

## **Minutes of the Academy of the City Board of Trustees Meeting of October 14, 2015**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Academy of the City Charter School (the “School”) was held on October 14, 2015 at 5:00 pm at the School (31-29 60<sup>th</sup> 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 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Woodside, NY 11377.

The following members of the Board were present: Nancy Sills (Chair), Angela Howard (Vice Chair), Richard Welles, Harold Elish (Treasurer), Steven Zimmerman, Ernest Brooks, and Michela Nonis (Secretary) Pilly Quintanilla (PCO Co-Chair), Monica Kahn-Liriano (PCO Co-Chair, via Skype).

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

### **Chair’s Report:**

NS called the meeting to order and thanked the board, RL, the administrative team and the staff for their dedication and for all the hard work being done in the school.

For the first celebration of the school segment, NS noted the work of Noel Peguero, parent coordinator, who has been able to re-instate the Dental Van service (sponsored by the NYU School of Dentistry and the Federal Government) for which the funding had been cut, and to make the service available to the entire community. She also noted the many other programs and workshops he runs for parents in our school community.

RL has expressed an interest in possibly opening a Pre-K. A Pre-K task force has been formed to look into the feasibility of expanding the program to include a Pre-K. Current members are JT and MN. The task force will put together a report and present that to the board. OSP will be able to help on some of aspects of the report. Timing for Pre-K report is still to be determined.

As part of the long-term plan NS and RL will meet with OSP to discuss an overall planning structure. Members of the board are encouraged to share their ideas for the long term plan with NS.

### **Ratification of the minutes:**

NS requested to ratify the minutes of the September 24, 2015 board meeting. HE so moved, AH seconded and all were in favor.

**School Report:** The School Report, previously distributed to the board, is Exhibit A. RL gave the school report.

- Enrollment is steady at 417, above the 405 target, but the school will probably lose 5 or 6 students during the year. The new art teacher, Vivian Lopez, has started and is doing well. Judy Richardson, the former art teacher, has written 4 Units of Study for the school, based on the history/social studies curriculum. A new ELL teacher, who is also a Learning Specialist, has been hired. She is a parent in the school and has worked for the DOE for 20 years. The school still has one opening for an ELL teacher.
- The first round of assessments for reading, writing and math has been completed. RL will report the data at the next Education Committee meeting. The K class this year is unusually weak—11-12 kids in each class have very little letter/sound association. Teachers are working in small groups on a daily basis, focusing on letter sounds and words of the day. Portables will be ready by the end of October or early November.

RL then gave an overview of curricular and pedagogical changes and initiatives.

Daily objectives are posted in the classrooms.

- School has started well and the SUNY visit has gone well so far. The school has instituted a new reading program, Journeys, focused on close reading of shorter passages.
- For ELA the school is also doing novel study in 4 and 5 grade.
- Grades 3-5 have a new history curriculum. The lower grades will continue with social studies.
- The school has moved to a double period (90 mins.) for ELA and 60 minutes period for math.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers each teach the two grades either ELA or Math.
- GoMath is being used in the entire school. The program, thanks to its units' pre-test and post-test activities, allows the school to monitor a student's progress over time. All the support providers are using GoMath re-teach with their students. This organic approach probably responsible for the rise in math scores in 2015.
- RL checks daily lesson plans to make sure HOQs are being asked. RL observes 9 classrooms two or three times a week and then gives feedback to teachers, both oral and written. DG is doing the same thing with her 6 classrooms. Jessica, the coach, is also at school twice a week.
- Classroom observations show that teachers are able to plan ahead for differentiation.
- The Science curriculum for 3-5 grade is Science Fusion, which was put in place last year. K-2 are using Delta and Foss kits.

A discussion of demographics and enrollment followed, and in particular doing outreach to ELL's and children eligible for free and reduced lunch.

#### **OSP report:**

RW gave the OSP report.

OSP will be working on long-term planning and on the revision of the principal evaluation rubric to include the SUNY benchmarks and board goals. The rubrics will be finished in November.

OSP has met with RL on prioritizing fundraising overtures, and four letters of inquiry are going out this week for grants. Amanda Lefer is now working for OSP in a fund raising capacity and as well as helping other schools start a parent organization modeled after AoC's. OSP is also working on coordinating an Albany lobbying strategy with CSI and NECSN, as well as a strategy for working with the DOE and City Hall. C3S has had conversations with Laetitia James, the public advocate, and has let her know that it is committed to working toward a better collaboration between Districts and charter schools. NS than thanked OSP for the work it has been doing for the school in the past few months, and in particular the excellent On-boarding Package.

#### **Education Committee Report:**

The Education Committee Report, previously circulated to the board, is exhibit B. MN gave the report.

- New benchmarks were discussed: 1. Student achievement will be 10 to 15% over district average over 3 years. Expecting growth every year. 2. Teacher excellence benchmarks are being worked on and will be addressed by the committee. 3. Soft benchmarks will be addressed through the E-portfolio program being implemented this year.
- There was a discussion of the new initiatives in the school's educational program, aimed at advancing student achievement toward the 10 to 15% over district, over 3 years benchmark.
- There was a discussion of teacher excellence and what might be ways of measuring it. RL will circulate to the board the documents that the school uses for teacher observations. The basic teacher assessment rubric has already been uploaded to the dropbox folder.

- The Library Project was also discussed. The committee will consider the possibility of bringing organizations such as Learning Leaders into the school to train parent volunteers to assist in the library. There also was a discussion around the possibility of adding more books to the library that align with the core knowledge curriculum.

**Finance & Operations Committee Report:**

The Finance Committee Report, previously circulated to the Board, is Exhibit C. HE gave the report.

- Finance: The budget for textbooks has been exceeded because of purchases such as the Journeys curriculum and other textbooks. RL will work with DB and HE to reflect the additional funding in the budget. The school has contacted two companies for outside test prep for students who will be taking the state tests next year. Attendance will be voluntary. Fees will range from 5 dollars to 25/30 dollars depending on family income. The school has received one quote for 40K from the Sylvan Learning Company. There is money in the budget for test prep this year and the school wants to make sure that a test prep program is sustainable for a number of years. The second test prep company, Smiles for Reading, has not yet sent in a quote. A decision will have to be made in November for a January launch.

- Operations: Accounting Solutions has been contracted to give operational support to the back office this year. AHunt has been able to take over additional responsibilities including overseeing the portable classrooms project. AHunt will be on paternity leave from November 15 to the end of February, but will work remotely on a few tasks. This being the case, the Operations committee will do its revue of operations in the Spring. OSP will be working with AHunt in the coming weeks to put together an Operations Manual.

**PCO Report:**

PQ gave the PCO report. There will be a Fall Festival on October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm to which all the board is invited. The next PCO meeting will be on Monday, October 19, in the morning. There will be a Title I presentation at the next meeting. The school is required to do that by law and is now receiving 100K in funds that are mostly allocated to learning specialists. The PCO board is fully staffed and is thinking of testing a program that will contact parents directly via text messages hoping that it will lead to better parent information and engagement. The PCO is researching potential after school arts programs.

There being no further business of the board during this session, NS moved to adjourn the meeting. The next board meeting will be on November 17, at 5:00 pm.