

Regular Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, January 17, 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.

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		Miriam Spector	X	
James Egan		X	Blair Stambaugh	X	
Charles Freyer	X		Judi Temple		X
Valerie Hanraty		X	Robert Fox		X
Kevin Kan	X		Wayne Weisman	X	
Sanjeev Midha	X		Bonnie Young		X

Also present and leading the discussion on most topics was Executive Director John Amenda, and as a guest development consultant Ellyn Saft.

III. UPDATES

1. Executive Director Update

a Dashboard Review

1. Parent Survey Results

Mr. Amenda began by reviewing the Dashboard noting that most categories were Green, with the exception of a predictive test in math that dealt with subject matter not yet taught to the students. With regard to the Parent Survey, he expressed pleasure with the generally high ratings provided by parents; the only area with a lower rating dealt with parent teacher contact on a weekly basis. John explained that with the advent of the Parent Portal, parents could access all relevant information online. It was suggested that in the future, teachers check to see which parents were not using the Parent Portal on a regular basis, and make an effort to reach out to those parents on a regular basis by phone to discuss their student’s progress.

b Updates: Staffing, Sports Programming Launch

Mr. Buchanan, who is now Director of Athletics reported that he had secured nearby athletic fields for the after school hours to be used for basketball, soccer, track and physical conditioning, and that he had secured commitments from a Lower Merion basketball coach and a DelVal Community College soccer coach to lead those sports. The cost for this is as yet undetermined, and uniforms will need to be procured (possible donor to be identified). The development of a sports program is extremely popular with students and will address some parental concerns about the lack of extracurricular activities.

c Discussion Topics:

1. Enrollment Increase and Community Support

YSCS has applied for 50 new seats as part of its charter renewal. John reported that he needed to demonstrate to the SRC as approving authority both the need for and community support for the additional seats. The need is financial and easily demonstrated, but we will need to mobilize the community and secure testimonials in support of the seats. In discussion, it was suggested we both look at how other schools in the past demonstrated this support in successful efforts to increase seats (Sanjeev will help us gather that data), and request a meeting with SDP Charter Office to inquire just what the SRC will be likely to find persuasive in this regard.

2. Summer School Value Add

John raised the possibility of expanding the current summer school program to include incoming students performing well below grade level to the current remedial program over the summer. He also brought to the Board a proposal to partner with Springboard who runs very successful summer programs around the country, and locally, for at least a year or so. Discussion followed, exploring the idea of doing this ourselves, but the consensus was that Springboard would be more effective in running the program (which involves interaction with parents as well as students) until the YSCS staff embraced the program and was able to replicate it. The program is expensive--\$625/student for 70 (minimum) to 100 kids. John will see if Springboard is receptive to trying it with only 40 students the first year. Efforts will be made to find a donor to support this effort as well.

3. Transportation

YSCS is again facing the threat of no school bus service (students would be required to use Transpasses), which would be devastating to it. The decision reached was to engage counsel to advocate for the school in retaining its bus service.

4. Young Scholars Educational Opportunities Foundation

John reported that the Foundation was now in place, and formed the basis for an application for its approval as a beneficiary of EITC money. It also makes possible the proposal to be discussed in the Finance Committee report regarding reassigning certain non-teacher employees of the school.

2. Finance & Audit Committee

The discussion here related to moving 6 non-teachers from employment by the school to employment by the newly approved Foundation, which would mean that going forward they have 403(b) retirement plans (with a 5% or 6% match) instead of participation in the PSERS retirement plan (38% or greater contribution by YSCS now required). Employees would retain all current PSERS benefits, and would be offered a bonus in connection with the change of employer as well. More details need to be worked out, but the Board was favorably disposed to the change.

3. Development Committee

Ms. Saft reported that there was a need to step up efforts to meet the Annual Fund goal for this year. On the positive side, she noted the pending donation of a Steinway piano to the school, and arrangements for a piano teacher to come to school periodically to interest students in lessons. Others suggested that we solicit the donation of other instruments for students. She reported there would be a Young Friends meeting next Friday morning; and that thanks to a generous donation all students now had their own Chrome books to use at school, allowing them to access all the information available on the internet related to school projects. Finally, she noted that the school's 20th anniversary was coming up in the fall, and plans about how to mark that occasion, involving community partners as well as alumni and parents, were just beginning. Alexandra Panichello and Emily Ashe had expressed some interest in helping with that planning.

4. School Performance & Planning Committee

No report.

5. Governance Committee

No report.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Resolved that the Board approve the Regular session minutes from the September 13, 2017 meeting.

Board Member	Approve	Deny	Board Member	Approve	Deny
Winston Churchill	X		Alexandra Panichello	X	
Emily Ashe	X		Lois Pressman	X	
Ira Brind	X		Tom Rebar	X	
Dana Dwirantwi	X		Miriam Spector	X	
James Egan			Blair Stambaugh	X	
Charles Freyer	X		Judi Temple		
Valerie Hanraty			Robert Fox		
Kevin Kan	X		Wayne Weisman	X	
Sanjeev Midha	X		Bonnie Young		

V. MOTIONS FOR APPROVAL

None

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS No news business was raised.

VII. OLD BUSINESS None

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.

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It is expected that the Board will go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, legal matters and facility negotiation matters.

No executive Session was deemed necessary at this meeting.

In conclusion, general agreement was expressed that the new Board meeting format, involving less rote reporting by John and others, and more focus on discussion topics that engaged the Board, was definitely preferable to past practice and should be maintained.

X. IMPORTANT DATES

1. Career Day – May 22, 2017 (sharing early for your calendars and requested participation)

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

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		Miriam Spector	X	
James Egan			Blair Stambaugh	X	
Charles Freyer	X		Judi Temple		
Valerie Hanraty			Robert Fox		
Kevin Kan	X		Wayne Weisman	X	
Sanjeev Midha	X		Bonnie Young		