

Nuasin Next Generation Charter School

Minutes

MetLCS February 2017 Board Meeting

Date and Time

Monday February 27, 2017 at 6:30 PM

Location

180 W. 165th St. Bronx

Trustees Present

A. Ferranti, A. Laraway, G. Goldsmith, J. Haber, J. Lee, J. Roland

Trustees Absent

T. Bryan

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened

A. Ferranti

Guests Present

Ana Gasin, Andrea Moore, Dave Britton, Eric Tillman, Ingrid Vargas, J. Finney (remote), Lisnelia Figueroa, M. Alston, M. Rousseau, Mariama Massaly, Olga M. Francisco, Samantha Lalli, Shakurat Durosinmi, T. Milsap, T. Williams

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Laraway called a meeting of the board of trustees of Nuasin Next Generation Charter School to order on Monday Feb 27, 2017 at 6:30 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Laraway made a motion to approve minutes from the MetLCS January 2017 Board Meeting on 01-26-17 MetLCS January 2017 Board Meeting on 01-26-17.

J. Lee seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Public Comments

A. Public Comments

The parent of a seventh grade scholar indicated concern about the impact of the lack of seventh grade math teacher on her son's education and expressed concern about whether to pull her scholar out of the school. Ms. Williams described to the steps she's taking to ensure the scholars are successful and implored them to visit the school. Ms. Milsap recommended that the school hold a session for 7th grade parents.

Ms. Massaly expressed her appreciation that the school is taking time to hire the right people, but expressed her opinion that the school needs to talk about teacher retention in order to keep highly performing teachers; there is too much turnover. It was recommended that Ms. Williams talk to particular teachers to find out what keeps them at MetLCS. Ms. Massaly expressed concern that she receives a good report about her scholar, but then the scholar has to go to summer school and said that she does not believe that the teachers are qualified. Ms. Massaly requested that if teachers are fired, parents are notified about the change and what the plan is to fix it.

Ms. Goldsmith explained that she believes the school is working hard to make sure all parents are informed when changes happen; she expressed that she understands the impact of turnover on families and scholars. Ms. Goldsmith acknowledged that her kids are in fourth grade, too, and understands the frustration of other parents. Ms. Goldsmith expressed that she believes the school is working tirelessly to get teachers who will stay and know what they're doing and are equipped to manage the class. She indicated that incentives are a good idea to make sure teachers want to stay. She will continue to work to ensure parents know what is going on.

A parent expressed that sometimes there is a need to hold parents responsible for the student behavior. She asked whether teachers are leaving because they're not used to the environment or having to hold scholars responsible. The parent expressed that she wants the best for her child's education.

A parent expressed that parents need to set standards in house and need to look inward at their own homes.

III. Board Chair Update

A. Board Member Interview

The board did not interview any candidates.

B. BOT Assessment

Mr. Britton provided an update on the Board Assessment. He indicated that the board should consider the skills and experience it's looking for and recruit accordingly. He suggested adopting new job descriptions for board members.

A. Ferranti arrived.

IV. Facilities

A. Facilities Update

Mansoor Mustafa has taken on the roles that CSSS previously provided to MetLCS, he will provide an update to the board at the March meeting. A plan for the future will be discussed at the next meeting.

B. Roof Update

Ms. Russell provided an update on the rooftop project - she is developing a proposal for the board.

C. Purchasing Update

John Pham provided an update about the building financing project. A kick-off call took place on March 2 to review what needs to be done for the financing, including due diligence and an application to Build NYC. The process is expected to take 4-5 months.

Any decisions on new projects that will be added into the financing need to be made in approximately 6 weeks.

