

**Board of Trustees Meeting
August 25, 2016
639-55 St. Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Resolution to Approve Minutes from June 2nd, 2016
- IV. Ariel Nadelstern, Director of Instruction and School Culture
- V. NYS Test Results and Response
 - A. ICT
 - B. Test Sessions
 - C. Assessment for Targeted Instruction
 - D. Additional Pullouts for IEPs
- VI. Final Enrollment for 2016 – 2017 School Year
- VII. Faculty Hiring Status Report
- VIII. Faculty Training - Current and Future Professional Development
- IX. Special Education Collaborative Membership
- X. Current Facility Status and Calendar Change
- XI. New Facility and Tenant's Representative
- XII. Schedule Finance and Personnel Committee Meetings
- XIII. School Leader Evaluation
- XIV. Annual Audit
- XV. New Business
- XVI. Next Meeting – **Thursday, September 15th** *(and then return to first Thursday of each month)*
- XVII. Adjournment



Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, August 25th, 2016
639 St. Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455

Trustees Present: Valerie Capers, Lori Chemla, Andrea Cohen, Felicia Franklin, Davon Russell, Jodi Schneider

Trustees Absent: Nancy Biberman, Serigne Gningue, Eric Nadelstern

SBECA Staff Present: Ric Campbell, Cat Eugenio, Ariel Nadelstern

Call to Order:

Davon Russell called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.

Resolution to Approve Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2nd, 2016 Board of Trustees meeting. Lori Chemla seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Ariel Nadelstern, Director of Instruction and School Culture:

Ric Campbell introduced Ariel Nadelstern who was hired two months ago as the Director of Instruction and School Culture. Mr. Campbell stated that, in this role, Ms. Nadelstern would address key aspects of school culture and learning, bringing additional leadership to the school and allowing for a division or sharing of work that is essential to the school's success. As an educator with interest and experience in developing systems that foster community engagement and productivity, Ms. Nadelstern will provide key support for teachers addressing issues of student behavior that is aimed at helping students become increasingly self-directed. As an instructional leader, Ms. Nadelstern will contribute to the work of advancing professional growth as teachers build project-based models for learning that challenge students to build core skills and the forms of understanding that lead to continued success in school and career.

Ms. Nadelstern said that she was born and raised in the Bronx and is committed to teaching in her own community. She studied Social-Educational Theory as an undergraduate at Hampshire College and later obtained her Master's Degree in School Leadership at Columbia University. Ms. Nadelstern is interested in school design and was a member of the planning team for The Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction. She was also a member of the founding faculty of the Crotona International High School. Mr. Campbell added that the combination of teaching experience, leadership experience, and school design expertise will guide Ms. Nadelstern in her new role at the South Bronx Early College Academy (SBECA).

NYS Test Results and Response:

Mr. Campbell reported that the scores from the New York State Math and ELA Tests, which SBECA students took in April, were released this month. He said that he was surprised by and disappointed with the results, since he

felt that they did not reflect the academic growth that the students achieved throughout the year, which was evident during year-end portfolio presentations in June. He added that last year's math teacher, Anjali Deshpande, had previously taught for six years at MS 223, which is one of the highest performing schools in District 7, and had two graduate students from NYU and a special education teacher embedded in her classroom throughout the year; however, the test scores showed that very few students were proficient in math. Similarly, Emily Packet, the English teacher had three years of teaching experience in a middle school in the Bronx, and had three full time graduate students and one special education teacher in the classroom, but few students scored well on the ELA exams. Mr. Campbell said that test prep had taken place in the English and Math classrooms for two months leading up to the exams, and he felt confident that students had scored better. He has requested that NYSED re-evaluate SBECA's bubble sheets to confirm that there were no errors in the grading process.

Mr. Russell asked if Ms. Packet was surprised by the result; Mr. Campbell said that she said that she was not surprised, given that many of the students were reading at a second or third grade level at that point in the year. Although students have made tremendous progress and are reading at a higher level than they were when they entered the school last August, most are still not where they should be.

Andrea Cohen inquired about other schools' scores within the district and whether those students were also selected through a lottery. Mr. Campbell explained that all charter schools are required to use a lottery process and that the only allowable preferences are for children residing in the school district and siblings of current students. Jodi Schneider asked about the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) at the school. Mr. Campbell stated that the school serves more students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) than ELLs; 32% of students have IEPs and 12% of students are ELLs.

