

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 – 4:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting is being held in compliance with Open Meeting requirements of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act and is open to the public. Notices were duly posted and the meeting was advertised in The Philadelphia Daily News. Formal action will be taken.

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Weisman called the meeting to order at 4PM and called the roll, noting that a quorum was present. Aside from Board members, those in attendance were Executive Director John Amenda, Becca Chazin, Katherine Reinert, Ellyn Saft, Mario Dattilo, and Kevin Corcoran (Charter Choices).

II. ROLL CALL

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Winston Churchill		x	Alexandra Panichello		x
Emily Ashe	x		Lois Pressman	x	
Ira Brind		x	Tom Rebar	x	
Dana Dwirantwi	x		Renee Rosenbluth	x	
James Egan	x		Valerie Schwartz		x
Charles Freyer	x		Miriam Spector		x
Robert Fox		x	Blair Stambaugh	x	
Valerie Hanraty	x		Wayne Weisman	x	
Kevin Kan		x	Bonnie Young	x	
Sanjeev Midha	x				

Mr. Weisman then called on John Amenda to give his Executive Director Report.

III. DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Executive Director Updates

- a Mr. Amenda reviewed a very positive Dashboard report, noting in particular high staff and student attendance, good parent attendance at report card conferences, low # of suspensions, and 100% of the 8th grade having filed their high school applications. The only Red category was MAP-On Grade Level math scores. He then introduced the 6th, 7th and 8th grade math teachers Allison Frank, Jessica Labish, and Jaclyn Nelson to discuss their challenges.
- b These challenges included students arriving in 6th grade who perform at a 2nd to 3rd grade levels in math, with little facility at basic math skills such as multiplication tables, and a significant problem with comprehending the word problems presented to them in order to determine which mathematical process to employ. The students often show growth in skills of up to 2 years. but still are far below grade level which they find discouraging. The introduction of the Common Core has also dramatically reduced grade level performance test scores.

Among the possible solutions discussed were more cross departmental math and language arts teaching to focus on word problem comprehension, additional support teachers for those far behind, teaching all students at a given level together (regardless of grade); and more small group instruction. This matter will be addressed at future Board meetings as well. Mr. Amenda and the Board thanked the Math team for attending and sharing their thoughts with us.

2. Finance & Audit Committee

- a Turning to Finance, Kevin Corcoran reported that the school was slightly (\$31K) ahead of plan for the year with \$378K in the bank, despite the School District being behind in its payments to YSCS, the SPED count at YSCS being above projections and PRCS being slow in payments due to NJ state funding issues. He reviewed the financial statements distributed to the board in advance of the meeting. He also reported frustration with the slowness of the audit and suggested we might do a search for a new auditor in 2019.
- b Mr. Amenda updated the Board on the bus transportation situation, reporting on conversations with the School District transportation office which was receptive to the idea of paying a marginal increase in their costs to continue to bus students on their regular routes. This is more attractive than the \$80-160K cost of hiring our own busses. Mr. Midha reported on the rapid increase in bussing costs due to competitive pressures for commercial drivers.
- c Mr. Amenda reported that the PSP was still considering our request for an addition \$105K grant to support our new seats and was conducting in depth due diligence on that front. PSP will be at our January 30 Board meeting to judge the Board engagement level.

3. Development Committee

- a Mr. Amenda pointed to our dramatic development results, thanks to the efforts of the 20th Anniversary committee and the event they ran so successfully. Our receipts so far total about \$434K, far outstripping the \$250K goal for the year. Suggestions for a monthly automatic charge for young donors, and a golf outing were discussed but rejected. Various ideas for an event venue were thrown out, including other Drexel sites, corporate sponsors (Comcast Technology building), etc. It was also noted that for some Young Friends, the donation of time would be preferable to donations of money, and their time as mentors would be very valuable to the school. It was suggested that we might have an open house combined with mentoring, followed by a social gathering, to attract more volunteers, particularly from those who attended the 20th anniversary event.
- b Mr. Amenda noted that 8th graders in particular were not availing themselves of our lunch offerings and may not be getting adequate nutrition as a result, various ideas were discussed, but the next step will be focus groups with students to assess what they really want to be offered for lunch.
- c Finally, Mr. Amenda reported early thinking on potential expansion or relocation options as the school is feeling very full given its increased student population.

4. School Performance Committee

- a A brief report from the School Performance Committee, which had held its meeting prior to the Board session, followed. It noted the emphasis on math performance that was highlighted by the Math Team discussion earlier in the meeting.

5. High School Admissions Committee

- a Finally, Mario Dattilo, a new hire this year who is responsible for High School Placement reported on a positive start to the process this year. 100% of the 8th grade have applications into District and Magnet high schools; 12% also applied to charter high schools and 8 families have filed applications

with various independent high schools. 78 of the 87 families with students in 8th grade have met with Mario to discuss their options.

6. Governance Committee – No report

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made and seconded, the following was adopted unanimously:

Resolved that the Board approve the Regular session minutes from the September 26, 2018 meeting.

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Winston Churchill		x	Alexandra Panichello		x
Emily Ashe	x		Lois Pressman	x	
Ira Brind		x	Tom Rebar	x	
Dana Dwirantwi	x		Renee Rosenbluth	x	
James Egan	x		Valerie Schwartz		x
Charles Freyer	xx		Miriam Spector		x
Robert Fox			Blair Stambaugh	x	
Valerie Hanraty	x		Wayne Weisman	x	
Kevin Kan		x	Bonnie Young	x	
Sanjeev Midha	x				

V. MOTIONS FOR APPROVAL

1. Policy / Governance / Operations / Miscellaneous - None

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Winston Churchill			Alexandra Panichello		
Emily Ashe			Lois Pressman		
Ira Brind			Tom Rebar		
Dana Dwirantwi			Renee Rosenbluth		
James Egan			Valerie Schwartz		
Charles Freyer			Miriam Spector		
Robert Fox			Blair Stambaugh		
Valerie Hanraty			Wayne Weisman		
Kevin Kan			Bonnie Young		
Sanjeev Midha					

VI. NEW BUSINESS – None raised

VII. OLD BUSINESS – None raised

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public wishing to address the Board of Trustees must state their name and are requested to limit their comments to three minutes. Please be aware that all Charter School employees retain the right of privacy and shall retain all rights against defamation and slander per the laws of Pennsylvania. The Board shall not be held liable for comments made by members of the public. Each member of the public will be given one opportunity to address the Board.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It is expected that the Board will go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, legal matters and facility negotiation matters. - A brief executive session occurred.

XIII. IMPORTANT DATES

1. Next Board meeting – January 30, 2019

XIV. MOTION TO ADJOURN - The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Winston Churchill		x	Alexandra Panichello		x
Emily Ashe	x		Lois Pressman	x	
Ira Brind		x	Tom Rebar	x	
Dana Dwirantwi	x		Renee Rosenbluth	x	
James Egan	x		Valerie Schwartz		x
Charles Freyer	x		Miriam Spector		x
Robert Fox		x	Blair Stambaugh	x	
Valerie Hanraty	x		Wayne Weisman	x	
Kevin Kan		x	Bonnie Young	x	
Sanjeev Midha	x				