

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL
888 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14209

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, April 6, 2017

Board Co-Chair Ramone Alexander called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

The following individuals were present:

Trustees: Divitta Alexander, Ramone Alexander, Thomas Bailey, Joe Costantini, Jacqueline Hollins, Bryan Donohue, Vivian Logan, James McLeod, and Ronald Stewart

Board Legal Counsel: Steve Polowitz

OCS Staff: Ellen Connell, Cara Monaco, Chantele Thompson, Tim Schosek

NYSUT Representative: Paul Conklin

Educational Consultants: Melissa Brinson and Kenneth Peterson

Kirsits & Associates: Karen Burhans

The following *Trustees* were excused:

Susan Hakala, Maureen Ludwig, Susanna Schenk and John Whitty

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon **Motion** by Joe Costantini, seconded by James McLeod, the meeting minutes from the March 2, 2017 Board meeting were unanimously approved by the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 5:10 PM upon **Motion** by Ramone Alexander, seconded by James McLeod, the Board unanimously agreed to move into Executive session to discuss personnel issues. At 5:28 PM Ramone Alexander **Moved** to move out of Executive Session. Jacqueline Hollins seconded the motion and Board members unanimously approved.

UNION GRIEVANCE – Step III Grievance Hearing:

Pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and request by the Oracle Charter School Instructional Staff Association (the “Union”), a Step III Grievance Hearing before the Board was held to appeal the Step II denial by the Head of School for payment of a \$2000 one-time stipend to all teachers with a Master’s degree. Ms. Cara Monaco, Union President, presented a grievance in relation to Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 41.2 (payment of a \$2,000 stipend to teachers with a Master’s degree). The Union is requesting payment of the stipend for all teachers with a Master’s degree. According to Ms. Monaco, two teachers who earned their Master’s degree prior to employment at Oracle state they received the stipend. However, verification of payment was not available. One teacher (who earned a Master’s degree while employed at Oracle) has been confirmed as having received the stipend. Discussion was had regarding two teachers who had previously asked to receive the stipend, and were denied payment based on a decision by the prior head of School that the “spirit of the contract” was that the stipend would only be paid to teachers that earned their Master’s degree while employed at Oracle Charter School. When asked why these two teachers did not pursue a grievance, Ms. Monaco was not sure why. Mr. Conklin, the NYSUT union representative indicated that the CBA clause which is the subject of this Step III Grievance was unchanged from the prior CBA. However, upon review of the prior CBA it was found that the clause was absent. Ms. Monaco and Mr. Conklin were asked if the Union would be open to an amendment to the current wording of said clause to clarify

conditions of payment. Both Ms. Monaco and Mr. Conklin agreed the clarity would be helpful. The Board reserved decision and advised that it would provide a decision on the Step III Grievance to the Union within the CBA required time-frame.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ken Peterson, KXD Consulting Group & project administrator along with KXD's Melissa Brinson updated the group regarding the four (4) Focus Areas:

1. National School Leader Search - The team has completed 25% of the short term objectives in terms of gathering information for the school candidate profile. The national ad will be posted soon based on expectations/feedback from the leadership team and search committee. The projected date of identifying a viable candidate is prior to the end of June; therefore, the new HoS will be available to take part in the end of year school activity.
2. Quality School Review - A comprehensive review will be conducted and a thorough report provided in preparation for the charter renewal process.
3. Talent Retention - KXD continues to work on developing a human capital strategy to address attrition and attract qualified teachers.
4. Charter Renewal - KXD started this process immediately upon hire. KXD continues to work with the former HoS and current leadership team to gather relevant school data/information.

KXD recommended that the Board begin to develop a corrective plan of action that includes enhanced tracking of school data and statistics; creating a dashboard to monitor school health, and continuous Board training. The Board must enhance knowledge of what is needed to meet goals/benchmarks to improve the culture and academic standards of the school. Oracle has begun this process by bringing expert consultants aboard to help with said process.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Interim HOS - In her absence, Ms. Barnes asked Cara Monaco to submit a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the School and the Oracle Charter School Instructional Staff Association (copy attached hereto) to adjust the school calendar to add two (2) additional instructional days.

