APPROVED

Next Generation Charter Schools

Minutes

Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School Board Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday March 26, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Location
180 W, 165th Street Bronx, NY 10452

Courtney Russell is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
Topic: MetLCS Board Meeting (vF)
Time: Mar 26, 2020 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/670711731?pwd=VFJ0Y3FMWG50T1czSmFzeS9ZY0pTQT09
Meeting ID: 670 711 731
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One tap mobile
+16465588656,,670711731# US (New York)

Mission

We prepare our students for college through a rigorous arts-infused program.

Vision

All students will be taught by a highly effective teacher in a nurturing environment and will achieve at high levels. Each student will develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for responsible citizenship and life-long learning. The impact of our collective efforts will fundamentally change public education.

Trustees Present
A. Bothner (remote), A. Khatiwada (remote), E. Chen (remote), J. Boulet (remote), K. Brisseau (remote), M. Dorrie (remote), S. Pressley (remote), T. Bryan (remote)

Trustees Absent
J. McDonald

Guests Present

A. Khanyile (remote), B. Elliott (remote), C. Russell (remote), K. Davidson (remote), K. McGuire (remote), M. Alston (remote), M. Rivera (remote), T. Williams (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Bothner called a meeting of the board of trustees of Next Generation Charter Schools to order on Thursday Mar 26, 2020 at 6:39 PM.
Participants joined as follows:

Aaron - remote/phone
Anuj - remote/video
Ellen - remote/video
Jamal - N/A
Jessica - remote/video
Kamaria - remote/video
Michael - remote/video
Shanta - remote/video
Tim - remote/video
Aluta - remote/phone
Brent - remote/phone
Courtney - remote/video
Karin - remote/video
Kurt - remote/video
Melissa - remote/video
Monica - remote/video
Tyra - remote/video

C. Review the Agenda

Aaron Bothner reviewed the agenda.

Jessica Boulet provided an update regarding Open Meeting Law as it pertains to COVID-19.

D. MetLCS Mission/Vision Reflection and Grounding

Aaron Bothner kicked off with the mission/vision reflection and grounding. He thanked everyone (Board members, school leadership, LHA) for their many efforts over the past few weeks. Everyone did their part to ensure everything that needed to happen did. We have over 600 scholars who depend on us for this critical work.

Where are we now and where do we go from here? There is a lot of unknown. We do know schools are an essential institution for the public. We know that we were asked to redesign hundreds of years of education in three weeks and need to acknowledge all that it took to do that. We know that there is still a lot changing and things we don't have answers for, that is ok. We will continue to make the best decisions we can.

Over the last few weeks we have moved the entire school online. We have worked with many key individuals and groups (NYC DOE, financial advisors, legal counsel, etc.) to ensure all aligned. We continue to focus on strategic planning. Our construction project has continued to date. We have prioritized the needs of the whole child and their families. We will come out of this and go back to school; we will need to have scholars who have made academic progress.

There is one fundamental question we will keep in mind which is what are we doing on a day to day basis to ensure our scholars are making progress towards our charter goals? Aaron will try to keep us focused on that as we move forward.

At this time it is not feasible for us to move forward with the additional space. We would not be able to build out the space at this point; this would be impossible with approvals needed, etc.

E. COVID-19 State of the School Update

Kurt Davidson K - 8 Principal presented. Phase One was preparing everything. Once it happened the school jumped on to connect with families. Materials were checked out to 75% of families. K - 8 and the CPA worked very hard across the board to get families and siblings in. Simultaneously the school has been working on the learning plan. Phase Two is the actual learning. Kurt Davidson presented images from the school and examples of learning resources.

The 3 - 8 grade band has transitioned to online learning; K - 2 is more of a challenge. Scholars are learning at home and doing similar things that they would be doing if at school. The school has posted tools for scholars to show their work. The goal is to get 100% of scholars on board, and to a high degree of quality. The team has been planning for all scholar needs, including but not limited to Students with Disabilities as well as English Language Learners. The social worker is meeting with scholars and families via phone. Scholar work is being graded which is facilitated via Google Classroom. Communicating with families has been of utmost importance. The culture team is supporting all around.

The team has been focused on culture and meetings have continued as usual. Team Zoom meetings have included the infusion of joy and continuation of the family model.

Ellen Chen asked how the school plans to use the data. Team meetings allow for check in around scholar data and adjustments to be made as appropriate. Examples of this would be data showing that scholars are struggling with accessing the content or struggling with the transition. This is being used on a day to day basis to adjust. Additionally staff surveys are being used to get a global synthesis of where the school is. The school is not yet at a place where the data can produce statements such as "65% of scholars in class X01 have mastered the standard ABC".

