

Board of Trustees Meeting

Location: New Dawn Charter High School, 760 Dekalb Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11216 **Zoom Meeting (School Closed)**

Date: Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Time: 3:00 P.M.

Board Members Present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Board Member, Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Amit Bahl, Secretary

Board Members Absent: Mr. Jonathon Carrington, Board Member.

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director, NDCS, Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations, NDCS, Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of H.R. and Finance, NDCS

Mr. Tabano, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

I. Resolution: Minutes for May 26, 2020 board meeting

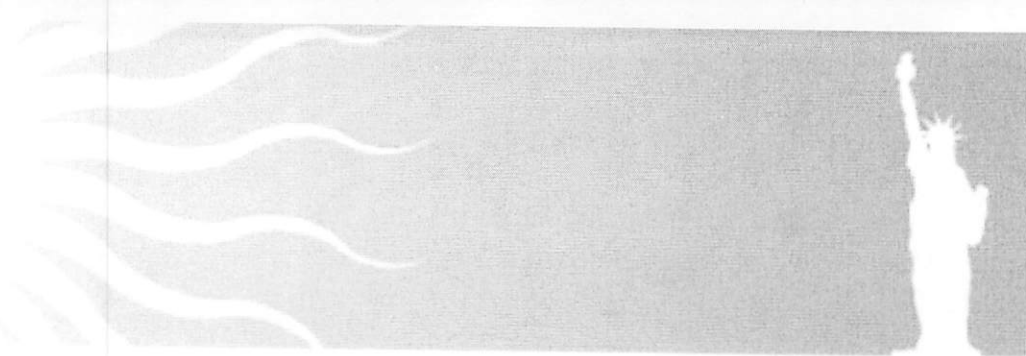
Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to approve the May 26, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Ron Tabano seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the May 26, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

II. Financials – Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of H.R. and Finance

Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of H.R. and Finance began by briefing the board on the new General Insurance quote submitted by Austin and Company, Inc. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon informed the board that the schools are insuring up to six hundred (600) students which will increase insurance premiums costs. Subsequently, the school will be spending more on Worker's Compensation insurance since New Dawn will be hiring seventeen (17) additional staff personnel. The insurance cost for directors and officers also increased. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon stated to the board that he looked at various other insurance options but feels that staying with Austin and Company, Inc. is the best option at this time as Mr. Tabano had recommended previously. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon informed the board that last year, the school paid \$83,284. in insurance premiums. This year, the cost will increase to \$104,723. He also stated that the insurance premium will probably increase to approximately \$110K annually given the added insurance coverages that will be needed to cover construction activities at the new building at 242 Hoyt Street for the months of July and August 2020. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon also stated that insurance premiums will probably change again when the school moves back to the new building.



He will ask the insurance company if the school is entitled to any discounts after the company reassess possible liabilities.

Mr. Ron Tabano asked the board for a resolution to accept the General Insurance quote submitted by Austin and Company, Inc.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the General Insurance quote submitted by Austin and Company, Inc.

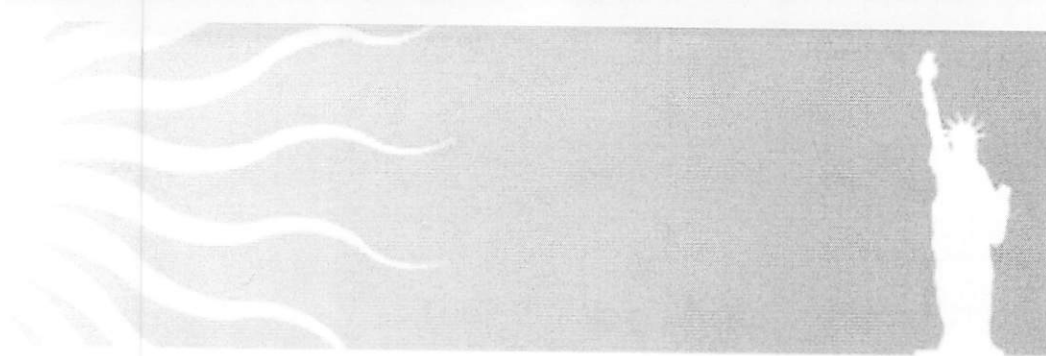
Motion Seconded: Ms. Katharine Urbati seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the General Insurance quote submitted by Austin and Company, Inc.

