

**Board of Trustees Meeting
September 15th, 2016
639-55 St. Ann's Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Resolution to Approve Minutes from August 25th, 2016
- IV. Executive Director's Report
- V. Finance Committee Report
- VI. Personnel Committee Report
- VII. DOE Construction Update
- VIII. New Facility and Tenant's Representative
- IX. Board/Faculty Mixer – Thursday, November 3rd (following Board meeting, location: TBA)
- X. New Business
- XI. Next Meeting – Thursday, October 6th
- XII. Adjournment



Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, September 15th, 2016

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

Trustees Present: Nancy Biberman, Lori Chemla, Andrea Cohen, Felicia Franklin, Eric Nadelstern, Davon Russell, Jodi Schneider

Trustees Absent: Valerie Capers, Serigne Gningue

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 5:15 pm.

Public Comment:

There were no attendees from the general public.

Mr. Russell suggested that Ric Campbell promote Board meetings to parents using flyers and other school-based notices, rather than only on the website, as that may attract more parents, especially those who pick up students from school. Mr. Campbell said that using the school's automated call/text service might also help. Katie Aylwin said that WHEDco could coordinate staff to provide childcare/supervision to any students and younger siblings whose parents attend the meetings moving forward.

Resolution to Approve Meeting Minutes:

Andrea Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25th, 2016 Board of Trustees meeting. Felicia Franklin seconded, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Executive Director's Report:

Potential Parent Association

Mr. Campbell said that there is a group of parents who want to form a Parent Association and that he is eager to support that initiative to promote increased parent engagement. Mr. Russell said that there are set protocols for Parent Associations in NYC, so the issue must be given serious consideration before moving forward. Mr. Campbell requested that it be added to the October 6th meeting agenda so that he could report back to the parents about next steps soon.

School Culture

Mr. Campbell reported that the school is in its second week of the school year. He said that the school has made adjustments to some of the protocols and rules, based on lessons learned in year one, to provide more structure

for students. For example, students are not allowed to use electronics on campus. He said that following up on small issues helps students understand consequences, which will also help mediate more serious issues should they arise. Ariel Nadelstern added that the school has created systems to ensure consistency across classrooms, which will help all faculty members hold students accountable for their behavior. These systems are being adjusted as needed during the first couple of weeks, given that the school is also adjusting to a new space, but will then stabilize so that the focus can be on instruction moving forward.

Mr. Campbell reported that there are two adults in every classroom, and that support staff, which includes special education teachers, two social workers and two social work interns, are also collaborating with teachers. He said that the school has created a buddy system for new 7th grade students, so that returning students can help them adapt to school culture.

Mr. Campbell said that the students have uniforms this year, which were designed by Public School and manufactured by Aeropostale. He said that the kids and parents have been enthusiastic and cooperative about the uniforms, and that the only issues have been a few students wearing sneakers that are not in accordance with the uniform regulations. Students are not allowed to attend class out of uniform, but these issues are being addressed early so that everyone becomes used to the new expectations. There are extra uniforms in case of emergencies, so that students can attend class.

Mr. Campbell said that he is planning to start sports teams this year, particularly in Basketball and Track and Field, given the school's current access to basketball courts and a track.

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Russell reported that the Finance Committee had met with the school's accountant, Digant Bahl from Accounting Solutions of NYC, to review the financial statements from the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year and the current financial statements, as of August 31, 2016. Mr. Campbell pointed out that the school completed the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year with a \$227,000 surplus, which is approximately 10% of the entire budget and, according to Mr. Bahl, a healthy surplus for a school's first year of operation. Mr. Campbell added that the year-end projection for the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year is currently \$290,000. He said that the DOE space for this school year has relieved the school of rent costs that were previously projected. Ms. Cohen added that the Finance Committee asked Mr. Bahl many questions during the Committee meeting earlier in the week, and that the group felt comfortable with the current projections.

Mr. Campbell reported that the audit is almost complete and that the audited financial statements will be ready for Board review by the October 6th meeting, so that it can be approved and submitted to NYSED before the November 1st, 2016 deadline.

Personnel Committee Report

Mr. Russell reported that the Personnel Committee had met earlier in the week and had discussed Mr. Campbell's evaluation. The Personnel Committee had previously worked with Mr. Campbell to develop a format for the Evaluation, which consists of three sections: (1) school data, (2) a narrative, and (3) feedback from faculty. Mr. Campbell said that the instrument that he developed to collect teacher feedback was influenced by research he had done from eight different sources; the survey includes 12 open-ended questions to be

answered using a Likert Scale (1 – 5), but also provides space for comments and elaboration. There is also a section at the end for comments related to areas not directly addressed by the questions. Eric Nadelstern said that he thought it would be a very effective instrument for collecting feedback.

Mr. Campbell said that Accounting Solutions of NYC would conduct the teacher survey and collect all responses and comments in order to maintain anonymity. Mr. Campbell will see the comments afterwards, but will not have access to the names of the teachers who submitted them.

Mr. Campbell said that he is in the process of making revisions to the narrative section of the evaluation based on feedback from the Personnel Committee, and that the survey will be distributed to all faculty from the 2015 – 2016 school year within the next week. He said the completed report would be submitted to the Board at least 48 hours in advance of the October 6th Board meeting for review and discussion at that time.

DOE Construction Update:

Mr. Campbell reported that the necessary construction on the facilities to create a nurse’s office and counseling rooms has not yet happened due to a delay in the DOE’s approval process, but that the paperwork has been re-submitted. He said that contractors are prepared to begin the work, as soon as the school receives approval, and that he expects the work to take a few days.

Long-term Facility Update:

Mr. Campbell said that the new facility is located approximately six blocks away from the current temporary site, and that construction is moving forward. He said that the Tenant’s Representative that the school engaged has officially begun working and will begin attending weekly construction meetings to ensure that the quality and timeline of the construction are consistent with the agreement the school signed with the developer. He added that the Tenant’s Representative is the architect who designed the building, so he knows the plans intimately and has a vested interest in ensuring that the building is constructed well and maintains the integrity of his plan.

Faculty Mixer:

Mr. Russell said that the Board had discussed holding a mixer with the school faculty and that the date has been set for November 3, following the regularly scheduled Board meeting. He asked that all Board members make every effort to attend.

New Business – Follow-Up on New York State Test Results:

Ms. Cohen asked if there had been any indication of an error in the grading after NYSED’s further review of the school’s bubble sheets. Mr. Campbell said that NYSED said that any changes would be very minor to the overall score, but that they could review specific students’ tests if needed. Ms. Cohen and Jodi Schneider inquired if it would be helpful to recruit volunteers to provide additional tutoring for students who are on the cusp of the next level. Mr. Campbell said that volunteers are not always reliable, and that inconsistency can be problematic. Ms. Aylwin said that space is also a concern, since all classrooms in the current facility are used throughout the entire day, including the Extended Day portion of the day from 2:45 – 5:15 and the After School timeslot from 5:15 – 6:00. Mr. Russell added that the instructional work happening during the school day is intended to target the current deficits and that Mr. Campbell and Ms. Nadelstern are responsible for coming up with solutions to those problems, with the Board’s support and guidance. Nancy Biberman and Lori Chemla added that if there

are ways that Board members can be of specific help, that Mr. Campbell should reach out. They both offered to lead field trips to cultural institutions to supplement the classroom time.

Adjournment:

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm.