

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL

888 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14209

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Board Co-Chair Jacqueline Hollins called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The following individuals were present:

Trustees - James McLeod, Bryan Donohue, Joseph Costantini, Jacqueline Hollins, John Whitty, Evin Conyer, Vivian Logan, Susan Hakala.

Administration/Teaching Staff - Janet Barnes, Dara Seeley, Ellen Connell, Chantele Thompson, Amanda Kenefick, Cara Monaco, Tim Schosek.

Legal-Steve Polowitz, not present at this meeting.

The following *Trustees* were not present - Divitta Alexander, Ramone Alexander, Maureen Ludwig, Thomas Bailey, Ron Stewart, Susanna Schenk.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ken Peterson, KXD Consulting Group and Project administrator for KXD's engagement with Oracle Charter School (OCS), provided an overview briefing. Paul Vallas, Project Leader, patched in by phone during a portion of the presentation. Melissa M. Brinson, team member, was also present. Mr. Peterson noted that he, Paul Vallas, and Melissa Brinson established a strong affiliation with OCS when they attended the Board retreat in October 2016. Ken briefed the Board on the objectives of the project, focus areas (charter renewal, quality review, national school leader search, and talent development/development strategy), and project timeline. The quality review should result in a 5-year plan which will provide the new Head of School (HoS) a head start and will strengthen the school. A report in this arena should be available within 6 weeks to inform discussions/action and HoS search. In looking for a school leader, the goal will be to find an individual who understands instruction, who understands the unique school climate and needs in terms of student behavior, student learning, and how to lead a faculty, and who has a good working knowledge of resource utilization and how a strong budget can be a vehicle for school improvement. A search committee has been formed as of mid-March 2017 with members of the Board and school staff, who will determine

characteristics of the ideal candidate, develop a compensation package and will determine the evaluation and selection process and participate in it. This committee had its first meeting on March 21. Meanwhile, KXD has already begun to search for candidates. Talent retention and development efforts will focus on developing a strong leadership team and expanding the pool of highly qualified and capable teachers. This strategy will be embedded in the charter renewal. The goal is also to develop models to give teachers stronger tools and training to manage classrooms. In building strong leadership teams among instructional staff, there will be focus on rewarding strong leaders and teachers and also on recruiting interns and student teachers who would potentially develop affinity with OCS early and who would then work at OCS upon graduation. An electronic version of the KXD briefing will be attached to these minutes.

MINUTES

Upon motion by Joseph Costantini, seconded by James McLeod, the meeting minutes from the February 2, 2017 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATES

Janet Barnes, Interim Head of School – Ms. Barnes noted that she has had a full plate of New York state reporting requirements with aggressive due dates. Ms. Barnes has engaged Dr. Cathy Battaglia to help with professional development (PD) sessions starting in May 2017. Upon suggestion from a Board member, the KXD team will be consulted about resources for PD that might be available earlier than May. Ms. Barnes has continued meetings with parents of seniors, including home visits where needed; she noted that 10/51 families needed to be met. All teacher evaluations pending from the 2015-16 school year have been completed.

Ms. Amanda Kenefick – Director of Operations, noted that six new teachers were hired in February and that there has been no fall off necessitating further hiring at this point.

Ms. Ellen Connell – Director of Student Life, reported on behavior management, Spirit Week, Athletics, restructuring of the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, etc.

Ms. Dara Seeley – Director of Curriculum and Instruction noted that students have been placed in OCS' Virtual Classroom to work on various online courses through Gradpoint. The Forensics Curriculum materials are being put to use. Ms. Seeley and Mr. Schosek are developing definitions and processes associated with a Response to Intervention program for OCS that will assist with targeted academic and behavioral support for students. Partnership with Upward Bound in conjunction with D'Youville College is in the works.

Ms. Chantele Thompson – Director of Community Relations and Outreach noted that monthly Lunch with Leaders is continuing, and U.S. History students from the junior class were honored recently. The College Simulation Program is enjoying active participation among the students who do attend regularly. There will be a second Open House on March 25, 2017. “The Phoenix” newsletter will be released in mid-March. Ms. Thompson advocated for incorporating as many extracurricular programs as possible during the school day because many students cannot stay after school because of work and other factors.

The HoS and School Leadership updates are available electronically now and will be attached electronically with the Board minutes.

BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Only one committee chairperson was present. John Whitty, Treasurer, and Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the deficit improved from 12/31/16 - \$490,475 to Jan 31 2017 - \$458006. Student FTE's decreased from 348 at 12/1/16 to 339 at 1/31/17. Special Education FTEs increased over the same period. Cafeteria revenue continues to show positive variance. Favorable variance in Administrative Staff was offset by unfavorable variance in Instructional Staff. Part of the unfavorable variance was explained by retention bonus which will reverse as we move later in the year. Accountability bonus was under-budgeted by \$21,500. Unfavorable variance in non-Instructional Staff was due to contract nurse not having been budgeted.

BOARD BUSINESS

Upon motion by Joseph Costantini, seconded by Vivian Logan, the Board voted unanimously to replace John Ashwood and Mr. Costantini as trustees of the School's 403(b) plan. Ramone Alexander, Board member/Co-Chair, John Whitty, Board member/Treasurer Bryan Donohue, Board Member, were designated and appointed as trustees who are authorized to sign any and all necessary banking and/or 403(b) plan documentation.

At 7:55 PM upon motion by Vivian Logan, seconded by Joseph Costantini, the Board unanimously agreed to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. At 8:10 PM Joe Costantini moved to move out of Executive Session. Bryan Donohue seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Upon motion by Evin Conyer, seconded by Bryan Donohue, the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting.

A meeting of the Executive Committee was set for March 15, 2017 (later changed to 4 PM March 21 due to inclement weather).

Next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2017 at 6 PM.

Sincerely,

Susan Hakala

Secretary to the Board of Trustees