

**Board of Trustees Meeting
January 11, 2018
801 East 156th Street, Bronx, NY 10455**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Resolution to Approve Minutes from December 7th, 2017 Board Meeting
- IV. Executive Director's Report
 - A. Academic Programming Update
 - i. Report on December 2017 Interim Assessments
 - B. Update on Dispute with Towne Partners
 - C. DOE's Rental Assistance
- V. Ford Research & Solutions' Report
- VI. Discussion on Potential Charter Revision Requests
- VII. New Business
- VIII. Executive Session
- IX. Next Meeting – February 1st, 2018
- X. Adjournment

**Reunión de la Junta
11 de enero de 2018
801 East 156th Street, Bronx, NY 10455**

AGENDA

- I. Inicio de Sesión
- II. Comentarios Públicos
- III. Moción para aprobar las minutas de la Reunión de la Junta del 7 de diciembre de 2017
- IV. Informe del Director Ejecutivo
 - A. Programación Académica
 - i. Informe sobre las evaluaciones preliminares de diciembre del 2017
 - B. Disputa con Towne Partners
 - C. Asistencia del Departamento de Educación (DOE) para pagos de renta
- V. Informe de *Ford Research & Solutions*
- VI. Discusión en torno a las posibles solicitudes de Revisión de Chárter
- VII. Asuntos Nuevos
- VIII. Sesión Ejecutiva
- IX. Próxima Reunión – 1 de febrero de 2018
- X. Cierre de Sesión



**Board of Trustees Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2018
766 E 156th Street, Bronx, NY 10455**

Trustees Present: Nancy Biberman, Valerie Capers, Andrea Cohen, Felicia Franklin, Davon Russell

Trustees Absent: Jodi Schneider, Lori Chemla, Serigne Gningue

SBECA Staff Present: Ric Campbell, Kelly Powers, Auriel Watson, Jason Adolphus, Jennifer Unger, Bruce Stansbury, Catherine Toussaint, Andre Harris, Sophia Jones, Dulce Rico, Vania Galveston, Lucy Peralta

WHEDco Staff Present: Katie Aylwin

Members of the Public Present: Jim Ford and Roblin Webb, Ford Research & Solutions Consultants

Call to Order

Davon Russell called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Andrea Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes from December 7th, 2017 Board Meeting as presented on January 11th, 2018. Felicia Franklin seconded and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Executive Director's Report

Academic Programming: Report on December 2017 Interim Assessments

Auriel Watson presented on the English Language Arts (ELA) assessments.

- The 6th grade class saw increased mastery in their extended responses, but their overall level of proficiency remained the same at 5%, with a larger percentage of students falling into Level 1.
- The 7th grade class saw their proficiency rise from 0% to 3%, but further growth was limited. Ms. Watson suggested that this might be the result of numerous absences that the 7th grade instructional team experienced throughout the quarter, due to personal/health reasons. All staff are currently being trained in close reading, and will be able to better assist in classes when faculty are absent going forward.

- The 8th grade class dropped from 13% proficiency to 4% proficiency, impacted, again, by a faculty absence, with one ELA teacher out on prolonged absence. In addition, there was a large number of students who were out during the interim testing, and were instead tested the day before winter recess. Former 8th grade dean Angelique Angrum has stepped out of her dean role to fill the Literature teacher vacancy, with several years of strong ELA and test prep experience.
- Ms. Watson reported that next steps will include a continued use of data to group students, and a utilization of Newsela, an online platform, across the curriculum to help students with their reading comprehension. Test prep begins on January 22nd, with an additional 45 minutes of ELA instruction four days per week, and teachers will be held accountable for utilizing data in their teaching practices. All grades will be using USA Test Prep at the end of each period, to assess students' understanding of the lessons, and which students need further instruction. Ms. Watson also stated that the Literature classes have been behind on teaching some of the standards, and only six of the eight standards that were tested were taught to students.

Nancy Biberman asked how students deal with stamina and anxiety during testing, and Mr. Campbell replied that students are moved to another location, given water, snacks, and given short breaks. Some students are eligible to have the test read to them, and are able to have questions and passages re-read as many times as they need. Mr. Campbell also mentioned that there will be further training for teachers around test administration.

Kelly Powers presented on the Math assessments.

