



Minutes for the Board of Trustees Meeting that took place at 830 Hunts Point Ave, Bronx, NY on October 17, 2022

Trustees Present:

Herb Fixler
Nick Ober
Susan Engel
Herb Kaplan

Trustees Present Via Video conference:

Tony Stoupas
Thomas Sturtevant
Deborah Dumont

Trustees Absent:

Susan Fine
David Shatsky
Ruth Jarmul

Also Present:

Celia Sosa, Executive Director
Stephen Trowbridge, Chief Financial & Operating Officer
Maya Severns, Director of Development & Marketing
Keveney McCrillis, Executive Assistant to the Senior Leadership Team
Two members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 by the Chairman of the Board, Herb Fixler.

A motion to approve minutes from the September 19th meeting was made by Board Chair, Herb Fixler. It was seconded by Herb Kaplan and approved unanimously.

Matthew Estershon and Xixi Dong from CBIZ Marks Paneth joined us via zoom at 6:15 pm. This is their third year acting as our auditor. They reported they've seen some stress and delays in the audit process but didn't see those things here with LION. They reported that they merged recently, and that should prove positive for the next few years when there will be shifts in technology. There was nothing to report to the board about disagreements with the management of LION. They typically have best practices recommendations, after year three, their recommendations have been cleared, so there is nothing to report this year. The auditors offered an executive session without management if the board would like one. All present agreed that was not needed. Herb



Fixler asked about the debt-equity ratio. Stephen Trowbridge thanked our Comptroller, Leslie Rich, for their hard work as well as the Auditors. Matthew and Xixi left the meeting at 6:40. Stephen asked for a motion to approve the audit and accept the audited financial statements. Herb Fixler made that motion, it was seconded by Nick Ober, the board voted and unanimously approved the audit.

Celia Sosa gave the Executive Director's report, sharing out the notes she took at the state of the charter school center meeting. She mentioned the teacher pay scale and that the UFT hasn't negotiated its contract with the DOE, if it did we would likely need to increase the teacher salaries. Celia suggested we put a policy in place, which we do not have currently, that delineated what we pay teachers based on factors the leadership team sees as important. Celia said she and the Executive Assistant, Keveney McCrillis, would work to put together that proposal along with the K-8 and former HS data managers' help. Celia then looked at our NWEA data. A board member asked about the test-taking stamina. A board member asked about how students are being prepared for the exam. Celia spoke about how we need to build buy-in to not only these tests but also the K-8 state exams as well. The Academic Leadership Team across divisions are thinking in a granular way about the changes we need to make to improve the state exam scores. These data-driven practices are going to evolve. A board member asked about college readiness scores and then asked for an evening where we focus on the HS and the college readiness measures.

Celia then shared out the percentage of proficient teachers in each division based on the Danielson Rubric. A board member asked about these numbers over time, and we do not have that data. A board member asked if the raters were calibrated. Celia said this is something that needs to be addressed and is being addressed.

Celia then shared some of what the senior leadership team is seeing and talking about in meetings, including a wider range of students with disabilities and teacher absences.

Celia shared the family events currently on the calendar.

Marlla Torres, a member of the public, shared about laundry night and J Term at the middle school. The board committed to helping in any way the leadership team felt would be beneficial.

Stephen Trowbridge, CFO/COO, gave his finance report. He stated we are in the middle of the calendar of spending the ESSER/ARP funds awarded under the federal grants.. He explained these are temporary funds and we will be coming back down off of that spending curve as we no longer have the federal funding. Stephen is working with Leslie and Celia to ensure we have the right human resource plan to minimize any negative impact on academic programs. We should decide, based on our strategic plan, what we want to fund with our reserves. Stephen reminded us that to remain buoyant, we have to work in tandem with our reserve spending and current funding.

Maya Severns, Director of Development & Marketing, gave her Development report. She

shared information about the upcoming Spring Social and the donations we still need. She then spoke about Giving Tuesday and the areas we will focus on. She asked that the board reach out to their network.

Herb Fixler, Chairman of the Board, asked if there were any board committee reports.

The Facilities committee reported the RFP for the project manager (for the classroom redesign project) was submitted for review and will be edited. Also that a letter to Representative Salamanca about the exterior project was drafted and sent. Phase one of the playground redesign project was approved.

The finance and investment committee met and made a decision about who they would like to employ to handle an investment portfolio. Stephen Trowbridge explained the committee's lengthy process in doing so, which started with investigating six investment firms, interviewing three, and ultimately voting on and unanimously choosing Neuberger Berman. Herb Fixler said there is time to determine the amount of money we invest because the firm hasn't been engaged in a contract yet.

The marketing committee met and discussed the feedback they received to look at bus shelter ads and other materials from competitors. They committed to having a one-pager to the board by the end of the week. They reported also working on recruitment materials which they will provide shortly.

Herb Fixler asked if there were thoughts/reflections on the special board meeting on October 15th. All present agreed it was a positive and structured experience.

Herb Fixler asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

Herb Fixler made a motion to adjourn at 8:02 PM. This motion was seconded by Herb Kaplan. There was a unanimous vote in agreement to adjourn.

Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule - 2022-23

July 25	November 28	March 27
August 22	December 19	April 24
September 19	January 23	May 22
October 17	February 27	June 26