Mr. Campbell added that, given that this was the school's first year, there are still many lessons to learn and he will continue to make adjustments to improve outcomes moving forward. He said that the following action steps are planned for the upcoming school year:

- NYSED is re-evaluating the bubble sheets from the exams to determine if there were any grading errors.
- Teachers will conduct "item analysis," assessing how each student did on each of the 90 test questions; this will allow teachers to get a better sense of which types of questions students struggled with most, and allow teachers to target instruction accordingly moving forward.
- The school will implement an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model into the four core classrooms (math, literature, science and social studies), which will leverage special education funding and allow for two certified teachers to be in the classroom at all times, providing differentiated instruction to address students' diverse needs. Graduate students will also be embedded in the classrooms, as they were in year one, to further reduce the student to teacher ratio.
- More students will receive tutoring and pull-out services in the upcoming school year. There will also be time in the school day set aside for reading time, during which time students with special needs can receive targeted instruction.
- A week in November and a week in February will be set aside for mock-tests.

Ms. Cohen asked if practice tests should be administered on a weekly basis to help the students prepare. Mr. Campbell said that testing too frequently would undercut the curriculum and the educational program, which features project-based learning.

Mr. Russell added that, in his experience working with public schools in the Bronx, state test scores pose a widespread challenge, and that a heavy focus on testing can inhibit students' growth in areas such as critical thinking and the ability to articulate their ideas. He agreed with Mr. Campbell that the portfolio presentations that students gave in June, in front of an audience of their peers, teachers, family and Board members, spoke to the development of those skills, which are critically important to their long-term success. Ms. Schneider agreed that certain methods of preparing for tests do not necessarily help develop important literacy skills. She recommended that Mr. Campbell explore using Lexia Learning, a literacy program that she has found effective in her work with students.

Final Enrollment for 2016-2017 school year:

Cat Eugenio reported that 222 students are enrolled for the 2016 – 2017 school year. Mr. Campbell stated that he is expecting the final number to grow to 224 by the time school starts through the enrollment of two additional sixth grade students. Should that happen, there will be 112 students in both sixth and seventh grades. He added that the operating budget is based on an enrollment of 220 students, so there is currently a small cushion.

Faculty Hiring Status Report:

Mr. Campbell reported that the school has hired 25 new faculty members for the 2016 – 2017 school year and that two of the full time faculty from last year have decided not to return. Ms. Cohen inquired about the diversity among the faculty. Mr. Campbell stated that the faculty is 60% non-white.

Faculty Training – Current and Future Professional Development:

Mr. Campbell reported that the faculty participated in 13 professional development days throughout the summer: July 5th – July 8th; August 17th – 19th; August 23th – 25th; and August 30th – September 1st.

Special Education Collaborative:

Mr. Campbell reported that the school joined the Special Education Collaborative, which is a support service offered by the NYC Charter School Center. The school subscribed to the membership with the highest level of benefits, including monthly visits to the school, a series of workshops throughout the year, on-call consultation and compliance, and full faculty workshops as needed.

Current Facility Status and Calendar Change:

The school is currently occupying its new, temporary facility, operated by the DOE and located at 639 St. Ann's Avenue in the Bronx. SBECA had originally planned to open on August 31st, 2016, as part of its extended school year model, but has had to postpone the first day of school to Tuesday, September 6th due to a delay in DOE approval for necessary construction and the completion of the work by a DOE contractor.

New Facility and Tenant's Representative:

Mr. Campbell reported that construction is in progress at the school's future, long-term site and that the steel

framing has been installed up to the second story. The school has not yet signed a contract with a tenant's representative because the services have not been needed to date. Mr. Campbell has requested that the architect revise the tenant's representative's contract for a September 1st, 2016 start-date, at which time he/she will begin weekly site visits to track progress and ensure that the construction timeline and quality is consistent with the mutually agreed-upon construction plans.

Finance and Personnel Committee Meetings and School Leader Evaluation:

Mr. Campbell requested that the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee schedule meetings in advance of the next Board meeting on September 15, 2016, so that they can report back to the full Board at that time. Mr. Russell suggested that the Personnel Committee meet after Mr. Campbell submits the School Leader Evaluation for their review in the coming weeks. He added that the Finance Committee should review the latest iteration of the school budget with Mr. Campbell and Digant Bahl of Accounting Solutions of NYC, the school's accountant. He said that Meredith Leverich would coordinate the scheduling of those two meetings.

Annual Audit:

Mr. Campbell reported that the school is undergoing its first audit, which is required by law after a school's first full year of operation. He said that the audit began on August 22nd and is progressing well.

School Uniforms

Mr. Campbell reported that 5,200 pieces of clothing were delivered and will be distributed to families the week of August 29th. The uniform pants are gray with adjustable waistbands. The shirts are white or blue button-downs with the school's monogram logo on the side. Sweaters are heather gray with the school's monogram logo, as well. Each piece of clothing has a tag inside with the three words that represent the school: Intelligence, Caring and Effort.

Adjournment:

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 pm.