

**Board of Trustees Meeting
December 1st, 2016
639-55 St. Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Resolution to Approve Minutes from November 3rd, 2016
- IV. Executive Director's Report
- V. New Business
- VI. Next Meeting – Thursday, January 12th, 2017
- VII. Adjournment



Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, December 1st, 2016

639 St. Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455

Trustees Present: Nancy Biberman, Valerie Capers, Lori Chemla, Andrea Cohen, Felicia Franklin, Serigne Gningue Davon Russell

Trustees Absent: Eric Nadelstern, Jodi Schneider

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

WHEDco Staff Present: Katie Aylwin, Meredith Leverich

Call to Order:

Davon Russell called the meeting to order at 5:11 pm.

Public Comment:

Nekesha Peters, a parent of a SBECA student, asked that homework be assigned on weekends and over holiday breaks. Mr. Russell explained that the Board policy is to not respond to public comment during meetings, but said that Mr. Campbell could directly address her comment, given that the nature of this particular issue should first be addressed by the school administration rather than the Board.

Mr. Campbell said that the school's Extended Day Model does not include homework, so that all students can complete assignments on campus; however, he suggested that Ms. Peters speak with her child's faculty advisor, who could coordinate with other faculty members to assign optional homework as extra credit.

Resolution to Approve Minutes from November 3rd, 2016 Board Meetings

Andrea Cohen made a motion to approve the November 3rd, 2016 Board meeting minutes, as presented on December 1st, 2016. Nancy Biberman seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Executive Director's Report

Current Facilities Update

Mr. Campbell reported that repairs are needed and requested regularly in the school's current facilities. These issues have included broken toilets, holes in floors, inadequate heating, broken locks, and broken lighting. The outstanding lighting repairs, which were requested in August, have made the school campus feel unsafe in the evening, since it gets dark early in the autumn and winter. As a result, the Extended Day Program is temporarily ending at 5:00 pm, instead of 5:45 pm, every day. Mr. Campbell said that dismissal will return to its later time once the lighting concerns are addressed. Mr. Campbell said that he has begun to include the Head of DOE Facilities on all new requests to ensure a faster response time from the custodian's office at the local high school, which is responsible for the repairs.

New Facility Construction Update

Mr. Campbell reported that construction at the future, long-term site at 156th Street and Westchester Avenue is ongoing.

State Examination Preparation

Mr. Campbell reported that three school days in November were dedicated to administering practice tests in English Language Arts and Math, in preparation for the State examinations in the spring. The practice tests were a grade level below students' current grade levels to help them build confidence. Practice tests will be administered in February, as well, and will be given at the accurate grade level at that time. The school has also subscribed to Reflex Math and Lexia, which are computer programs that students can access during free time in classes when they finish other projects.

Mr. Campbell said that recent legislation has changed the way that students with IEPs are able to take the tests. Under the new law, students with IEPs can have the passages read to them, which will allow the State to test comprehension, even if literacy remains an issue. The Board discussed testing policies and strategies for ensuring students' success.

Mr. Campbell added that, in addition to helping students prepare for the State examinations, these practice tests have given teachers an opportunity to see the types of questions that students are struggling with, so that they can target their lesson planning to better serve students throughout the school year.

Parent/Teacher Conference Days

Mr. Campbell reported that the school held Parent/Teacher Conferences throughout the day on November 17th and 18th. He said that 148 families participated, which is about 67% of the student body. He also added that returning families, whose children are now in 7th grade, participated to a greater extent (80%) than the new families of 6th grade students. He said that he is going to try to determine why that may be, so that he can work on increasing participation among the incoming families, as well.

The Board inquired about the means of communicating about the conferences. Mr. Campbell said that there were two mailings and a robo call to request that parents schedule timeslots. Those who did not call the school received a personal call to see if they could participate.

Cat Eugenio suggested that some parents may not have attended if they were satisfied with their children's report cards, which were distributed in advance of the conferences. Ariel Nadelstern said that hosting other types of events to exhibit students work would be a good way to engage parents who do not have concerns about grades. She added that there would be a choral concert on December 14th and a family potluck on December 21st, which would offer other parent engagement opportunities.

CSNYC Research

Mr. Campbell said that the Collaborative Action Research Project in partnership with The Computer Science Foundation of NYC and under the leadership of faculty member Kelly Powers is ongoing. He said that the project is currently looking at 9 students (3 high performing, 3 average performing, and 3 low performing) to see if computer science helps students achieve across subject areas. The project is collecting data on all students with a more in-depth focus on 9 students to try to understand the data across all students. The research is also trying to add to knowledge about how CS is best taught and learned. Mr. Campbell said he would circulate the

Research Profile to members of the Board who are interested and would invite one of the CSNYC researchers to attend a future meeting.

New Business

Lori Chemla requested that the Development Committee meet and discuss fundraising needs and opportunities. She added that she is pursuing FitBit to see if there are ways to partner, which would enhance work already happening in the computer science and physical education departments.

Mr. Campbell said that Jodi Schneider has begun volunteering at the school, leading a weekly reading group. He added that she knows two young adult authors, who have agreed to visit the school and speak to the kids about their novels, which are among the five novels that the group will be reading in the coming months.

Adjournment:

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:50 pm.