

# October Board Meeting

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

campus, larissa, families, school, students, quarantined, building, meeting, kids, issued, west bank, minutes, completed, terms, karla, percentages, state, people, work, data

## SPEAKERS

Melanie Tennyson, Larissa Muetzel, Guest, All Board Members, Sharon Barthelemy, Susan Chapman, Sarah Murphy, Max Correa

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- S** Sharon Barthelemy 00:00  
Okay. So I'm going to go ahead and call the meeting to order. Grant is unable to make the meeting tonight and he asked me to step in. Can we just start with the agenda now?
- S** Susan Chapman 19:13  
We can, yes. And I'll go ahead and start the recording. Okay.
- S** Susan Chapman 19:22  
I just dropped a link to the agenda in the chat box for anybody who's looking for that.
- S** Sharon Barthelemy 19:58  
Okay, sorry about that everybody. So I think the first thing is Max takes the roll.
- M** Max Correa 20:42  
Okay, yeah, can you guys hear me? Hello everybody. Um, yeah, I have on the Board members, Sarah, Sharon, Valiant and I don't see Larissa, Jade, or Grant. Is that correct? You guys out there, anybody?
- L** Larissa Muetzel 20:58  
Larissa's here.

**M** Max Correa 21:00  
Oh, Larissa. Sorry. Yes. Hello, everybody. Hi. Jade, are you in the call? Doesn't not look like it. Okay, so looks like we have five Board members. And Susan as well here, okay.

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 21:21  
Okay. Next I'm having an issue downloading the agenda. Sorry about that.

**M** Melanie Tennyson 21:33  
Finance committee.... I think it's next on the agenda.

**M** Melanie Tennyson 21:37

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 21:38  
We'll hear from the finance committee. Who's representing them tonight?

**M** Melanie Tennyson 21:41  
I think we the only thing we have in the finance committee is to approve the minutes.

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 21:48  
Okay. Any questions? Do we approve them first? Or do we have questions first?

**M** Melanie Tennyson 21:57  
You can ask for.. you can make a motion to approve, and then someone can second it. And then if there's any discussion...

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 22:08  
Okay. Do we have a motion to approve the minutes from the finance group?

**S** Sarah Murphy 22:12  
So moved, to approve the minutes.

L Larissa Muetzel 22:16  
I will second. This is Larissa.

S Sharon Barthelemy 22:18  
Okay, we have a motion to accept and a second, too. Any questions from anyone? We'll take a vote. All those in favor say aye.

A All Board Members 22:33  
Aye. Aye.

S Sharon Barthelemy 22:38  
All those against say nay.

S Sharon Barthelemy 22:43  
The adapted minutes are adopted.

M Melanie Tennyson 22:47  
Can I take a minute right now - I talked about that it at the finance committee meeting but not everyone was there - just to thank Larissa for her two terms as Treasurer. Her first term she completed, and then she recently stepped in when Lena had to step down. And just want to say again, Larissa, how much I appreciate you doing that and all that you have done for us over the six years that you've been on the board. I don't know if you've ever missed, if you rarely missed a meeting, and always have been there when we needed you. And it's been just a real pleasure to get to know you. And I want to thank you for your time with us. It's been..

L Larissa Muetzel 23:31  
Thank you. It's been a great pleasure. I enjoyed it. You're all very easy to work with.

S Sharon Barthelemy 23:38  
Well, great. Thank you, Larissa. Next, Melanie, I'm sorry I still can't pull up mine...

M Melanie Tennyson 23:49  
I looked and then I, I don't have head of school report. I know we didn't we didn't have any thing to vote so I can come back. Okay. There it is. Yeah.

S

Sharon Barthelemy 24:00

Okay. Thank you.

