

South Bronx Early College Academy Charter School

Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, March 20th, 2014
CEI-PEA
28 West 44th Street, New York, NY

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** – Davon Russell
- II. **Resolution to approve minutes from February 20th, 2014 meeting**
- III. **Clarification on Open Meetings Law**
- IV. **Approval of planning year by NYSED**
- V. **Discussion**
 - A. Facilities
 - B. Educational Partners
 - C. CSP Grant
- VI. **Resolutions**
 - A. Resolution to approve WHEDco Loan Agreement – pending quorum
- VII. **Other Business**
 - A. Scheduling board training
 - B. Board committees
 - C. Board recruitment – looking for expertise in Special Education, Fundraising and Finance

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Thursday, March 20, 2014
CEI-PEA
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Attendees

Board Members Present: Ric Campbell, Andrea Cohen, Harvey Newman, Davon Russell, Deborah Taylor

Board Members Participating via Phone (Non-voting): Nancy Biberman

Other: Meredith Leverich, WHEDco; Frank San Felice, CEI

Absent Board Members

Valerie Capers, Eric Nadelstern

Call to Order

Davon Russell called the meeting to order at 2:17pm.

Approval of February 27th, 2014 Meeting Minutes

The Board unanimously passed a resolution to approve the February 27th, 2014 meeting minutes.

Report on Phone Call with NYSED Liaison

Mr. Russell reported on a phone call with Kimberly Santiago, the school's NYSED liaison, during which she clarified the regulations surrounding the Open Meetings Law. Her call to us came because of a discussion documented in the minutes from the February 27th, 2014 Board meeting where we had discussed and had questions about the law. Ms. Santiago clarified that Board members calling in by phone cannot vote. Board members participating via video conference can vote if their location is announced in advance and made available to the public.

During the call, Ms. Santiago also indicated that the Board resolution approving a WHEDco loan agreement to the school from February 27th, 2014 is void; since Ms. Biberman and Mr. Russell recused themselves from the vote, the Board no longer had quorum. The Board will have to vote again at a time when there is quorum without Ms. Biberman and Mr. Russell.

Approval of Planning Year by NYSED

Mr. Russell reported that the school's request to take a planning year and delay opening until September 2015 was granted. The second request regarding a modification to the enrollment plan is still under review.

Discussion

Facilities

Mr. Russell and Mr. Campbell reported on three facility options in School District 7:

1. Mr. Campbell indicated that the owner of the **old Bronx Courthouse Building** has proposed a fair deal in terms of rental costs, but is requesting an initial \$400,000 to contribute to the cost of the build-out. The owners may accept a counter offer that divides this \$400,000 into staggered payments or folds this cost into the rent; however, the cost is difficult to justify in any form, since it is the landlord's responsibility to make the building ready to be used. Ideally, this cost would be removed from the building owner's proposal.
2. Near the courthouse is a **former YMCA**, which later became a state-owned juvenile detention center. It was recently sold to a group of investors for \$6.5 million. It has an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a full gymnasium, a track and theater, which make it attractive for a school. However, this building would also need considerable build-out to create classrooms, etc. The school can explore the option of buying the building from the owners, but it may cost around \$20 million with the necessary build-out costs.
3. **Boricua College** has a building in the area with vacant floors that could be rented to the charter school. This could be a temporary option for the first two years and would allow the school to take additional time to consider more permanent options. In the first year, the school could rent two floors/four classrooms, and then expand to four floors/eight classrooms in the second year. There is a shared common area on one floor that could be used for eating and physical education. Food would have to be prepared off-site.

Ms. Biberman described the real estate landscape in the Bronx. She indicated that many investors are purchasing vacant buildings or lots, especially with the knowledge that charter schools and UPK programs will be looking for private space to a greater degree moving forward. The Board discussed that the ideal option would be to invest in its own property, but in order to do so, the school would need to leverage relationships with individual donors in a major way. It is not clear whether or not this is a realistic goal at this point. Mr. Russell and Mr. Campbell said they would work towards getting official proposals from the three options above and bring them to the Board for a vote.

CSP Grant

Mr. Russell reported that the CSP Grant proposal we submitted was approved; however, the school will need to make modifications to accommodate the new timeline given the delayed opening. A new proposal will be submitted in the coming weeks. At the next Board meeting, the finalized budget will be distributed and discussed.

Educational Partners

Mr. Campbell discussed the importance of the graduate teacher program to the school, as both a way to develop teachers and to provide additional classroom support. Mr. Campbell reported

that he is currently restructuring budgets to develop a sustainable model for an educational partnership with the Bard MAT program. The reason for restructuring the budget results from a recent decision by Bard College to consolidate its MAT program on the upstate campus for the coming 2014-2015 academic year. The reinstatement of the MAT program in New York City will depend on a sound fiscal plan. Mr. Campbell suggested that the school also consider Hunter College and Cornell University as potential educational partners, if the Bard plan doesn't materialize. Mr. Newman suggested considering SUNY Oswego, as well.

Mr. Campbell indicated that the educational partner should be solidified in the next few months so that recruitment of graduate student candidates to the teacher preparation program can begin on schedule by end of summer.

Other Business

Scheduling Board Trainings

Mr. Campbell suggested that the Board schedule trainings to ensure that all members are acting in accordance with the Open Meetings Law and other important protocols. The Board must also develop policies to determine how the principal will be evaluated, as well as how it will be evaluated.

Board Committees

The Board Committees listed in the school's charter agreement include the Executive Committee (chaired by the Board Chair), the Finance/Operations Committee (chaired by the Board Treasurer), the Education Committee, and the Personnel Committee. Committees will meet privately and report back to the Board during general Board meetings.

Mr. Russell also indicated that the Board should grow before committees can become effective. Ms. Taylor recommended Kristin Erat be invited to join the Board. Ms. Erat is a principal of a public school in the Bronx and could bring Special Education expertise to the Board. She was a member of the school's founding group. Mr. Campbell suggested that Lori Chemla also be invited. Ms. Chemla is invested in the school's mission and would bring fundraising capacity to the Board. Mr. Russell said that he would reach out to both women and ask if they would consider serving on the Board.

Meeting Adjourned

Mr. Russell adjourned the meeting at 3:26pm.