V. Principal's Report

A. PAL Report

Ms. Williams discussed the factors that are contributing to lower than expected student attendance. This is the first year that most scholars are coming from the local neighborhood, many of the students who have not been to pre-K. In addition, 7th graders do not qualify for a school bus and instead rely upon public transportation. Parents tend to keep students home during inclement weather and in the winter when it gets dark earlier. The number of students with siblings in the school has grown; when one sibling is home sick, all siblings are often kept home from school. Ms. Williams and Ms. Goldsmith have been speaking with parents and families. Ms. Goldsmith indicated that some behaviors are changing based on these conversations and attendance is improving. The board asked whether there were any available benchmarks. At BLCS this is also a problem for K-2. The board requested an update on progress of this in the future.

Ms. Williams presented the principal's report and dashboard. Ms. Williams discussed the recruitment for teacher vacancies. It is a priority to hire a seventh grade math teacher within the next few weeks. Ms. Williams discussed that classroom management will be a major issue for the new teacher. The school leadership team will provide additional support for that teacher so that they can be successful.

Ms. Williams discussed programming leading up to the state tests to engage scholars in preparation.

B. Retention Plan

Ms. Milsap hosted a staffing summit for the principals for two days to discuss the plan for teacher retention. The focus of conversation was around retention, recruitment and on-boarding. The principals developed a plan for how they can be more competitive in the charter school market, this included several strategies include retention bonuses. The board discussed the bonus structure and other ideas. Ms. Ferrenti asked about bonuses and why LHA had us get rid of them and is bringing back a form of bonus. Mr. Ballard suggested this is important as a retention strategy in New York; it not something they're doing across the board at LHA. Any new bonus structure will be based upon specific things teachers do, rather than for all teachers.

C. Mid Year Academic Update

Ms. Williams provided a mid-year update on academic update on. The school has developed a plan of action for each grade level to address weaknesses identified through the interim assessments. Overall, ELA tends to be an area of weakness for the school.

The Math curriculum includes many repetitive drills ("sprints") to ensure that scholars understand their basic facts. As math becomes more multi-stepped it becomes more difficult. In ELA, scholars across the board struggle with understanding the "central idea" and the background knowledge and supporting a main idea with details (going back into a text support an answer by pulling out the details fro what they're reading). To work on this, teachers are doing a push on "high interest" reading in order to build stamina in reading. Vocabulary is another area of weakness; teachers are implementing various initiatives to strengthen vocabulary on an individual basis.

Ms. Williams discussed interventions to improve scholar performance. Ms. Lee asked about the impact of Alida and Kurt going into the classroom on supporting teachers. Ms. Williams indicated that there is a strain, but the scholars need to have someone consistent who knows and understands the content in the classroom. Ms. Williams has made some shifts in coaching to prioritize the teachers who need weekly support to redistribute the load and ensure teachers are still coached. Schedules were revised to ensure that teachers had time to co-plan, review data together, etc. The initial feedback from teachers is positive.

Ms. Williams discussed the intersection of struggles in ELA with Math. She has encouraged parents to work with students on math problems at home.

The board requested that Ms. Milsap provide comparisons to see how we're doing as compared to district schools and other charter schools in NYC.

VI. RVP Report

A. CPA Updates

Ms. Milsap provided an update on planning for the CPA. Three principal candidates remain in the pool and on-site interviews will take place on March 10. Ms. Lee, Ms. Ferrenti and Ms. Goldsmith will participate in the interview process and make a hiring recommendation to the full board.

The board requested that a review of the Charter Renewal Goals be added to the March agenda.

B. LHA Referral Structure

There was no update.

VII. Education Committee

A. Education Committee

There was no update.

VIII. Finance

A. Financial Report

Ms. Rousseau provided the financial update. The Net Assets and Building Lease Capital sections of the budget were updated in response to the audit findings. The school is currently seeing savings in health insurance and other benefits; there are higher costs on payroll; and higher costs on occupancy, due to unforeseen repairs and maintenance.

A budget for the 2017-18 academic year will be prepared and presented in April. The board asked that it look forward a few years and that a separate budget be created for the lower and upper academies.

IX. Executive Session

A. Executive Session

The board discussed a personnel matter.

X. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Haber