

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL

888 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14209

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING Thursday November 3, 2016

The following individuals were present: Trustees - Joseph Costantini, Ramone Alexander, Jacqueline Hollins, Tom Bailey, Maureen Ludwig, Divitta Alexander, James McLeod, Divitta Alexander, Susan Hakala; Administration - John Ashwood, Dara Seeley, Chantele Thompson, and Ellen Connell. Legal - Steve Polowitz. Vivian Logan and Ron Stewart - Trustees, were excused and not present.

Ms. Evin Conyer, new Parent Trustee, whose application forms are still pending, was present. Prospective new Trustees Bryan Donohue, Susanna Schenk, and John Whitty were also present at the meeting but were excused when the Board went into Executive session. Robert Spampata and Peggy Moriarty resigned as Trustees, effective immediately. Their letters of resignation were circulated among the Board members at the meeting.

Board Chairman Joe Costantini called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

MINUTES: Upon motion by James McLeod, seconded by Jacqueline Hollins, the draft minutes from the October 6, 2016 meeting were approved.

PRESENTATIONS:
None.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Mr. John Ashwood, Head of School, provided a combined report for the HoS and the Directors. He noted that the 2017 graduation ceremony will be held on Monday, June 16, 2017 at Kleinhans. Plans will be made to deal with crowd control and with audio quality for the speakers. There was a water treatment inspection done on October 29, 2016; 28 samples were taken and results expected in 2 weeks. There are 2 staff vacancies (Special Education and ENL). The Social Studies and Science teacher positions have been filled.

Director of Student Life Ellen Connell's report noted enrollment at 366 students. The Board questioned whether the 13 out of school suspensions (OSS) was on par with previous years and learned that it was typical. In school suspensions (ISS) were at "0" and there was a 98.6% compliance rate with phone submissions. Board Chair Mr. Costantini noted that he had received a letter from a parent in late October requesting a hearing to appeal a student expulsion. Mr. Polowitz noted that under the law, if a parent requests an appeal, the Board must set a date promptly to hear the appeal. It was agreed to hold a special Board meeting on Monday, November 14, 2016 at 6 P.M (see Addendum below). The transcript of the expulsion hearing, as well as other pertinent documentation, will be sent electronically to all Trustees one week prior to the special meeting for review. The Board requested an update on alternative education opportunities being offered in the interim to the expelled student and were assured that these have been provided.

Ms. Dara Seeley, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, provided an update on student assessments, data analysis, and lesson planning alignment as part of professional development and continuous tracking of student progress. At the next Board meeting in December, Ms. Seeley will provide a readout on how the students are doing, with several months of data to paint the picture.

Ms. Chantele Thompson, Director of Community Relations and Outreach, provided an extensive list of ongoing activities, developing relationships, discussions, etc. This sparked a fairly lengthy discussion of how to spur greater parent participation and presence at the school. Board members shared various ideas and all agreed that it was important to establish a stronger expectation at the 9th grade level when students and perhaps parents are perhaps more engaged. It was noted that parent engagement is a "heavy lift," but that over a period of years, with consistency and planning and with rigorous follow up, it will be possible to see increased engagement. Mr. Ramone Alexander requested a

framework to be developed by Ms. Thompson for bringing about this cultural shift toward greater involvement among parents and students at the school. Finally, Ms. Thompson noted that a media specialist had been hired.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Several reports will be ready for the December 2016 Board meeting (financial audit and academic Dashboard). It was noted that the Chairs of Finance and Development/Marketing (Robert Spampata and Peggy Moriarty) had resigned. Tom Bailey introduced three excellent prospective Board members to help fill the gaps, in terms of expertise and commitment: John Whitty, a recently retired CPA with over 30 years of experience; Susanna Schenk, a Buffalo Public Schools teacher on leave who lives in the OCS neighborhood; and Bryan Donohue, the COO of the Buffalo News and father of 3 children. The prospective Trustees introduced themselves and observed the first part of the meeting. Documentation for the prospective new Trustees will be submitted to CSI, which will authorize. Tom Bailey moved to appoint John Whitty and Susanna Schenk to the School's Board of Trustees, subject to CSI's approval. James McLeod seconded the motion and the Board approved the motion unanimously. Mr. Whitty's and Ms. Schenk's applications will be submitted to CSI for final approval, as required in order for them to become official voting members of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Donohue's application will also be submitted when complete, and the Board will vote to appoint him at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Upon motion by Maureen Ludwig, seconded by Jacqui Hollins, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

The session was concluded at 8:25 P.M. upon motion by Tom Bailey, seconded by Divitta Alexander.

Next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 6:00 P.M.

ADDENDUM:

On November 14, 2016, an appeal hearing with all Trustees, Legal Counsel, Head of School, and Director of Student Life present. It was held at the request of a parent whose student was expelled from OCS. The parent and student were heard by the Board. Upon motion by James McLeod, seconded by Jacqui Hollins, the decision to uphold the expulsion was affirmed unanimously. There were 2 abstentions.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan R. Hakala
Secretary to the Board of Trustees