M

Melanie Tennyson 24:03

Um, so the report... It's a good one. There's good things are happening. Um, the I'll go in order. I wanted to start with the West Bank, but I'll go in order. Enrollment is at about 1200 Kids - 1178. Lower than anticipated, but um, that seems to be true across the city and all - and even the state - all schools for the most part, have seen decreases in enrollment. Academically, things look really good. We got our first ANet (the achievement network or the interim benchmarks that we use) back and in that Head Report, if you haven't, you can see that I put a sample from the West Bank. The West Bank is a small subgroup, they completed their testing before everybody else. There's still some kids who are need to finish up their assessments Uptown. But when you look at 2019, 2020, to 21 There is an upward trend in the percentages there. Now when you say in second grade ELA, the percentages are 29, 36 and then up to 46. It's not.. these percentages don't equate to a to an ABC scale or what one would traditionally think of as a passing rate. If there's a 50% score at grade level, that means that 75% of your kids are trending between meeting the standard and mastering the standard so, so for us, those of us who are the educators and instructors and academic.. anything over 50% is really terrific and numbers are trending closer to 60% and almost across the board up from last year in ELA and math. So that tells us that all the having the kids back in the seats, number one, just back in school learning, and then using the interventions and acceleration that we have in place, is working and kids are moving towards mastery, and that's what we want. So we're really excited about that. The West Bank campus will begin after-care. There we did not have before and after care when we opened the school year and we had the split campus and COVID was raging in the beginning of the year. We couldn't figure out how to make it all work, but now that COVID numbers are down and we are going to be in the split campus longer, we are having, will start after care in November. We feel like it's a smaller, more crowded campus, but but we're in a much better place to be able to do that. And I think families, I know families will be really happy to have that additional support for working, those who would need to work and need childcare. We have issued progress reports and we have parent teacher conferences today around progress reports and we did them both virtually and in person. I saw a lot of families in the school people. People looked happy to be in the school. We also had back to school events at all three of our campuses throughout the month in October and that was really great for families.

M

Melanie Tennyson 28:14

We, you know, have had families that had new kindergarten age students, first grade students, sixth grade families that had come from the West Bank to the Uptown campus, and due to COVID, had never been in our buildings, like never seen their kids classrooms. So people are feeling really good now that they're able to come into the buildings on a limited basis and see, see the inside of the school meet their teachers in person, look at their kids work and have a sense, I think, a feeling of normalcy that's been been really great. An addition to the to the back to school, we incorporated the eighth grade, preparing or enrolling in high school event and we had a really good turnout for that too. So we've got a lot of our kids already and families thinking about where they're going to go to high school and how they're going to apply. We have a number of assessments that the state mandates that we complete: kindergarten readiness, which is a developmental readiness for five year olds, DIBELS, the dynamic indicators of something English language literacy, I can never remember what the B stands for, which is a K through three reading fluency and comprehension. Those screenings have been completed, as well as our iReady diagnostics. That with the achievement network benchmarks have us really set up with a great set of data to begin even more acceleration and differentiation and making instructional shifts that we need to for kids. So we're in really good shape there. Operationally, we have, we had some bad news and some good news. The operations or finance office, which was

not on the Dixon campus, but adjacent to, was the former Mel's grocery, which was the controversial corner store that was closed and renovated, and we had rented the two apartments that were being renovated, and that was our office space... during Ida, the roof was ripped off and had a lot of water damage. That landlord got the roof on pretty quick, but he didn't mitigate so everything was moldy and funky, and then he came in and did kind of a slipshod job there. So, long story short, we couldn't move back in. It was moldy and awful so we were able to - thanks to Ashley Weiss - who was scouting, as well as everyone else, we've found some really affordable rental space in the Nelson building. Those of you who are familiar with lower Prytania right where it starts, close to the top of the CBD - there's like a 1940s office building there. So we now have office space for our business office there, and development and communications, and it's really well situated to get to the three campuses - up and down off the highway - people can walk up to the Uptown campus, and we're just really excited about that. Emily and her folks are there. IT is there. Aviva has a desk for the first time ever, and like I said Development is there - Karla and Vanessa. The IT department secured an \$84,000 in funding, it wasn't a grant, but in funding from the emergency connectivity fund, and so they were able to upgrade every single Chromebook that goes home with our middle schoolers, so that was really a great windfall. And once again, thanks to Ashley for pursuing that. Really exciting news is that the West Bank campus is under construction and being worked on. That project was delayed due to Ida. But now some of our negotiations with the Archdiocese... but we got it on track and it's being worked on and ready to go, and we see a light at the end of the tunnel of getting our kids back in that building by January. So keep your fingers crossed that the supply chain holds and that we're not slowed down again.

