

Minutes of the AoC Board of Trustees Meeting of March 31, 2015

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of The Academy of the City Charter School (the "School") was held on March 31, 2015 at 5:00 P.M. at the School (31-29 60th Street Woodside, NY 11377).

The following members of the Board were present:

Richard Welles, Chair, James Traub, Steve Zimmerman, Harry Elish, Treasurer, Michaela Nonis, Ernie Brooks, Angela Howard, Vice-Chair and Nancy Sills, Secretary

The following staff members and visitors were present:

Richard Lee (Principal), Desiree Galashaw (Asst. Principal), Amanda Lefer & Julie Simonson (PCO Co-Chairs), and Christine Nick (OSP)

RW called meeting to order and read a short passage from John Dewey's *The School in Society* (1899).

RW ask Trustee NS to report on the Fourth Grade Lunch Drama Club performance of the play, *Inky, the Dog Detective*, written by NS and directed by Volunteer Caterina Nonis, with assistance from Trustees NS and MN. The play is inspired by the true story of the art theft at the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston, and while learning their lines, acting techniques and a final song, the children also learned some history and art history. The children did an absolutely fabulous job. Some of the students in the club were "scenic artists", creating the set of the "famous museum" and an intricate sculpture made out of legos, as well as original artworks inspired by Pollack _____. It was a wonderful community event. Not only their classmates and parents came to support the children, but many members of the AoC community also came to support the children in the play, including staff and many of the teaching specialists.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adopt the minutes of the February 24, 2015 AoC Board Meeting as written and amended.

PCO: Amanda Lefer and Julie Simonson presented the PCO Report. (Their prepared report is Exhibit A) The PCO revised ticket prices for the 1st Annual Gala and are continuing to solicit donations from community restaurants and suppliers. Outgoing officers are working on nominations for the coming school year. Trustee SZ agreed to serve on the PCO nominations committee.

RL gave the School Report (The Report that was distributed to the board before the meeting is Exhibit B) RL reported that the administration is working on comprehensive observations for teaching staff and that hiring has begun for the upcoming school year. Among new hires will be a Special Education Coordinator and Lead 5th grade teacher. Many lead teachers are moving up and the school has experienced very little attrition, retaining 40+ staff members. Teaching staff is

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receiving professional training in Math. Adam Aberman has been retained to assist the school in its application for charter renewal.

Trustee JT asked what has been learned from observations. RL replied that observations show considerable improvement in students being “on task” and for teachers checking for “student understanding.” Additionally, there is improved evidence of writing in all lessons. There still remains work to be done regarding the issue of “high order questions” which RL and DG have been working on and will continue to work on with all teachers.

RL and DG gave a PowerPoint presentation of the AoC Midyear Assessment Report:

Assessment tool: Go Math Assessments

1st Grade Math – 28% improvement from beginning of year.

2nd Grade Math – 19% improvement

3rd Grade Math – 16% improvement

4th Grade Math – 9% improvement

ELA

Assessment tool: Fountas and Pinnell

The following were the percentages of children who were assessed as “proficient”, meaning levels 3 or 4:

1st grade – 65%

2nd grade – 50%

3rd grade – 66%

4th grade – 65%.

There was concern expressed by the board regarding the large percentage of the second grade who were assessed as being in category 1. RL and DG explained the focus of the school to bring those children up to or above grade level, including introduction of the LLI reading system in the second grade classrooms and regular, small group and individual work with each of those children with learning specialist Caryn Leslie.

Finance

The Finance Report was distributed to the board before the meeting and is attached as Exhibit C. HE reported that the year is going as planned and that there is nothing noteworthy to report.

RW delivered the Open School Project report. (The Report that was distributed to the board before the meeting is Exhibit D) Announced that budget will include a \$100 per pupil increase in PPR. The budget deal struck in Albany also includes a \$225 per child charter school direct grant from the State SEnate. RW and SZ also reported on a meeting they arranged with leaders of Queens charter schools and Queensboro president, Melinda Katz.

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NS moved that the board form a legal committee which would meet three times a year and assist the School/Board with legal issues. The purpose of this committee is not to give legal advice per se, but to review all major contracts, serve as a resource to the administration, serve as board liaison with outside counsel, recommend outside special counsel if necessary, and present reports to board. Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to form the committee. MN, HE and NS volunteered to be the members of the committee.

RW gave an update on our whistle blower policy. The attorney for AoC has recommended that AoC adopt a policy and presented a draft policy for the board's consideration. Motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to approve the whistle-blower policy recommended by outside counsel. The policy is attached as Exhibit E.

RW moved that the board go into executive session to discuss the status of negotiations with the UFT, and to discuss the status of work being performed for the school by the Open School Project. During that portion of the executive session which concerned the contract performance by OSP, board members SZ and RW recused themselves and left the room. There were no votes taken during the executive session. (There are minutes of the executive session that are maintained separately). The business of the board during the executive session being concluded, the motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to return to public session.

There being no further business of the board during the public session, it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting. The board adjourned until its next meeting on April 28, 2015.