

Board of Trustees Meeting

Location: New Dawn Charter High School, 242 Hoyt Street, Brooklyn, New York 11217

Zoom Meeting (School Closed)

Date: December 15, 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, Board Member

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 Finance and HR, Mr. Zach Flory, Principal, NDCHS II, Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal, NDCHS, Dr. Lisa DiGaudio, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Ms. Nazli Askin, Data Specialist

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

I. Resolution: November 24, 2020 minutes

Motion: Ms. Katharine Urbati motioned to approve the November 24, 2020 Board of Trustee meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the November 24, 2020 Board of Trustee meeting minutes.

II. Resolution: Policies and Procedures

A. Curriculum: Policies – Dr. Lisa DiGaudio

Dr. DiGaudio informed the board that the schools has switched to Chalk for curriculum mapping. Dr. DiGaudio stated that there is a need for the teaching staff to have scope and sequence tool available for planning. This includes a reference on how to breakdown and create of an outline. Dr. DiGaudio added that updates on this new curriculum mapping manual will be coming in January 2021 and courses will be added. New teachers will be able to use this program in person or in a remote environment. Dr. DiGaudio also stated that the curriculum will be updated based on the needs of the school. Mr. Tabano congratulated Dr. DiGaudio for her work and the comprehensive product that all teachers will now be able to utilize. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept the curriculum policies and procedures.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept the curriculum policies and procedures.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Amit Bahl seconded the motion.

Vote: The board unanimously voted to accept and approve the curriculum policies and procedures.

Ms. Jane Sun asked if there is a short version of this document that can be given to parents and be posted on the school website. Dr. DiGaudio confirmed that there will be and will be posted. Additionally, Ms. Sun also asked that the school website be updated where needed.

III. Update on Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoo – Director of Finance and Human Resources

Mr. Ramkissoo reported to the board that the audit and the new Financial Transparency submission had been completed. He reported that the bank balances total 2.7M in the bond account with Bank NY Melon. He further stated that some of this money will be refunded to the school which paid for some construction costs out of its per pupil revenue. As of this reporting period, 246K was paid towards the principal of the loan. Q3 compliance letter is already submitted. There is enough money to pay for completion of the project.

Mr. Ramkissoo also informed the board that since September 2020, the school has not issued any payments to Benchmark. There is still 1.6M in payments due. Mr. Ramkissoo also reported to the board that he met with Brian Baer, the owner's rep, and later collectively with Brian, Benchmark, and GKV Architects to discuss the change orders that were generated and total 1.1M. Mr. Ramkissoo also stated that some these change orders were a result of design issues. These particular change orders total over 500K and will have to be discussed with Benchmark and GKV to ascertain if the school should be responsible for these unforeseen costs. This includes the ten-foot fence on the roof top.

Mr. Ramkissoo reported to the board the number of employees at each school location and the number of employees funded by way of a grant. He also elaborated on open items such as the Friends of New Dawn, the name change from NDCHS to NDCS for the IRS, PPP funding, bank account consolidation, and COVID Time off requirements and the legalities regarding such time off. Mr. Ramkissoo stated that there are some employees who are not complying with travel restrictions although they are informing the school leadership when they do travel. Mr. Ramkissoo indicated that he will investigate what is the legal protocol to follow for employees that choose to do this.

Mr. Tabano commented that it is a good idea to find out the legal recourses for those that choose to travel and abuse travel restrictions. Ms. Urbati also asked that Steve inquire about the legal ramifications for the school.

IV. Facilities— Mr. Jose Obregon, Director of Operations

A. Brooklyn – Mr. Obregon informed the board that the construction project punch list is significantly reduced in items that still need attention. Among the items that still need to be addressed are the door locks throughout the school, the signage on the canopy, the rear handicap exit door, the installation of the safety rail behind the rear handicap exit door, the programming of the card access system, the FDNY fire alarm approval letter, and several lighting system adjustments. Mr. Obregon also informed the board that contractors will be in the building during the Christmas break to finish punch list items.

B. Queens – Mr. Obregon informed the board that the fire alarm approval letter (FDNY Form A106) was finally issued for the Queens building. A copy of that letter was forwarded to NYSED to confirm compliance. Barone management is continuing to conduct work on items that need to be addressed such as faulty windows that do not fully close and leaks in two (2) bathroom areas. MSP Network will also install missing cameras in the hallway areas, if not during the break, in January 2021 when school resumes.

