

ORACLE CHARTER SCHOOL

888 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14209

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Thursday, October 5, 2017

Board Co-Chairs Jacqueline Hollins and Ramone Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

The following individuals were present:

Trustees – Jacqueline Hollins, Ramone Alexander, Thomas Bailey, Divitta Alexander, John Whitty, Susan Hakala, Maureen Ludwig, Vivian Logan, Ron Stewart, James McLeod, Dr. Ramelli Choates.

Administration/Teaching Staff - Janet Barnes, Ellen Connell, Dara Seeley, Jeff Meister, Kathy Herman.

Legal-Steve Polowitz.

The following *Trustees* were excused –Bryan Donohue, Evin Conyer.

Guests (prospective new Trustee) – Pastor George Nicholas.

Consultants –Dr. Lavonne Sheffield, Dr. Amy Brackenridge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Maureen Ludwig, seconded by Vivian Logan, the Board unanimously voted to approve the September 7, 2017 Regular Board meeting minutes.

EDUCATION CONSULTANT UPDATE

Dr. Lavonne Sheffield, KXD Consultants

Dr. Sheffield has been spending one week per month in-house at Oracle Charter School. She noted that:

-- she has seen significant improvement since last school year. Staff members are more collegial and there are more smiles seen.

-- the staff needs more professional development to strengthen pedagogy. Students need to learn to be questioned with higher order thinking in mind and learn to write across the curriculum. Lesson plans are used more and the climate in the school has improved, and students would benefit from routines and rituals, as well as from scaffolding to build up concepts.

--there is a more organized leadership.

Dr. Sheffield believes that the Board needs to play a role, by nurturing teachers and showing the Board cares about teachers about the work they are doing.

Dr. Amy Brackenridge, Educational Consultant, School Leadership and Data Use and Professor, Niagara University Graduate School of Education

Dr. Brackenridge provided a very helpful explanation of how student data is collected, reported and shared. She stressed (1) that the school's student information system is critical in ensuring that annual reports properly reflect the state of student achievement and college readiness; (2) the need for 100% accuracy in data collection, inputting, and reporting; and (3) how accurate data can inform strategic planning, provide individualized and group roadmaps for student achievement, and help with decision making. She noted that peer reviewed research shows that teacher turnover has a high impact on student success.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP UPDATES

Ms Barnes provided a written update to the Board covering progress made to address the Accountability Plan, discussed current enrollment (323 students), attendance, conduct, faculty/staff hires/vacancies and student activities. There was some discussion about tardy students, and Ms. Barnes provided perspectives on the difficulties in dealing with families and students that are challenged in getting to school on time.

Ms. Barnes provided a proposal for a trip for OCS Seniors to visit HBCU Colleges in the Washington, D.C. area. Approval was deferred.

BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES AND BOARD BUSINESS

A. Academic Excellence—Vivian Logan, Chair

The Committee planned to meet on October 10 and will formulate its goals for the school year. Ms. Logan will write up the minutes and they will be provided to Trustees in their read-ahead material for the next Board meeting.

B. Governance—Tom Bailey, Chair

The Board Retreat will be held in mid-January 2018.

Dr. Ramelli Choates has been approved by CSI as a voting member of the Board.

Mr. Bailey noted that several members of the Board are facing expiration of their terms as of the next Annual meeting and plan to step off the Board per the self-assessment handed out for the Board Retreat. The Board will also need a full slate of new officers at that time.

C. Finance—John Whitty, Chair

1. June, July, and August end of month financials were provided and Mr. Whitty answered questions, such as whether there was a line item in the budget for staff recognition.
2. The Annual Audit Report is not yet complete, however, it must be submitted to the Authorizer by November 1st, which is prior to the date of the next scheduled Regular Board meeting. Therefor, upon **Motion** by James McLeod, seconded by Jacqueline Hollins, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution to authorize submission of the Annual Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, to the school's Authorizer by the due date of November 1, 2017 upon review and approved of the Audit by the Financial Committee, to be Ratified at the next Regular meeting.
3. The Board reviewed several proposals for additional interior and exterior security cameras that have been requested by the Administration. Upon **Motion** by Jacqueline Hollins, seconded by Susan Hakala, the Board unanimously approved a recommendation to award a contract to Life Safety for up to \$20,000 for interior and exterior security camera installation, pending approval of the contract by counsel.
4. The School was advised that its current 403(B) third party plan administrator had given notice that it would no longer be able to provide services, thereby creating the need for a new third party administrator. Upon receipt of the notice, the Finance Committee immediately commenced a search for a new administrator and recommends retaining . Actuarial Consultant Services. The cost will be essentially the same as the School has been paying, and the Finance Committee believes that Actuarial Consultant Services will be more responsive, as they are a local company. Upon **Motion** by Jacqueline Hollins, seconded by James McLeod, the Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee to retain Actuarial Consultant Services for administration of the School's 403(B) Plan.

D. Executive Committee

1. Ms. Hollins noted that the rubric for the Head of School evaluation was completed by the Committee.
2. The Committee will begin working with the School Leadership Planning Team.
3. An ad hoc personnel committee will take up matters as needed.
4. An experienced administrator from another charter school has agreed to accept the Assistant Head of School position as the and will begin work in 2-4 weeks.
5. CSI's site visit with the Board will take place at the school at **5:30 on October 17, 2017.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon **Motion** by Ron Stewart, seconded by James McLeod, the Board unanimously agreed to enter Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel matter.. Upon **Motion** by James McLeod, seconded by Ron Stewart, the Board unanimously agreed to come out of Executive Session.

Upon **Motion** by Tom Bailey, seconded by Jacqueline Hollins, the Board unanimously approved provision of a retention bonus for non-Union school staff in the same amount as given to Union staff. It was noted that this would affect approximately seven persons.

At 7:45 PM upon Motion by Maureen Ludwig, seconded by Ramone Alexander, the Board unanimously approved adjournment of the meeting.

The next Regular Board Meeting will take place on November 2, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hakala

Secretary to the Board

