

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL  
888 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14209

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
Thursday October 6, 2016

The following individuals were present: Trustees - Joseph Costantini, Peggy Moriarty, Ramone Alexander, Ron Stewart, Jacqueline Hollins, Tom Bailey, Maureen Ludwig, Divitta Alexander, Susan Hakala; Ms. Evin Conyer, new Parent Trustee, Legal - Steve Polowitz. Administration - John Ashwood, Dara Seeley, Chantele Thompson, Ellen Connell, and Amanda Kenefick.

The following individuals were not present:

Trustees James McLeod, Robert Spampata and Vivian Logan

Board Chairman Joe Costantini called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

MINUTES: Upon motion by Tom Bailey, seconded by Peggy Moriarty, the draft minutes from the September 1, 2016 meeting were approved.

PRESENTATIONS:

None.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Mr. John Ashwood, Head of School, provided his report in a new format, and it covered areas of responsibility that the school Directors are responsible for. It included dashboard data which recorded a 9-12 grade total student enrollment of 366 pupils. Mr. Ashwood commented on the 10 formal suspension hearings and out of school suspensions, which were largely attributed to fighting, which in some cases was fueled by social media or was tied to middle school grudges. Related to that, he reported that phone submission was up to 98% in the second week of school. There were 3 staff vacancies and one teacher resignation (in order to transfer to Buffalo Public Schools). Mr. Ashwood noted that the building substitute would be filling the social studies vacancy. Professional development focus was on alignment of lesson plans and thinking maps training. A new social media specialist was hired; Allison Jaworski will start on October 6. OCS now is a member of the Northeast Charter School Advocacy network, and Ms. Chantele Thompson will meet with the local representative to find effective ways to plug into the organization. On September 20 almost 30 students turned out for the kickoff session of the Law and Government Career Explorers program and represented the school very well.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Ashwood provided the Board with a rationale for hiring an additional full-time ENL teacher to accommodate the needs of the school's growing ENL population. 7% of OCS enrollment is comprised of students with ENL needs. That population is higher than when OCS had 2 full-time

staff members in the 2014-16 school years. OCS wants to have a student demographic that mirrors the greater community in which it resides, and Mr. Ashwood noted that an additional teacher was needed to build an ENL program. The new group of freshmen has 13 students who require some level of ENL support, and their success, of based on past experience, will be based on the support the freshmen receive in content areas, such as ELA, Global History, LE, and math. A resolution to hire an additional ENL teacher with an increase to the school's operating budget had been drawn up as a result of favorable discussion of this matter in the Finance and Executive Committees. Upon call for motion to adopt the resolution, Peggy Moriarty moved to do so, and Maureen Ludwig seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted by the Board and will be appended to these minutes.

#### BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

##### A. Academic Excellence (Academic Policies) - Jacqueline Hollins, Chair:

Ms. Hollins noted that the last meeting was held on September 13, 2016. The three OCS Directors, Ms. Seeley, Ms. Connell, and Ms. Thompson attended the meeting with Trustees on the Committee. The teachers wanted to know more about the role of the Board and would like opportunities to interact with the Board. The leadership team of the school will develop a calendar of activities that will be shared with the Board on a regular basis. The Academic Committee recommended to the Board that a meet-and-great session or holiday gathering be scheduled with the Board and teachers. The teachers should receive information on the Board as part of their on-boarding. The Committee and leadership team discussed professional development programs/sessions for training related to Cultural Competency, and the leadership team was encouraged to seek assistance from the Committee to connect them to sources of teacher training tailored to needs. In that vein, teachers will attend a Restorative Justice training session on Oct. 15.

##### B. Development/Marketing - Peggy Moriarty, Chair:

There was a frank discussion about whether it was realistic for the school to apply for several prominent grants, such as the 21st Century Grant, which has an urgent deadline. The Committee is trying to get a "Grant File" assembled so it will be poised with appropriate documentation when appropriate opportunities arise. When asked about would benefit OCS students, Mr. Ashwood stressed the importance of providing opportunities to foster high aspirations and fuel student dreams.

##### C. Finance Committee - Robert Spampata, Chair:

No report - Mr. Spampata was not present.

##### D. Governance - Tom Bailey, Chair:

Mr. Bailey provided details about the upcoming October 29, 2016 Retreat to be held at Canisius College, facilitated by Ken Peterson. Mr. Bailey noted that Mr. Spampata will be taking a medical absence. Technically, he will resign from the Board and from his post of Treasurer. Mr. Bailey has located a recently retired individual with solid background as a CPA who may be interested in serving on the Board. In addition, he has been dialoguing with another person who is a former Buffalo Public Schools teacher with interest in joining the Board of Trustees. Bios and formal proposals of new Trustees will be presented at

the next Board meeting. Ms. Evin Conyer has come forward to serve as a Parent Trustee. Ms. Conyer was present at the meeting and commented that she is the parent of an OCS senior and a sophomore, as well as 2 alumni. She has a vested interest in the school and likes its size and expectations that students will regularly attend school and prepare to go to college. Tom Bailey moved to appoint Evin Conyer to the School's Board of Trustees as the Parent Representative, subject to CSI's approval. Maureen Ludwig seconded the motion and the Board approved the motion unanimously. Ms. Conyer's application will be submitted to CSI for final approval, as required in order for Ms. Conyer to become an official voting member of the Board of Trustees.

At 7:20 PM the meeting was adjourned upon motion by Maureen Ludwig, seconded by Ramone Alexander.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on November 3, 2016 at 6 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan R. Hakala  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees