

The Bronx Charter School for Children

Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Bronx Charter School of Children was held virtually on October 21, 2021, at 4:30pm.

The following members of the Board were present:

Denise Alexander (Ex-Officio, Executive Director), Brigitte Bentele, Sydney Blair, Joanne Carris, Hayden Chan, Bruce Greenwald, Krista Hammond, Paul Libretta, Jane Ehrenberg Rosen (chair), Mark A. Samuel, Nicole Schmidt, and Larry Slous.

Guests included Bethany Goldszer (Director of Development and Community Partnerships), Candice Manzano (Director of Operations), and Anastasiya Rosenbaum (Director of Finance), Carmen Umpierre (Principal of Elementary School)

The meeting was called to order at 4:31pm.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Board:

VOTED:

To approve the minutes of the last Board meeting held on September 17, 2021, in the form previously circulated and emended.

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

The Board:

VOTED:

To approve the revised COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Denise explained that the process for giving exemptions, without preference, is that she works with the school counsel.

Executive Director Report

Denise Alexander reported that the conference sponsored by the Charter School Growth Fund was an awesome experience and she encouraged the Board to use it more. She and Bruce have started discussions with respect to Facilities and Finance and what the Fund has to offer. It provides membership to BoardOnTrack for a year, after which the school would pay half, or \$5000, if the Board continues to use the service. Denise will explore what sources are available beyond what we learned at the last Board meeting. Questions were raised about the Executive Director Report (attached). Challenges will be raised in Executive Session.

Principal Highlights

Carmen Umpierre gave highlights about the Elementary School. The NWEA assessment showed scholars’ areas of strengths and needs which are used to set new expectations, with changes to the scope and sequence, and the structure of the day to accommodate science and social science. She has worked with teachers to set goals, communicated with parents, created a pacing calendar, changed Eureka Math to Math 180, worked with interventionists on guided reading and

math. Parent forums will be held for ENL and SpEd and Wednesday mornings are used for the upper grade teachers to learn how to teach phonics. Carmen is creating professional development opportunities and having walk-throughs. The tone is one of teaching and learning. Bulletin boards had a Spanish theme. One teacher needs additional support and one was released. In answer to the question about changes in academics and possible difficulties for teachers, Carmen gave the example of Kindergartners who are coming to school without ever having been in school due to Covid, as an example of making changes based on what students are able to know and do.

Academic Committee

Brigitte Bentele reported on the Academic Committee meeting that was held on October 14. (minutes attached). A question was raised of how many teachers are fully certified. Denise reported that the State has widened certification considerations because there weren't enough qualified candidates, but said that the school prioritizes full certification for ENL and SpEd teachers. Teachers who are not certified are required to be working toward certification. The school supports teacher in acquiring CTLE hours toward certification.

Development Committee

Bethany Goldszer expanded on the Development Report (attached).

Finance Committee

Anastasiya Rosenbaum reported on the September finances, with \$1.1 million in revenue and \$952,000 spent. Per pupil is under the budgeted amount and the expenditures are also lower due to unfilled positions. Until the uncertainties of enrollment and unfilled positions settle down, there will be fluctuation in the financial situation. 95% of the audit is completed. The Board VOTED:

To delegate to the Finance Committee to complete the audit and approve it. The full Board will approve it at the next meeting.

Governance Committee

Paul Libretta reported that Board Assist needs more time to find potential board candidates who are minorities to better reflect the community. A question was raised of whether network schools that have individual charters for each school have any overlap in board members.

Facilities Committee

Bruce Greenwald reported that ABS Brokerage presented two possibilities for Middle School or K-8 school at 153rd and 154th Streets and Third Avenue, with 25,000 and 65,000 square feet respectively. These sites would not be available for three years. Given the enrollment challenge and the financial uncertainty, committing to a long-term plan for a new facility is risky. The ad hoc committee will meet to discuss. The site at 138th Street which now houses 6th and 7th grades has an additional 5000 square feet available, that may work for 6-8. Denise and Candice Manzano will look at the space. The landlord at 388 Willis has plans for upgrading the building during the summer, including replacing the roof, replacing windows so they can open, installing LED lighting. Denise is in conversation with Abraham House about space for herself and the Executive Team. Another possibility may be to occupy the available space at 138th Street

immediately. Proximity of the different divisions of the school to each other is concerning to about 10-15% of Middle School parents.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte Bentele
substituting for Hayden Chan, Secretary