M

Melanie Tennyson 33:05

The annual 403 B audit is completed and we we Emily and her team has begun getting all the documentation for our annual financial audit. Now she's in that new space and she'll have the auditors in there and start, start getting that going. And then finally in terms of operations, just NOLA Public Schools used a company called Terra Con to do a lot of their remediation after the storm and even though we had just small damage at the Uptown and Dixon campuses. It's important to note that they came in and they tested you know the repairs that they did in the rooms where we had some water leakage, and there is no mold or any issues there, and they've all been cleared and certified. So it makes everybody feel just confident and comfortable - students, families, kids to teachers and students, teachers, students and families can know that everybody's learning in a safe environment. Communications and Development have been just working non stop right through Ida with all the communications we talked about last month and then Karla worked with Miss Melissa food director to do a real coordinated push to get the free and reduced meal applications out. Being able to identify students who are eligible is very important to the school for lots of reasons when we're applying for grants when we're getting our funding from the state. And not to mention that right now meals are free; all kids are eating - as I think it should be for all children all the time - but there will be this shift back to people having to identify, and we just want to make sure that people have filled out that paperwork so that when the USDA, you know, flips that switch that kids are set up so that they can get their free and reduced lunch, and we don't find families caught in the middle of that. They've also been working hard on admission. We'll start to see billboards, electronic billboards up by the SuperDome. There's going to be new streetcar ads, and I saw the proofs for those today, and I thought they were really terrific. Great job, Karla and Vanessa.

M

Melanie Tennyson 36:03

COVID operations.. We've had the on site testing and that has been really great. We've had fewer than 10 asymptomatic positive cases out of the more than 24,000 or 2400 tests completed. I have we had two students quarantined I found out today we have a third and third grade French class will be quarantined, but I have to remind myself that that those numbers are so much less than where they were last year and the beginning of the school year that there's still a lot to celebrate. Governor Edwards announced today that the state's going to lift the facemask mandate for a lot of public places, but not in schools. NOLA Public Schools has, you know, issued that they will keep it in place in New Orleans, too, and we will, of course, will follow the mask requirements inside school

buildings, school buses and during any school related activities. So there will be masks at school for students, teachers, staff and anyone who enters the building. We're super excited that our nurses coordinated a flu shot.clinic at each campus as well as booster shots for COVID vaccines for staff, so we have over 300 students who have received their flu shots already, and one of the school nurses told me that they had over 90 on their campus, and that was more than they've ever had before. So that is a really positive step for keeping all of us you know healthy in general. So that's really exciting news.

