

## **Academy of the City Charter School Board Minutes**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of The Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on December 17, 2013 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (31-29 60<sup>th</sup> Street Woodside, N.Y. 11377)

Notice of the meeting was given by submitting a notice electronically to the Queens Courier newspaper, posting the meeting’s notice on the school website, and posting a paper notice on the bulletin board at Academy of the City Charter School, 31-29 60<sup>th</sup> Street Woodside, N.Y. 11377

The following members of the Board were present:

Dr. Richard Welles, Nancy Sills, James Traub, Harold Elish, Steve Zimmerman, Silvana Vasconcelos

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (principal), Desiree Galashaw (Asst. principal), Paul Ajon (AoC), Dorothy Bukantz (teacher/OSP), June Schwartz (OSP), Emily Kotsaftis (PCO)

RL gave the report of the education committee. The last education committee meeting focused on project-based learning and how it is being incorporated in elementary

schools. There was a presentation by Sarah Cardillo (AoC teacher) and Dorothy Bukantz (AoC teacher). The meeting on December 17 focused on project based learning with regard to a middle school curriculum. Teachers have been coming to the education committee meetings. There was also a discussion about school culture and financial issues for the formation of a middle school if the school were to continue growing one grade at a time up through 8th grade. The committee plans to meet by February to make a recommendation to the board. Another issue is where the middle school would be located.

RW reported that he had met with Alicia Latman (AoC teacher and UFT Chapter Leader) concerning the regular teacher reports to the board. She had met with the teachers and they had offered to collect their weekly newsletters for distribution to the board members and that a teacher from a different grade level would be present at each meeting. The board universally welcomed the teachers' suggestion.

There was a brief discussion of the board scheduling a social with the teachers for a date in the future.

RL discussed the extraordinary work that has been done by the PCO this year. RL commended the volunteerism and energy of the parents. The deep involvement of the PCO has enabled AoC to move to a new level. He also

commended in particular the PCO co-chairs, who have done a wonderful job getting parents to undertake different projects. The pie sale and the Scholastic book sale were a great success. Every assembly has about 30-40 parents present, which is a testament to their involvement in the school. He characterized the achievements of the PCO as “amazing.”

The imagination playground is scheduled to arrive at AoC on Jan 7 or 8, 2014. The tiles and leveling should take place around the same time. The area for the playground is mapped out in a 25 x 50 ft space.

#### PCO Report

EK gave the PCO report. The PCO will soon prepare for next year’s election and revision of the PCO by-laws. The PCO co-chairs are reaching out to other parents to get more of them involved. The PCO has purchased interpreting equipment to do simultaneous translations from English to Spanish. Non- English speaking parents are giving positive feedback on techniques being employed by PCO. Steve Zimmerman and Rick Welles gave a great presentation to the PCO about the founding of the school and the educational philosophy and vision of the school.

The winter concert went well. There were beautiful decorations put up by the parents. There have been

ongoing discussions about multi-cultural education and whether the PCO should become a separate legal entity. Richard Lee will give a talk at the next PCO meeting on testing. Many of the parents came to the school because it does not emphasize testing as much as other schools.

The book fair was very successful and generated \$4,500 so far for the school. It is continuing on-line. The PCO plans on having another book sale in the spring.

Finance report (Exhibit A)

Harry Elish gave the finance committee report. The school's finances are in very good shape. The enrollment is greater than anticipated which has resulted in increased revenue. The utility costs are a little lower than anticipated and IT a little bit higher. There is anticipated to be approximately a \$100,000 surplus which meets the board's charge to the administration to save 2% this year. Although the revenues from the after school programs are coming in slower than anticipated, the administration is working with the parents to obtain payment of after school fees.

HE also discussed a recent United Way orientation session he attended along with RW. As a result of attending this session, AoC may now participate in the

United Way's program to match not for profit board with young professionals who wish to serve on boards. The orientation session focused particularly on issues that may plague nascent boards, especially those with founding board members.

School report (Exhibit A):

RL gave the school report. FTE is at 278.1 (projected was 270). Enrollment by the end of the year is anticipated to be 276 or 277, with one family anticipated to be moving. SPED is approximately 6.9% of the student population.

Attendance numbers are excellent, usually at 95% on regular school days and 90% on half days, averaging out to approximately 93%. With regard to outreach, Ms. Galashaw and Mr. Lee are planning to make a presentation at Woodside Houses and 82nd Street Academics. NP is also planning to make a presentation at Queensbridge Houses. The school is currently looking for a contact so that a presentation can be made at the Ravenswood Houses.

Open houses are being planned for the beginning of the year. Applications will be ready to be given out in the beginning of the year but will not be accepted until late January. The school is anticipating approximately 800 applications.

Unit Plans are going well. Progress reports will be mailed to all families this week, except where a child has been enrolled for less than thirty days.

Professional Learning Communities are going very well. The first cycle of our current Professional Learning Communities will end in January. The first cycle of clubs will end in January. Clubs this time included puzzles, Tai Chi, dancing, cooking, beading, physical education and Yoga. Clubs are inter-aged/ K-1 and 2-3.

The winter concert was a huge success. Over 400 families attended winter concert. The children sang beautifully and everyone left with a joyous feeling. There is footage of the concert that can be shared with the board.

Teacher evaluations are going well. Most of the focused observations have been completed. The full observations will go forward next month with the task being divided between Ms. Galashaw and Mr. Lee.

There has been an investment made to weather proof rooms. Investments to be decided for the future based upon budget are monitors; security cameras, white-boards, a PA system and the playground.

Charter renewal work has begun with school and OSP.

OSP Report

June Schwartz presented the OSP report.

Dorothy Bukantz has been working on the grade four curriculum, identifying resources for integrating technology into classroom activities, assessment structures with focus on formative assessments, and reviewing middle-school options re museums and other local resources. JSchwartz has been working with the teachers gathering information for the E-Portfolios. She also met with the teachers for about one hour during the PD time to discuss strategies for E-Portfolios. There is excitement at school over the E-Portfolios.

RL and RW have been working on middle-school options and obstacles. They have also have been working on leadership structures and succession, retreat planning and updating the web-site. SZ has been meeting with a variety of political representatives and generally been involved with advocacy for AoC. He has also been meeting with other independent charter schools in Western Queens. OSP is also undertaking a facilities search for a potential middle school and has identified potential locations in Astoria and Sunnyside as well as the Boys and Girls Club. At the Boys and Girls Club dinner, there was high praise for AoC and its partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. OSP has retained a consultant to research potential grants available to AoC.

RW moved that the board go into executive session to

discuss a personnel issue. RL was invited to join the executive session. JT seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed. There were no votes taken during the executive session. The business of the board being concluded in executive session, NS moved to return to public session. JT seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The business of the board being concluded, NS moved to adjourn. RW seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by all present at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting of the board will take place on January 28, 2014.