Tyra Williams 9 - 11 Principal presented. This has been a challenging but exciting last few weeks. The team has come together very well. Castle Learning is the hub of all the CPA work. Teachers have been teaching in whole group as well as in small groups, particularly for those who are struggling with the content. Teachers are remaining scope and sequence they have made that is housed in Alma, the Student Information System. An Interim Assessment will be administered the week of April 13 and will be cumulative, covering all skills and knowledge learned since August of 2019.

Small group instruction allows scholars to get what they needed. Grade Slam is a 24 hour online tutoring program. This allows scholars to go on if there is a concept they do not understand and to access a tutor. There are a lot of logistics that arise as they are running a virtual high school..

Tomorrow's Professional Development will ensure teachers who are lead teachers know how to invite co-teachers into the virtual setting. Additionally the teachers will learn about how to set expectations for behavior and otherwise in this virtual time. For example, scholars can chat on the side. Scholars may not know what their uniform should be or what is appropriate to have in the background.

Jessica Boulet inquired about upcoming Regents examinations. She asked if the Regents would be administered virtually and if so, whether it is possible or not to prepare for same. Principal Williams said this still is to be determined. The AP exam will be administered virtually. The team is uploading Regents-based questions to Castle Learning. The scope and sequence is also based on Regents - the standards, the skills, and strategies that scholars need to be able to know and do.

Michael Dorrie asked about scholar attendance. Castle Learning and Zoom are helping to track attendance. Scholars have homeroom. The school is using a variety of methods to ensure scholars are engaged. Spreadsheets are being used to track communication. Teachers who manage students well, set high expectations, and more - they are having the highest rate of attendance.

Ellen Chen commended the leaders on their efforts, in particular around areas such as tracking attendance.

Aaron Bothner inquired about virtual efforts for college visits; Principal Williams will discuss this idea with her Counselor.

II. Education Committee

A. Education Committee Report

Ellen Chen led us through the Education Committee update. The team has heard about all of the hard work the Principals and others have put in. Next month's Board meeting the committee would like to see more of an intermediate plan. The short term is to ensure we have attendance and that all scholars have access to virtual learning. We want to ensure the teachers are comfortable with the content. The intermediate plan will incorporate how the school will plan and execute for a longer-term closure. Goals would not change, the school would need to continue to strive towards with the charter goals. Ellen also discussed documentation; we need to make sure that whatever effort we put in is well-documented, no matter how small. Additionally the Board would like to see an example of how we are documenting our plans and actions and a table of contents as to what is being documented.

Aaron asked to have a placeholder in the governance section for this item moving forward (documentation).

III. LHA Updates

A. Enrollment Update

Melissa shared that the current number of applications is over 1800. This time last year 500 in district applications existed; this number is already over 800 right now showing a positive trajectory. There are more siblings applying to the school than ever before. This data will need to be validated that the potential incoming scholar is a true sibling. In regards to special populations, there has been a large spike since last time Melissa reported (29% identified as ELL and 18% identified as SpEd). Finally, a breakdown of applications by day is provided for Board members to review. Recruiting is now taking place completely remotely. The school is utilizing new methods of reaching out to people such as social media.

Aaron Bothner asked if there is anything Melissa anticipates needing to meet the school's special population goals. Melissa shared information in regards to the number of open seats available which is limited beyond Kindergarten.

IV. Public Comments

A. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. School Operations

A. Financial Report

Mary Beth walked the team through the February financials.

Looking at the monthly report, the balance sheet is still in a very strong position with 9.9 million in assets. There is an increase from January to February for both assets and liabilities; this is due to funding coming in. Metrics look great. Ratios are strong. Investment accounts are at 8.1 million with $32,000 of expenses per day we are exceeding the required days cash on hand. The numbers are all above requirements for the bond covenants.

The budgeted enrollment was for 629 but the enrollment increased after that; the last billing was at 642 scholars. It is likely we will end up over budget for the year on the revenue side as long as there are no major changes as related to funding given the current state of affairs with Coronavirus.

There is a surplus of over $800,000.

The expense categories are under budget, staff expenses are under budget, and there was also savings in the benefit line. Other non-staff expenses are under budget. The Finance Team will continue to work with the school to make any adjustments needed.

B. MetLCS Investment Update

Brent Elliott spoke about the investments. Everything is very well taken care of and have not dwindled over this time period.

The team had a call with JP Morgan and some money was moved around in the money market to a treasury money market; they will continue to watch this and see if any adjustments are needed.

Aaron Bothner provided additional details. The Investment Committee (Aaron, Jamal, Shanta, Tim ad Kamaria) talked about capital preservation and also what the next few months look like. Aaron discussed the breakdown of funds (approximately four million in cash); through the end of the year there is approximately five million in expenditures that we would want to know we would be able to cover. We want to ensure we maintain enough cash in the event we were to learn we were not going to be getting the revenue required to operate. The school is a very conservative position to fund the operating expenses and the rest of the rooftop expenses.
A. Bothner made a motion to approve the February finances.
M. Dorrie seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Dorrie	Aye
E. Chen	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
T. Bryan	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye
S. Pressley	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent

C. FY21 Budget

Brent Elliott gave a high level overview of the budget process. This included an initial meeting with the Finance team, the school, and LHA to review needs. The budget was based on 663 scholars. The team talked about staffing, materials, professional development, and more. A preliminary budget is prepared although they will continue to work on this in the coming months with a May vote.