M

Melanie Tennyson 38:06

Our October count was submitted and I gave enrollment numbers; our SPED percentage has gone up from six point maybe two or three to 7.8% which is important for in terms of just our annual renewal. They're looking at 9% for ISL. We have been, it's the one marker that we have - the only marker - we have not met ever in the checklist of items on our renewal over time, and we are steadily increasing those numbers both, I think, as part of an expanded net that has been cast by Enroll NOLA for students, and also, we've done a much better job of identifying students within our own existing school populations. Talked about admission. Our Data/Admissions team has been super busy, just catching up with people who still haven't completed their enrollment for this 21-22 school year, and the window is already opening for, or will open, for new and kindergarten... we fill upper grades, but it's mainly kindergarten.. for the 22-23 school year, so they have a foot in each year right now, which is a really busy and crazy time of year for them. As well as - I don't know that I've talked about this - that the state has switched over data systems, which is we're going to EdLink from CES which has been a really huge project for our data manager but data managers across the state, and I just want to give a shout out to Michelle Travers, who has just... She's a perfectionist, and she's just been picking her way through, like, all of the changes and trying to maintain the perfection of her data in a really complex and not-seamless system change. So she's she's just been a real champion in doing that, and I appreciate all of that work. And that trickles down to to what what everyone else is doing to as well as PEP reports, all the all of our state reporting that we do, as well as teachers being able to access information, so I'm hoping that they get all those kinks out of all that stuff soon, and we can take another layer of stress off from our staff. We send in our application to reapply for the Louisiana Consortium of Immersion Schools World Language Certificate. I'm confident that we'll get that but it is time for that renewal again, and that was accomplished. And then we have expanded our antibias and community building work that we were doing with Roots Connected inside of the school to include free programming for families, and our new community engagement coordinator Tamia Randolph-Alvarez has really been working with Community Roots around those meetings, and how to get more people engaged and do that work. And we're really excited that our families seem are interested. And there's a link in this head of school report, and if you want to send it out to friends or community members or colleagues who have families who want to do work around identity and anti racist thinking, have them log on and attend these really great sessions with our community. That's it. If anybody has any questions, I'm happy to take them. I'm sorry, Jade. I just saw that you...

S

Sharon Barthelemy 42:58

Any questions? Anyone? Thank you, Melanie. Um, any public comment?

G

Guest 43:11

Yes. Hey, this is Carol McCarthy. I have a public comment. Can you hear me?

S

Sharon Barthelemy 43:15

Yes.



Guest 43:16

Okay. So I missed the first part of the meeting because I wasn't able to get in so the I think the meeting minutes were being approved for the finance committee. Did that happen?



Melanie Tennyson 43:29

It did Carol.



Guest 43:31

Okay. I just I also want to just to make a note, I had emailed Susan at the end of last school year, about the missing meeting minutes in the portal. They go all the way from July of 2020 through the most recent ones on October, I'm sorry, August 25 and September 22. So the portal itself still needs meeting minutes, and I have a whole bunch of dates written down that I'm happy to send again. But those minutes are still not in this portal system.



Melanie Tennyson 44:00

Just wanted to let you know, thank you, Carol. It may be we just need to click the public button some but thank you for that. We'll look and see why that is and go over them because I thought we were up to date, because I knew we had gotten behind, and then we worked really hard to get everything up to date. Thank you for that.



And then I have one more comment. I know that, um... I'm sorry guys, one second. Um, I have just received notification that my class is yet again in quarantine. I'm in F3B. And so we will be scrambling to figure out what we're going to do. I'm wondering if, Melanie, and you don't have to answer this now, if we are going to reconsider these 14-day quarantines if we're not seeing community spread in the school. I know that my kids are not vaccinated. They're not eligible yet but it says this is the fourth time in COVID history that this child is going to be quarantined. I feel like we're hitting the lottery but the bad lottery. And I'm just wondering if there is something better that we can do if we're not seeing community spread in the schools, if masks are working. If these 14-day quarantines are necessary, especially now that we're doing mask mandates being lifted. I just, I mean, I mean, I'm coming in frustration right now because it's it's this is very hard for me and my family, and that's all I just wanted to say that. Thank you.



Sharon Barthelemy 45:39

Thank you Carol. Any more comments? Do we have any closing items? If not, then I need a motion. Thank you everybody for coming. And thank the public for connecting and coming to this meeting also. If there's no more public comment, and I move for a motion to adjourn



Larissa Muetzel 46:15

I make a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 46:21  
Alright, Larissa. A second?

**M** Max Correa 46:33  
I'll second the motion.

**S** Sharon Barthelemy 46:35  
Thank you, Max. So that's it. Thanks. Thank everybody. Thank you everybody for coming and hopefully next month Grant will be back. Have a good night.