Hayden Chan, Nicole Schmidt, and Larry Slous

Guests included Richard Gonzalez (Middle School Principal), Tina Maiuolo (Elementary School Interim Director), Bruno Marchan (High School Guidance Counselor), Candice Manzano (Director of Operations and Development).

The meeting was called to order at 4:33pm.

The February minutes were approved as amended.

### Executive Director Report

Denise answered questions that were raised about her report. Since data showed no MS staff responded, she will redo that survey. In response to concerns about the math test results for grades 4 and 7, these are summative results (chapter tests) that indicate reteaching is needed in grade 4. In grade 7, the difficulty resulted from being on remote for so long, with catch-up needed. Also, 4th grade has had a great turn-over in teachers with the third hire beginning in November. There are plans for morning math for grade 4, an hour five days a week. There have been more ACS cases (4) that the school initiated this year than in the past. These have resulted primarily from attendance issues. Teachers hired through TFA tend to stay beyond two years. Outreach with parent groups and community groups has started; parents can give the school feedback and be advocates for it. Denise participated in a press conference about zombie charter schools; one of our staff was highlighted on Univision. Denise has been invited to political events. She will be meeting with Assembly ~~woman~~ Member Amanda Septimo who sits on the Education Committee. She has also met with other Executive Directors.

### Board candidate

Paul introduced Maria Aveledo who has met with and is recommended by the Governance Committee. Board members asked her questions (how do you think you can help us? what is your view of charter schools) and Maria posed questions to the Board (what has been the most difficult decision you have had to make as a board? how has being on the board changed you? what expectations do you have of board members) and expressed an interest in the Academic and Facilities Committees.

The Bronx Charter School for Children Board of Trustees, having conducted a thorough background check via a fingerprint scan as required and having discovered no State or federal criminal history, or having provided such history to SED if found, has voted unanimously to select Maria Aveledo as final candidates to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on July

2025, pending approval by SED. The resolution is formally adopted upon SED's approval.

### Principal Highlights

Tina Maiuolo reported that teachers are preparing scholars for the ELA state tests, being held on March 29 and 31. She is going into classrooms, giving feedback to teachers. Now that the weather is better, children have been going outside for recess. After testing she plans to have more field trips for them.

Richard Gonzalez reported similar activity in the MS, with state test prep and visiting classrooms with academic leads. Since scholars were on remote for such a long time, they now need to acclimate to being in the building again. Formal teacher evaluations will be done after testing. Morning announcements were hijacked with good humor by an announcement of the student council candidates for elections.

In answer to a questions of whether it will be difficult to engage scholars after testing, ES has plans to have scholars choose which unit to do first and MS will be involved in planning for next year. Also, MS is planning a product to celebrate National History Day and a Science Fair. Denise reminded us that 4th grade will have to prepare for the state Science test.

Bruno has met with all 7th grade students and is in the process with meeting with parents to give them a list of schools to consider for high school. For this list he considers schools that have a graduation rate of greater than 75% and a place where students are safe. Nine students are preparing for the specialized high school test. The art teacher is working with students interested in arts on their portfolio. Bruno is also working with the 6th graders to ask them to define the characteristics of a good school. It is too late for 6th graders to apply for Prep for Prep, but they could apply separately to independent schools with scholarship. There is less hesitancy about going out of the district for high school than in the past.

### Academic Committee

The committee had its monthly meeting last week, primarily to discuss the staffing proposal for '22-23. The proposal was distributed to the entire board with a few minor changes, due to facility restrictions and limits on adults not in the classroom. In addition, the staffing proposal has non-academic positions, including a Dean of Students in each division. The committee also discussed test scores. Concerns about 4th and 7th grade math have already been raised.

### Development Committee

After signing a contract with the Development Guild, Denise and Jane met with them. They are beginning to get candidates for Development Director and predict the process to be completed in 4-5 months. Denise will forward grants received to board members; Bethany is working on grants. Denise will also send individual updates to each board member for the annual appeal and wants to send thank you notes.

### Finance Committee

Bruce said that there was not a lot to report regarding the monthly financials since the last month. The end of year projection is that the school breaks even or has a \$50,000 deficit. The process of developing the budget for next year has started; he hopes to bring a draft to the Board in April so that it can be voted on in May. Major open items that make budgeting difficult are enrollment, professional headcount, and compensation model. The goal is to be competitive with the DOE. Denise said that current staff are being polled regarding benefits, with flexible schedule a

favorite. Tina and Richard are speaking with teachers.

#### Governance Committee

Paul reported that Christopher Berger who had previously interviewed with the Governance Committee about board membership expressed that it is a better time for him to serve on the Board. The priority for recruiting new board members is to increase the racial diversity of the Board, but considering how difficult it was to find a candidate ~~of color~~who would help meet these goals. (it took 8 months to find Maria who is from Venezuela), consensus was that we invite Chris to the Board. He may be able to contribute to ~~another other goals which is to increase fundraising of board composition an development~~

#### Facilities Committee

Bruce reported that additional new space at the current MS building wouldn't be available until January 2023, which is too late. Denise is meeting with the architects to see if an additional grade can be squeezed into the space. At 388 Willis architects have produced two alternate floor plans for having another grade in the current ES space. However, the landlord has been unresponsive. Future space for all three grades of MS is at 629 Courtland. Some rooms would need to be reconfigured. The committee plans to send a letter of intent; complication is that the landlord doesn't own the building. Still, it is the best candidate for MS.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte Bentele,  
substitute for Hayden Chan, Secretary