A. Resolution: Brooklyn and Queens 2020-2021 Annual Budget

In response to Ms. Katharine Urbati's question last board meeting concerning rising expenditures, Mr. Steve Ramkissoon reported that overhead costs increased for both schools. This increase is a result of the hiring of three (3) extra staff members for Brooklyn which includes a new Internship Coordinator, an ELL teacher, and a Culinary Instructor. In Queens, there will be twelve (12) new staff members coming on board. Mr. Tabano asked how the school plans to budget correctly if we do not know what our final FTE will be. Mr. Tabano further stated that we need to be careful not to over hire without having the necessary funding and at the same time be cognizant that that we need to get new staff on board soon. Mr. Tabano further asked if there are certain positions that can wait if schools are doing remote instruction and learning. Dr. Asmussen replied that the schools are not going to hire new staff until September 2020. Mr. Tabano asked what will happen if remote learning continues in September and these additional hires are not needed. Dr. Asmussen replied that it might be a situation that the school may have to deal with short of nullifying a new hire's contract. Mr. Tabano stated that we may have to wait and see how the pandemic plays out.

Ms. Katharine Urbati stated that the budget is ambitious, but she has full confidence in Dr. Asmussen. Ms. Urbati also acknowledged that PPE will offset some costs. Ms. Urbati stated that she was a little concerned about Queens' projected enrollment set at two hundred forty-five (245) students. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon replied that prior to the pandemic, enrollment was increasing. Dr. Asmussen also stated that the school will enroll new 9th and 10th grade students. Students with twenty (20) or fewer credits will be allowed to enroll which will help to reach the projected numbers. Ms. Urbati stated that she is hoping that schools will be allowed to re-open to make target enrollment numbers easier to attain. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon asked if anyone on the board had any further questions or concerns about the school budgets. Ms. Urbati stated that there was not anything concerning except for the challenges already discussed. Ms. Urbati asked how much of the budget was projected for repayment of the bond and the PPE. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon replied that the government is allowing twenty-four weeks for beginning the



repayment of PPE at a 1% interest rate. However, he believes that the PPE will be forgiven. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon also stated that there is some cushion in the budget for a worst-case scenario.

Mr. Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to accept the 2020-2021 Annual Budget.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the 2020-2021 Annual budget.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Amit Bahl seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the 2020-2021 Annual Budget.

B. Benefit Review

Medical: Mr. Steve Ramkissoon stated that since New Dawn is a small group which is under one hundred (100) employees, it does not qualify for any special discounts. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon also stated that there will be no change in rates for employee vision or dental plan. Neither will there be a change in rates for the short term, long term, accidental, or life insurance premiums. The medical high plan will have a 11.2% increase and the low plan will have a 7.26% increase in premiums. Ms. Jane Sun asked if these insurance increases happen regularly and Mr. Steve Ramkissoon answered that there is usually a premium increase every year. Mr. Steve Ramkissoon informed the board that New Dawn recently had its open enrollment period. As a bonus, the gym feature offered by Oxford is available to staff if they report that they are exercising at home.

Mr. Tabano asked the board if there is a motion to accept the employee benefits package.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the employee benefit package.

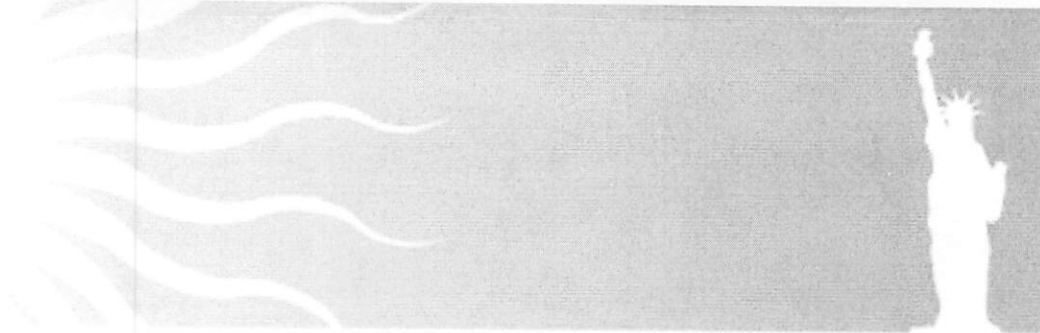
Motion Seconded: Mr. Amit Bahl seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve employee benefit package.

C. Resolution: Engagement Letters Schall & Ashenfarb—Dr. Sara Asmussen

Mr. Ron Tabano stated that the school has used Schall & Ashenfarb as auditors and are very reasonably priced and efficient. Ms. Katharine Urbati stated that it is a good idea to rotate auditors. However, she further stated that it is a good idea to stay with them for this coming year especially since they have done a good job in the past and they continue to highlight things that have changed in our annual financial reports.

