

Minutes of the Academy of the City Board of Trustees Meeting of December 15, 2015

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on December 15, 2015 at 4:30 pm at the School (31-29 60th Street, Woodside, NY 11377).

Notice was given of the meeting by submitting a notice electronically to the Queens Courier newspaper, posting the meeting notice on the school’s website and posting a paper notice outside the school building at Academy of the City Charter School, 31-29 60th Street, Woodside, NY 11377.

The following members of the Board were present: Nancy Sills (Chair), Richard Welles, Harold Elish (Treasurer), James Traub, Steven Zimmerman, Ernest Brooks, Michela Nonis (Secretary) and Monica Kahn-Liriano (PCO Co-Chair).

The following staff members and visitors were present: Richard Lee (Principal).

Ratification of the minutes:

NS asked for a motion to ratify the minutes of the November 17, 2015 board meeting. JT so moved, SZ seconded and all were in favor.

Introduction to the classroom: The board meeting took place in a second grade classroom. RL walked the board through the daily schedule posted in the classroom, describing the curriculum and the various elements of the second graders’ day. The focus is on reading and math, with long double periods spent on each subject. While the reading block is long, it is split into different reading activities, with the children working in small groups and doing independent reading, as well as teacher led reading.

School Report (previously distributed to the board, and attached as Exhibit A). RL gave the report.

- The school will be hiring Sylvan Learning Center to prep 3rd to 5th grade students for the state tests. The test prep will be for 30 students, divided in small groups of 4 to 6 kids. The program would begin in early January. The school is targeting kids who are at level 1 & 2 and are attending the after school program. The kids will be doing test prep instead of homework. The cost per student will be \$1,400 and the total cost will be \$42,000. The cost could be covered under Title 1 funds and the school has the budget to do it. RL will look at the latest data to determine which students will be attending. There will be no test prep run by the school, as last year, the week in the Spring this year because the April break comes after the tests. There were not enough teachers to staff a test prep session during the February break. The school cannot offer this test prep to more than 30 students because of budget concerns. About 40% of the kids are at level 1 & 2 in those grades.

NS asked for a motion to fund the test prep program. JT moved that it be funded as RL described it, for 30 students in the after school program, SZ seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

- The portable classrooms will be finished by the end of the break.
- There will be math workshops run by teachers for parents of K-2 students on January 11, and another for parents of grades 3-5 on January 14.
- The SUNY report (previously distributed to the board, and attached as Exhibit B) was a positive report overall. RL will ask the board to check for factual mistakes. Two items on RL’s checklist: 1. “School struggles to retain staff:” 8 teachers left last year but that is only 20% of staff and some teachers have left because they moved. 2. Number of students eligible for free lunch has declined from 50.7% in 2012 to 39.3% in 13/14. Does not seem correct: RL will check on that data.

Next steps to respond to SUNY concerns: Sylvan Learning Centers will address Level 1 and 2 students; rubrics for all grades have been introduced this year as well as the revue of material not mastered, which the coach is helping teachers work on. DG, RL and the Victory coach are also working with teachers in the

classroom. Daily lesson plans and feedback for all teachers have been implemented. DG & RL are in classrooms very frequently. Teacher feedback has been quite positive—teachers are feeling valued by the administration. Outreach for ELL students and students with disabilities is being implemented. OSP is helping prepare flyers that will be distributed shortly. NS suggested that the school also recruit at ELL classes at the local library.

- Library project: the school has invested \$35K on the new library. DS is adding to the library incrementally, in various subject areas, but books are still needed in some of those areas, as well as additional shelving. The school will look to the board for help on this project. MKL noted that she had received a lot of positive feedback from parents about the new library and DS. There are two new initiatives as part of this project: one is to bring authors into the library to talk to children. The other is a Family Literacy project. Silvana Vasconcelos, a former board member, will come and talk to the board in January about Family Literacy and Pre-K/early childhood education.

Finance Report: (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit B). HE gave the report. The school will be receiving the money for the new portable classrooms from the State Legislature, although the timing has not been confirmed.

Development & Advocacy Report: (previously distributed to the board and attached as Exhibit C). There were no questions. The committee will update the board on school visits and fundraising in January.

NS requested a motion to move into executive session to discuss the principal's review. JT so moved, HE seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The business of the executive session being concluded, JT moved to return to public session. NS seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The business of the public session being concluded, HE moved to adjourn the public session, SZ seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The next board meeting will be on January 19, 2016 at 5:00 pm.