- The 6th grade class experienced significant growth, improving from 1% proficiency to 28% on this assessment. The 6th grade team has been aligning their lessons to standards and has provided extra help during the Elective Program, lunch, and other down time for students.
- The 7th grade class saw small growth, moving from 1% to 2% proficiency. There are three teachers in the 7th grade classroom, and Ms. Powers asserted that the lack of success in the testing is due to a lack of fluency (ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide). The pacing of this classroom is on track, and they have been able to repeat standards in their instruction.
- The 8th grade class, which also has a three-person teaching team, saw small growth as well, from 2% to 4%. The 8th grade team has seen their students experience more time on task, and has had classroom management growth. They have redesigned lessons to be more engaging.
- All grades are utilizing Khan Academy, an online tool that works with students on the standards being covered in class. Students are also using Reflex Math in Math RTI, which works with them on fluency.
- As of January 22, students will begin receiving 420 minutes of math instruction per week, increased from 180-270 minutes in the previous schedule. This will be made possible by adding new math teaching blocks to the schedule, and tying the first 30 minutes of Computer Science classes directly to the math standards that are being taught in each grade level.

Davon Russell suggested and the Board agreed that the meeting should segue to Jim Ford and Roblin Webb's presentation, given that it directly speaks to the school's Academic Programming, as well, postponing the remaining agenda items under the Executive Director's report.

Ford Research & Solution's Report

Mr. Ford and Ms. Webb reported that they had conducted a site visit on January 10th and January 11th, which included classroom observations, as well as a series of interviews with the Board and a cross-section of faculty members. They stated that, based on observations made during their December visit, there has been slight improvements in hallway transitions and classroom management; increased buy-in among teachers regarding proposed changes and an increased sense of urgency; and a strong focus on test prep, including the implementation of a rewards system.

Mr. Ford and Ms. Webb made a series of recommendations to further strengthen the school, which include:

- Visiting successful charter schools in the immediate future with Ms. Webb.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the school leadership to ensure that the Corrective Action Plan is feasible and that there is accountability assigned.
- Reconsidering the school's hiring tactics, beginning the hiring process earlier in the year, and building Human Resources capacity.
- Focusing on building strong culture systems and structures, with a particular emphasis on 6th grade culture. Ms. Webb recommended conducting Professional Development sessions around this issue and referred an expert in her network to lead the session.

Mr. Ford and Ms. Webb suggested that they schedule additional visits to the school to assist with the implementation of the recommendations above and to assist the school leadership in determining the material modification needs for submission before the February 1st, 2018 deadline.

Executive Director's Report (Continued)

Update on Dispute with Towne Partners

SBECA's pro-bono law firm, K&L Gates, has requested that Towne Partners, the school's former landlord, make an offer to settle the ongoing dispute regarding the unreturned portion of the school's security deposit. The requested deadline to submit a settlement offer was Tuesday, January 9th, 2018, but as of January 11th, no offer has been made.

Board Members Ms. Cohen and Ms. Biberman have volunteered to meet with the firm K&L Gates in an effort to settle this case as swiftly as possible.

DOE's Rental Assistance

Mr. Campbell reported that the Department of Education's (DOE) rental assistance has been received. It is not being dispersed monthly, as originally expected, and is instead scheduled for two payments in March and May. The next payment by the DOE for rental assistance is scheduled for March.

He said that the DOE is not willing to pay for certain expenses that are folded into the school's lease agreement, including utilities and custodial services, which amount to approximately \$200,000 per year. He said that this withholding the full amount of base rent is interpreted as contrary to legislation passed by NYS in 2013. Article 78 lawsuits are required to be filed by mid-February to litigate this matter. A subset of the board, including Ms. Biberman and Ms. Cohen, as well as Susan Briggs, SBECA's attorney, will meet to discuss how best to proceed.

Discussion on Potential Charter Revision Requests

Mr. Russell and Mr. Campbell will continue to discuss the proposed modifications and draft a submission to NYSED, incorporating the recommendations from FRS. These modifications may include revising the organizational structure of the school and possibly amending the calendar and time of instruction. Mr. Ford will reach out to David Frank to continue this conversation on the school's behalf. The school received an extension to submit these requests; the new deadline is February 1st, 2018.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Executive Session

The Board voted to go into Executive Session.

Adjournment

The Board came out of Executive Session and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 1st, returning to the first Thursday of the month schedule.