Mr. Ron Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to accept and approve the Schall & Ashenfarb engagement letter.



Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to accept and approve the Schall & Ashenfarb engagement letter.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Amit Bahl seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the Schall & Ashenfarb engagement letter.

D. Resolution. Reimbursement for rebuilding of wall at 242 Hoyt Street.

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the school used operational money to pay for reconstruction of a structural wall at 242 Hoyt Street. She asked the board to approve reimbursement of those monies spent from the bond fund.

Mr. Ron Tabano asked the board if there was a motion to approve the reimbursement of operational funding that was spent on reconstruction of the structural wall at 242 Hoyt Street spent from the bond fund if available.

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to approve the reimbursement of operational monies that were spent on reconstruction of the structural wall at 242 Hoyt Street bond money is available.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Amit Bahl seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to approve the reimbursement of operational funds spent on reconstruction of the wall at 242 Hoyt Street.

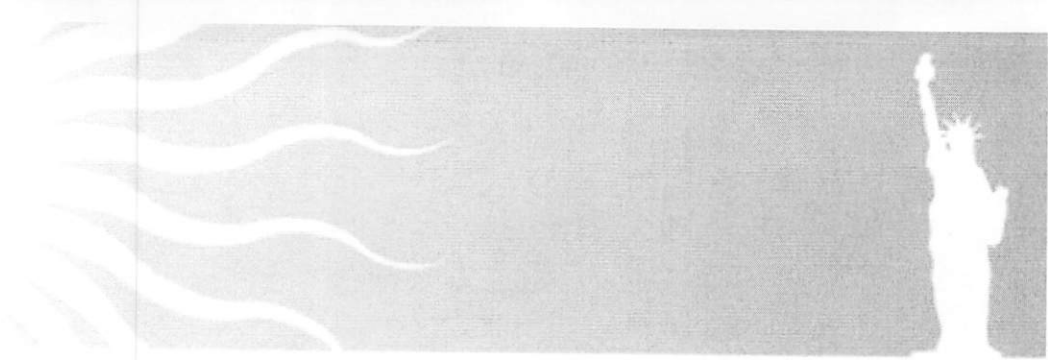
III. HR Update – Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

A. HR Committee—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that the HR committee met yesterday and that 90% of the vacancies are posted on Indeed. The Queens school has a separate email to receive applications. The Brooklyn school already has their own email for applicants. Mr. Ramkissoon informed the board that the applications will be screened and those candidates which are the best qualified will be scheduled for remote demo lessons if the situation remains the same. Mr. Ramkissoon also informed the board that posting for vacancies began in the middle of May 2020 but that the process has gained good momentum as applications continue to come in.

B. Vacation Time— Mr. Steve Ramkissoon

Mr. Ramkissoon brought up the fact that since staff had to forgo their spring break vacation time, we needed to figure out how to honor their contracts. It was decided that school could run with a skeleton crew the week of June 22 since it was a “Regents” and testing week for students. All other staff would be given the week off.



C. Hiring for Mental Health Grant—Sara Asmussen

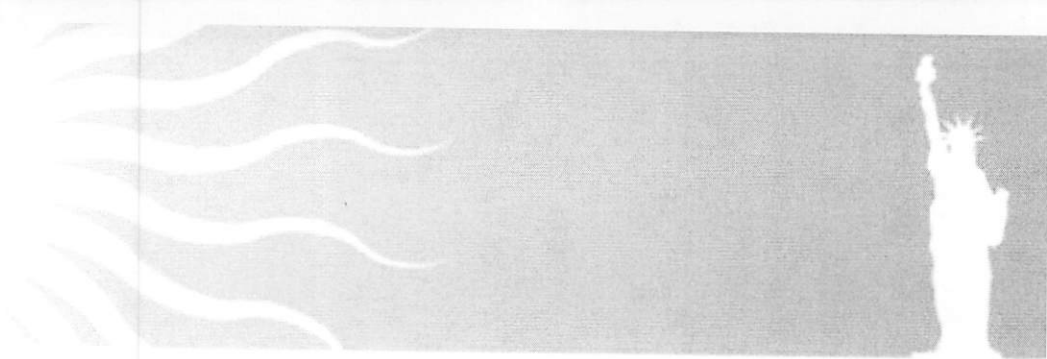
Regarding the mental health grant, Mr. Tabano asked if the school was getting applications for the substance abuse therapist and mental health therapist positions. Dr. Asmussen stated that there are three (3) applications received for the substance abuse therapist and one (1) for the mental health therapist positions. Mr. Tabano stated that his school was getting applications as well. Dr. Asmussen informed the board that this grant was obtained through Wildcat Charter School but all hires for these positions will be through New Dawn Charter Schools and personnel. The other four staff will work at the two campuses of Wildcat and the two campuses of Renaissance. The Board will vote on the contract between the two schools at the next meeting.