Following review of the proposed MOU and discussion about the reason for adding the additional two (2) days, Vivian Logan **Moved** to approve and enter into the MOU, Joe Costantini seconded the motion. Divitta Alexander abstained, all other Board members approved.

Director of Curriculum - Director Seeley's written report provided information on the *master calendar, interim exam week, teacher evaluations, professional development, the virtual classroom, recruitment day at the Convention Center, and the RTI process*. Director Seeley continues to track student data and provide support for students who are struggling academically.

Director of Student Life - Director Connell reported on *behavior management, spirit week and talent show* (great showing of talent among Oracle students), *participation in VADIR and DASA webinar, School Safety & Emergency Planning, and workshop on Managing Negative Employee Behavior, Athletics and FBI's Community Outreach to speak to Oracle freshmen*. Trustee Divitta Alexander continues to work with Director Connell and Committee on restructuring the *Code of Conduct*. Trustee Divitta reports the goal to complete the restructuring is the end of April 2017.

Director of Community Relationships and Outreach - Director Thompson provided a written report on several accomplishments during the month of March. She reported the second Open House on March 25, 2017, had better attendance compared to the first event. OCS students that provided tours, and greeted guests were given rave reviews for the information and respect displayed. A total of 192 applications have been submitted for 113 openings and a waiting list has been developed. Director

Thompson asked for support for school volunteers who need to be fingerprinted to work at the school and have to pay the \$100 fee and cannot afford to do so. Vivian Logan suggested if volunteers are UB alumni, they may be able to get prints at UB Safety Office on Amherst Campus, and Jacqueline Hollins stated she will seek guidance from finance committee regarding their recommendations.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee - Board Co-Chairs Ramone Alexander and Jacqueline Hollins met with the entire school staff on March 27, 2017 to provide an update on the CSI Accountability Dossier and work of the Education Consultants and Board toward Renewal.

CSI pre-visit phone call will be conducted on April 24, 2017, Co-Chairs R. Alexander and J. Hollins will be present during the call. The OCS leadership team is gathering the necessary documents in preparation for the upcoming CSI visit. **Trustees were reminded that CSI will meet with the Board on at 5:30 PM on May 16, 2017.**

Academic Excellence - Jacqueline Hollins (on behalf of Committee Chair Susanna Schenk) reported the team has been focusing on the academic progress of seniors (preparation for graduation), and has also requested data on freshmen, sophomores and juniors.

Finance - Karen Burnhas (on behalf of Committee Chair John Whitty) noted that per Resolutions adopted at the January and March 2017 Board meetings, the signatories for the Oracle bank accounts and 403(b) forms have now been updated. The new signatories include: Ramone Alexander, Tom Bailey, Amanda Kenefick and John Whitty.

The 990 tax forms were previously distributed to the Board and are ready for filing.

Joe Costantini **Moved** to approve the filing of the IRS Form 990, Jacqueline Hollins seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

BOARD BUSINESS:

It was noted that the signatories for both the savings money market account and "Beneflex" Flexible Spending Account "FSA"/Health Reimbursement Arrangement "HRA" account with Northwest Savings Bank must be updated.

Upon **Motion** by James McLeod, seconded by Bryan Donohue, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution to update signatories on the savings money market account and "Beneflex" Flexible Spending Account "FSA"/Health Reimbursement Arrangement "HRA" account with Northwest Savings Bank and that the new signatories shall be Ramone Alexander, Tom Bailey, Amanda Kenefick and John Whitty

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 7:17 PM upon **Motion** by Jacqueline Hollins, seconded by Joe Costantini, the Board unanimously agreed to move into Executive session to discuss a confidential legal matter. At 8:00 PM Ramone Alexander **Moved** to move out of Executive Session. Jacqueline Hollins seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon **Motion** by Jacqueline Hollins, seconded by James McLeod, the Board unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Vivian D. Logan, Trustee