V. School Updates

A. Brooklyn – Ms. Donna Lobato, Principal

Ms. Lobato reported to the board that since the last board meeting, NDCHS has four (4) additional students enrolled and a few other new appointments with perspective students. Additionally, as students fail Regent exams or do not take the Regents, other schools will be looking to disenroll those students. This presents a recruiting opportunity for NDCHS. Outreach will begin shortly. Further, Ms. Lobato confirmed that the school received 250K in grant funding from the Brooklyn borough president which will be used for STEAM activities which may include renovations to the roof. This will permit student activities on the roof top. Ms. Lobato confirmed that the school is compliant with COVID safety requirements. Additionally, there are students who stopped participating when remote learning started and are participating again as a result of successful student outreach efforts. Ms. Lobato also reported to the board that in lieu of Regents exams this year, students will take final exams. Information will be available regarding the exams if documentation is requested.

B. Queens – Mr. Zach Flory, Principal

Mr. Flory reported to the board that as of this date, eighteen (18) new students were enrolled for a total of 165 students enrolled at NDCHS II. Mr. Flory also reported that the school website is active and it is generating recruiting queries. Mr. Flory also informed the board that school counselors conducted a staff and student survey which revealed that some students want on-site counseling services. Additionally, the survey canvassed teachers and found some feelings of high anxiety in some staff members. There was another survey conducted, which is still being tabulated, that solicited input from teachers with the goal of improving the school overall. Suggestions included a virtual teacher's lounge where teachers can speak and interact with each other. Mr. Flory also informed the board that he will be streamlining the student recruiting process which will make it easier for teachers and admin staff to welcome new students. This will also help teachers conduct planning more efficiently. Additionally, Ms.'s Spaterella and Cruz at NDCHS II are moving forward to start a girl's group. The immediate goal is to train some of the female student population at NDCHS II along with other groups in the Queens borough so they can run this group by themselves. Potentially, the school can receive a \$500. stipend for starting the group to fund their activities. This initiative will come with no cost to the school. Mr. Flory also stated that the Internship program has a career day planned. They have eighteen professional career individuals scheduled who will participate in the career fair.

Mr. Tabano congratulated Mr. Flory on a job well done and asked him to thank the staff.

VI. Data- Ms. Nazli Askin

A. December Dashboard

Ms. Askin started her presentation with student enrollment information. In Brooklyn, three (3) students were added for a total of 274 students enrolled. SPED, ELL, free and reduced lunch, immunizations, gender, ethnicity, and Hispanic indicator percentages were discussed. Additionally, June and August 2020 Regent pass rate results were published and discussed in the report.

For the Queens school, as of last week there were 161 students enrolled not counting an additional three (3) new students that Mr. Flory reported as new enrollments. The same student data was presented to the board for the Queens school as was for Brooklyn school. Regents exam outcomes were also presented to the board. Ms. Askin also created a recruitment report for both schools which she discussed. This recruitment report depicts number of students enrolled by date, school of origin for each recruit, and appointments made by each school.

B. Draft of Self-Audit Against Performance Benchmarks

Ms. Askin also reported to the board that she has created a self-audit against performance benchmarks report utilizing the 2019 mid-term site visit benchmarks. The report includes ratings on the following benchmarks: Benchmark 1: Student Performance, Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning, Benchmark 3: Culture Climate, Student, and Family Engagement, Benchmark 4: Financial Condition, Benchmark 5: Financial Management, Benchmark 6: Board Oversight and Governance, Benchmark 7: Organizational Capacity, Benchmark 8: Mission and Key Design Elements, Benchmark 9: Enrollment, Recruiting, and Retention, Benchmark 10: Legal Compliance. Ms. Askin expanded on the performance ratings for each benchmark and the pertinent indicators.

Dr. Asmussen commented to the board, that this self-audit report is designed to keep the board members updated. Additionally, Dr. Asmussen indicated that as a result of the 2019 mid-term site visit in April/May benchmark ratings, staff changes were made that addressed some of the weaknesses within the draft report. A final report has not yet been received.

Mr. Tabano complimented Ms. Askin for a thorough and informative report.

VII. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

VIII. Adjournment

The next board meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2020 at 3:00 PM
The board of trustee meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.