D. Staff Returning to Building—Sara Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen stated that there will be staff members who will not want to come back into the building. However, Dr. Asmussen indicated that she will be scheduling staff to come back in the building to pack for the move to Hoyt Street. Dr. Asmussen stated that the school will be following all COVID-19 protective measure protocols set forth by the State and Federal government such as wearing facemasks, social distancing, using sanitizer, etc. Dr. Asmussen asked the Board to think about how to respond to employees who refuse to physically come to work. Dr. Asmussen also stated that labor laws do not address a situation like the current pandemic crisis and asked the board if they knew of any labor law that addressed such a situation. Ms. Katharine Urbati stated that her contacts have not seen any guidance on what the best practices will be used in the industry. Ms. Urbati recommended that the school wait until further guidance comes forth. Dr. Asmussen agreed and emphasized that the policy should really be clear and set rules in place. Mr. Tabano also stated that employees currently have the right to say they will not come in physically. Ms. Urbati asked, when is the best time to decide on a policy, what is a reasonable timeline, and does the board have to come up with a decision immediately. Dr. Asmussen stated that it is not necessary to implement a policy immediately and those employees that become ill can be treated in accordance with current sick leave policies. Dr. Asmussen emphasized that she is trying to circumvent the possibility that some employees will decide that they do not want to come work. Mr. Tabano stated that he believes that there will be some guidelines in place by September 2020. Ms. Urbati further stated that right now, employees need only declare if they have a fever and that will exempt them from coming in.

IV. Facilities

A. Construction & Maintenance—Jose Obregon



Mr. Obregon informed the board that this week at the construction site the ceilings will be closed and all wiring will be done. Further, overall, the site looks like it is progressing nicely. Also, the guard roof rail fence is scheduled to be installed this week. No major obstacles are forecasted. Mr. Obregon also informed the board that there will be some training scheduled for himself pertaining to the HVAC system, the fire alarm, and sprinkler systems. Mr. Tabano recommended that someone else from the staff is also trained to serve as a backup. Regarding the Queens and Dekalb facilities, there are no major issues. Mr. Obregon also informed the board that Mr. Rob Loheit, owner of the Dekalb property, called him to remind him that the lease at Dekalb Avenue was going to expire in July 2020. He asked that if we needed an extension to the lease to please let him know. Mr. Tabano asked if there are people interested in buying the building and Mr. Obregon responded that recently, Mr. Loheit is showing the building to several potential buyers. (Additional Note: the lease expires on August 15, 2020).

B. Agreement with Butler Resident—Dr. Sara Asmussen

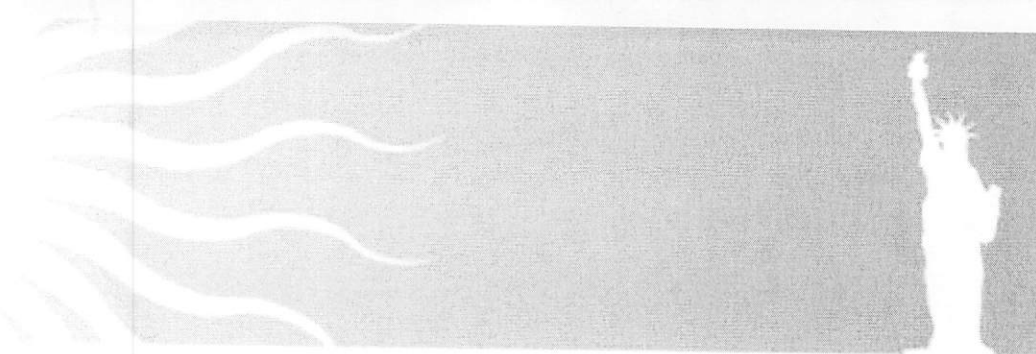
Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that the school acquired the permit to put up an additional six (6) feet of scaffolding on the outside. Dr. Asmussen asked if the existing scaffolding is going to be brought down today and Mr. Obregon confirmed that it would be brought down today. Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the school agreed to pay the owner at the Butler residence \$1500 for two months to let us put our scaffolding on his property. After the two (2) months, it will cost the school \$150. per day to keep the scaffolding up. The school has agreed that if there is damage to the bamboo garden on the butler resident's property, the school's horticultural club will replace it.

