

The Bronx Charter School for Children

Board Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2022

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Bronx Charter School of Children was held virtually on April 21, 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), Hayden Chan, Nicole Schmidt, and Larry Slous

Absent were: Mark A. Samuel

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

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

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board:

VOTED:

To approve the minutes of the last Board meeting held on March 17, 2022.

Executive Director Report

The Executive Leadership Team has been communicating a vision of Equity across the system. 4 - 4.5 day work week would be possible for Middle School, but does not work for elementary school at the moment. KIPP Charter School shared their schedule for 4.5 day work week. This approach is in response to Post Pandemic effects as educators are seeking work life balance/flexibility. Much thought is being considered by the leadership team towards work life balance, such as staffing levels, students, and NYS work week guidelines. Also keeping in mind that of false expectations are not created. Many other school leaders are formulating solutions to attract and retain educators. Trying to respond to these challenges by maximizing student performance in conjunction with teacher focus. We are looking to hiring educators who are certified and have current classroom experience. Certified teachers are required as we prepare for the Regions. The Electronic Benefits survey did not work out as expected therefore transitioned over to pencil/paper. Change of curriculum when there is an adoption. Middle School Writing and Social Studies not in compliance and science is good. New standards approved by NYS need to be implemented by next year. Parents are allowed to opt out of taking the NYS Assessment test. NYS “refuse”, always the parents’ choice. There is a minimum threshold to be in compliance, we always have never been close to being out of compliance. School home partnership initiative - framework to work together with families to work best with scholars.

Board create policies - Denise ensures compliance of policies and procedures with Executive Leadership Team. This year both Principals will facilitate as opposed to Denise. Budget falls in this category, yearly review.

Principal Report

Tina Maiuolo

One on one teacher with discussion led to additional meetings, almost met with everyone. Working with building response team, take scholars outdoors at the park, covering school safety and practice drills. Locally we have been experiencing an uptick in violence in the neighborhood. Parents were calling us to let us know they do not want outdoor recess, more so than in the past. Even split of families feel this way. We consulted with local police “school safety officer Lugo” asked for more patrol 12:00 – 2:00 pm. How is our school security? Consider hiring additional security? All instances of violence mentioned due to external circumstances. Operations and BRT have conducted various discussions.

Richard Gonzalez

Evaluations - Two teachers will conduct the observations with Francis or Piers. Many additional questions arose from our surveys. Denise Alexander and Carolyn Lashley, spoke with staff about the survey data and addressed each issue. School consequences - teachers utilized their own approach to their class. Protocols must be followed to the letter when addressing scholars. Richard has deliberately increased his presence in classes and parent engagement increase as he has been reaching out to three families a day. Technology challenges in the 6th grade, inappropriate websites, teasing and bullying. Potential approaches to mitigate issues shared with parents to restrict to Wi-Fi at home.

Marketing Update

Candice and Denise

Plan to increase our schools presence by way of research marketing consultants firms. Our district is over saturated of school. We do not have a brand, no PR, need a digital platform. How does this effect multi stakeholders, scholars, teachers, schools, donors.

Four firms presented strategy proposals.

Top agency is our first choice – they have capacity to expand services which can grow with our needs. Have a public relations piece (news organizations) beneficial to our stakeholders.

Better understanding of competition, their brand expression is the start outside then filter down to our brand. Incorporation of catch phrases. Have templates for messaging. Brea, Zetta, public Prep school (younger organizations), some slogan they came up were very attractive.

Do they have a built in conflict of interest? Work more with profit and nonprofit less charter schools. Rod Val is 2nd choice. We never issued a formal RFP.

Continuing minutes – Board meeting – April 21, 2022

5:30p

Academic Committee

Brigitte Bentele reported that a new grading system will be implemented – this system is based on the NYS standards and benchmarks and accomplishment of the learning expected by the standards.

Development Committee

Denise reported on the recently announced Bloomberg money made available for programs outside regular school hours – this funding will include charter schools. This will support programs like Summer Rising. It will provide \$2K/ student and will cover the staff costs. It is expected to have a short and easy to complete application. Denise will ask Bethany to handle this application.

Finance Committee

March revenue totaled \$1.13 mil, \$35 K lower than projected. March expenses totaled \$1.02 mil, \$100 K lower than projected and \$116K lower than budgeted. The projected surplus at end of FY 2022 is \$320K - this is due to unfilled positions.

There have been issues with the Con Ed bills for the Middle School, but Candice spoke to Con Ed and thinks the problem is straightened out.

A finalized draft of the budget will be available before the May Board meeting.

Governance Committee

Paul Libretta spoke briefly about the Community Analysis that will be done by Terra Winston beginning on May 9. It is likely we will schedule an additional Board meeting for Terra to report out her findings.

Facilities Committee

Bruce Greenwald talked to the Board about the space considerations for next year and beyond. Seventh and eighth grade will be housed at 138th Street next year; sixth grade will be housed at 388 Willis. This is a temporary plan; we will not do added construction at 388 to accommodate this situation.

The space at 629 Courtlandt which will house sixth, seventh, and eighth grades could be ready by the fall of 2024. A letter of intent to move forward with this space was circulated and approved unanimously by the Board last week. This building exists, but needs to be totally refurbished. Plans indicate a gym, and possibly a rooftop playground or the preparation for that without completing it. The School will be responsible for all furnishings for the space.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Hayden Chan, Secretary