The Finance Committee (Aaron, Jamal, Shanta, Tim ad Kamaria) supports moving the vote to the May meeting given the state of affairs with the Coronavirus.
A. Bothner made a motion to move the FY21 budget vote to the May meeting.
S. Pressley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

J. McDonald	Absent
T. Bryan	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
M. Dorrie	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye
E. Chen	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
S. Pressley	Aye

D. Facilities

Monica Rivera provided an update on the facility and the rooftop project.

There was approximately two weeks of contractual construction left. Windows have been installed, the floor has been started to be installed. Construction has come to a halt (for a two week pause) due to the Coronavirus and regulations that have been put in place. There are several permits expiring on April 1; much of that work has been completed. The insurance and regular work permit does not expire until July.

Aaron Bothner shared how expensive the insurance is; he would like to get in front of that with the insurance company to see what we can do if the project runs over whenever the insurance policy expires.

E. MetLCS Rooftop Ribbon Cutting

A call took place to discuss the ribbon cutting which will take place at a later date; an additional update will be made at a future meeting. Members of this call included Monica, Aluta, Shanta, Ellen, Aaron, Melissa, and Courtney.

F. MetCPA Alternative Space

The Board came out of the February meeting full steam ahead in terms of evaluating the alternative space. However, as Coronavirus became a challenge, the school will not be moving forward at this time. It is important to think about what we will do moving forward with a plan of action.

Aaron proposed that we will continue to do the monthly facilities update and the facilities sub-committee (Aaron, Anuj, and Michael) will remain intact. Additionally a monthly report will be provided about progress towards an alternative space by Monica Rivera.

Jessica Boulet inquired about the availability of the space in the future. Monica Rivera shared that after everything calms down it is very possible that we can go back and reconsider the space.

VI. Board Governance

A. Approve Minutes from February 2020 Meeting

J. Boulet made a motion to approve the minutes from Metropolitan Lighthouse Charter School Board Meeting on 02-27-20.
T. Bryan seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

E. Chen	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent
A. Bothner	Aye
S. Pressley	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
M. Dorrie	Aye
T. Bryan	Aye

B. Board Strategic Initiatives Review

All trustees will be receiving Google Forms regarding the LHA evaluation as well as the Board Strategic Initiatives.

Moving forward as we approach the Annual Meeting we will be assessing internal process for how we evaluate and adjust the Board's work.

Board members should think about committees and what they'd like to see in terms of how they'd like their committee to operate, how their committee can interface with others, and any other processes that would be helpful to individuals in being involved and involved more effectively.

Aaron reminded team members that the Board completed the self-assessment. Board members should consider what the low hanging fruit is and what the most important strategic initiatives are that the Board should review.

All team members should review the LHA Service Agreement.

C. MetLCS Values

The team will continue to revisit this in the future.

VII. Nominating Committee Update

A. Nominating Committee Update

The Board decided last month to put a hold on Board member recruitment. Interviews will not be taking place in the near future. There is a person who is interested in interviewing at the May meeting; the feasibility of that will be determined at a later date/time.

Kamaria will send around a questionnaire to gauge what is needed to ensure the Board is whole in terms of skills and qualifications.
A. Bothner made a motion to move into Executive Session regarding a discussion around potential litigation.
T. Bryan seconded the motion.
Courtney Russell was invited to Executive Session.
Aluta Khanyile was invited to Executive Session.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

T. Bryan	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
E. Chen	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
M. Dorrie	Aye

Roll Call

A. Khatiwada	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent
S. Pressley	Aye

VIII. Executive Session

A. Executive Session

J. Boulet made a motion to exit Executive Session regarding a discussion around potential litigation.
A. Bothner seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Pressley	Aye
E. Chen	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
M. Dorrie	Aye
T. Bryan	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent
J. Boulet	Aye

J. Boulet made a motion to ratify actions taken to this point regarding potential legal actions taken in Executive Session.
A. Bothner seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Dorrie	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
S. Pressley	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
T. Bryan	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent
E. Chen	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye

J. Boulet made a motion to delegate authority to the members of the Governance Committee (Aaron, Anuj, Ellen, Jessica, Shanta) to continue to pursue the legal matter in regards to the matter outlined in Executive Session.
S. Pressley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

S. Pressley	Aye
J. McDonald	Absent

Roll Call

M. Dorrie	Aye
A. Bothner	Aye
A. Khatiwada	Aye
K. Brisseau	Aye
J. Boulet	Aye
T. Bryan	Aye
E. Chen	Aye

IX. 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 10:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Russell