V. Reports on Remote Learning – Dr. Sara Asmussen

A. Grading Policy

Mr. Tabano asked if the State sent out surveys to parents of Charter schools. Dr. Asmussen replied that she did get a survey since her children are in public school, but parents of charter school students did not. Mr. Tabano further stated that they are holding back results because the outcomes were not good. Dr. Asmussen informed the board that New Dawn is simply trying to maintain the student achievement levels before students started their online instruction. Dr. Asmussen further stated that there is no attempt to bolster student grades artificially. Reviewing the attendance of four classes for one day, Ms. Jane Sun stated that Global attendance is only at 10% and asked was the low attendance due to it being scheduled during 1st period and if Global is always at 1st period. Dr. Asmussen replied that classes are switched around and that Regents classes are never scheduled during first period.

B. Using Data to Identify Struggling Students



Dr. Asmussen explained that data was sent to the board since she knew that student attendance was going to be an issue during SED's oversight visit. Dr. Asmussen wanted to show that students can sign in any other time during the day and not just during the live Zoom lessons, which are recorded for students to download later. Data also indicates that those students failing in the prior quarter were still failing in the current quarter. Certain classes showed a drop in grades during remote learning. Data was also broken down by teachers. Teachers who had failing students were asked to go back and ascertain why kids were not completing assignments. Teachers were expected to call their students to ascertain why they were not completing work. This push helped increase student performance especially in Health and U.S. history classes. Another analysis showed that all other classes had a 10% increase in grades. Living environment did not show the progress that the other classes did. Dr. Asmussen further stated that it is only within the last month that students have acquired the rhythm for the new learning norm. Since then, students have greatly improved, as shown by the data, as they have become accustomed to online learning. Some students have expressed their feelings of being overwhelmed. Dr. Asmussen stated that the focus the last few weeks is to get students to make up assignments they did not finish so they can pass their classes.

VI. Compliance—Sara Asmussen

A. Title Grants

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that the school received the Title Fund allocations. August 31, 2020 is the due date for Title Grant applications for next year and the school will be retaining Arthur Pritchard as its Title grant consultant.

B. Annual Report

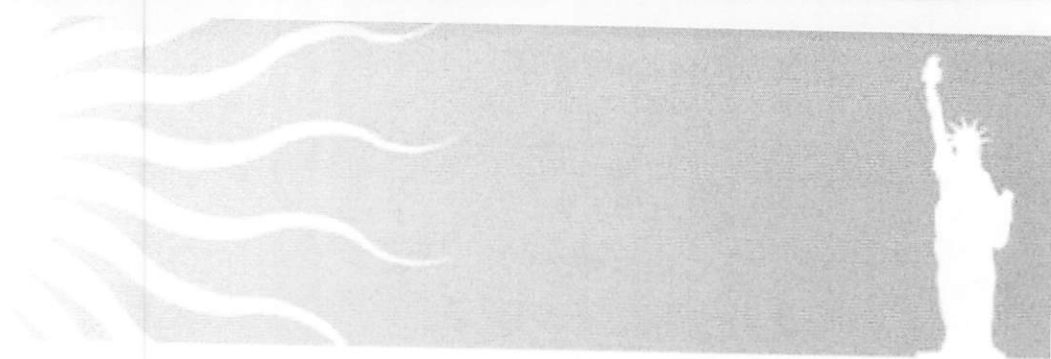
Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the annual report will be due soon. However, the NYSED business portal is not open yet for submitting that report.

C. BOCES Reporting

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the State erroneously informed the school that it had missed the annual TAA reporting requirement when in fact it was submitted on time. It was discovered later that the report was submitted and due to a technical glitch on its side, it did not register. The State rectified the issue and the school is in reporting compliance.

VII. Update on NYSED Charter School Office Year 1 Visit Queens - Dr. Asmussen

Dr. Asmussen informed the board that the State was scheduled to observe four (4) classes but only observed three (3). She did send the recording of the class that they missed to the



oversight team. Additionally, Dr. Asmussen stated that the school returned the eighteen (18) questions pertaining to the Queens school. There was no follow up call on the answers submitted. Dr. Asmussen commented to the board that the classes observed were fantastic.

VIII. New Business – Mr. Ron Tabano

N/A

IX. Adjournment

The next scheduled board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday July 21, 2020 at 3:00 PM. The board meeting was adjourned at 4:05PM.