

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL

888 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14209

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday, June 1, 2017

Board Co-Chairs Jacqueline Hollins and Ramone Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The following individuals were present:

*Trustees* - James McLeod, Joseph Costantini, Jacqueline Hollins, John Whitty, Evin Conyer, Divitta Alexander, Ramone Alexander, Maureen Ludwig, Thomas Bailey, Ron Stewart, Susan Hakala, Susanna Schenk, Vivian Logan.

*Administration/Teaching Staff* - Janet Barnes, Dara Seeley, Ellen Connell, Cara Monaco.

*Legal-not present.*

The following *Trustees* were not present – Bryan Donohue.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

An Oracle Charter School (OCS) parent addressed the Board about her concerns around behavior and discipline, which she perceived to be impacting teacher retention and student learning. She proposed several ideas about how to improve the situation including encouraging parents to volunteer to sit in the classrooms. Co-Chair Ms. Hollins encouraged the parent to get involved in the Parent-Teacher organization at OCS and advised the parent about the increase in professional development (PD) around behavior management. Co-Chair Mr. Ramone Alexander commended the parent for coming forward and advised her about the revision of the student Code of Conduct and rolling it out effectively in 2017-18, assuring her that the Board was very concerned about high teacher turnover. He asked the parent to work with the Board, school leadership, and the teachers, and to be patient. The issue of requiring fingerprinting before parents could volunteer will be followed up. Ms. Barnes

acknowledged that the “buck stops” with her and that the school needs effective PD around behavior issues aimed at routinization of use of effective management tools by teachers and staff.

## MINUTES

Upon motion by James McLeod, seconded by John Whitty, the meeting minutes from the May 4, 2017 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

## UPDATE ON CONSULTING GROUP DIALOGUE AND INPUT

Ms. Hollins provided KXD Consulting Group’s May Status Report and reported that the Search Committee, upon agreeing that the current focus should be on recruitment of an Assistant Head of School (HoS), authorized KXD to post for this position immediately. An ad hoc committee will monitor and oversee the Charter renewal procedure, timelines, and documentation, in concert with KXD. In addition, the Accountability Report will be submitted on time.

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATES

Janet Barnes, Head of School report–

- a. Reported on Seniors ready for graduation, discussed numbers of Seniors who have passed all exams and are passing all courses and numbers of Seniors who need exams and credits. She reports that OCS will offer an August 2017 graduation this year and that all students in the cohort have been accounted for. A Senior Study Room with content area teachers, support staff and counselors aimed at course credit recovery is in place for the full week of June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Presented a written proposal for summer programming at OCS, to include a Senior academic clinic to run for 4 weeks, a plan to offer teachers paid time to develop curriculum guides, assessments, and unit plans, and to learn eDoctrina, and a plan for a 2 week Math clinic for incoming Freshmen and current Freshmen who were in the Algebra I two year course. A Funding request for these efforts will be included in the 2017-18 OCS budget to be submitted to the Board for approval.
- c. Discussed the 2017-18 school calendar, noting that August 21 is reserved as PD day for teachers. On August 28 Freshmen come in with their parents, and on August 29, the entire student body will return to school. The Board reiterated the need for parent sign-off for a “compact” between parents, students, and OCS upon receipt of the new Student Handbook and Code of Conduct. There will be a parent board established in 2017-18.

- d. Provided a draft copy of the revamped school organizational chart and reporting lines. The Board noted that it supported the hiring of an Administrative Assistant (or realignment of duties of current staff) to assist Ms. Barnes.
- e. Reported on staffing: current staff members are being asked what they want to teach next year. OCS will host one teacher through an AmeriCorps opportunity.
- f. Noted that a student had been invited to a 2017 Canisius College Summer Honors Program for American Government. This sparked a good discussion about establishment of an OCS scholarship committee and scholarship fund to set clear policies and standards.
- g. Noted that OCS has put out a request for proposal for janitorial services. Though a recommendation was made by the Facilities Manager regarding the matter, more providers will be solicited.

Dara Seeley, Director of Curriculum and Instruction-

- a. Noted that PD is occurring during department meetings, with the last one on June 5 focused on summer curriculum writing.
- b. Reported that OCS has submitted a proposal to the Cullen Foundation to fund a Safe and Civil Schools Program.
- c. Noted use of Domain 4 meetings for teachers to inform them about use of this component of the rubric used to evaluate teachers.
- d. Commented that 5 students received college credit for their scores on CLEP exams and more were within a few points.

Ellen Connell, Director of Student Life-

- a. Reported on student behavior management statistics, noting that the trend is more positive and that when students learn to believe in themselves, results are good.
- b. Noted that the Senior Brunch was well attended by Seniors, family members, and community members, including Pastor Jones. Commented on several other venues where students were recognized for academic achievements.

Chantele Thompson, Director of Community Relations and Outreach-

Ms. Thompson was not present at the meeting and provided a written report with areas of concern and requests related to the position.

## BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Hollins:

- Noted that it was Joseph Costantini's last meeting, as his second term on the Board had expired.
- Polled the Board members about the monthly meeting day/time and it was decided to keep the Board meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 6 PM. Ms.
- Asked the Governance Committee to begin to look at the next annual retreat, to think about recruitment of new Board members, to plan for a new Board Chair once the term of Ms. Hollins and Mr. Ramone Alexander is over, and to look at the on-boarding process for new Board members, including compilation of a Board book.
- Asked the Academic Committee to put together its schedule of upcoming meetings, so they could be published.
- Asked the Finance Committee to put together its schedule of upcoming meeting, so they could be published.

Ms. Schenk noted that the departmental chairs have been asked to begin reporting to the Academic Committee.

Ms. Hakala noted that differentiated PD should be offered to keep experienced teachers inspired, and Ms. Schenk will take that to the Committee.

Mr. Whitty, Treasurer, talked the Board through the OCS financial statements for the ten months that ended on April 30, 2017, commenting on such issues as the current assets, current ratio, significant variances, etc.

Graduation will be on June 26 at 5 PM in the Mary Seton Room at Kleinhans Music Hall. There was some discussion around how to ensure that the graduation is more orderly, so student names and speeches can be heard. Ms. Barnes will look closely at the arrangements.

Upon motion by Thomas Bailey, seconded by Susanna Schenk, the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

The next Board meeting will be held on July 6, 2017.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Hakala  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees