



THE ROSALYN YALOW CHARTER SCHOOL

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Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 26, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
3480 Third Avenue
Bronx, NY 10454

Trustees Present

Miguel Balbuena – Chair, Sandra Hayes – Vice Chair, Gregoria Feliciano, Donna Friedman, Ivan Lee, Benjamin Yalow

Staff: Alec Diacou – Executive Director, Shannon Burton- Principal, Eldwin Fernandez, Kim Smaw

Guests: Dr. Ross Lyon, Lakiesha Howard, David Nussenbaum, Bronx Arts, Esther Sosa, parent

Call to Order

Following a tour of the new Third Avenue campus conducted by Eldwin Fernandez, operations manager, and Philippa Sutherland, dean of students, the meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Miguel Balbuena, Chairman. A quorum was present.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Executive Session

Discussed in Executive Session were personnel in addition to board development goals for next year and the next steps for academic leadership. Mr. Balbuena will provide the board with potential dates to hold a Board Retreat. Dates will be sent via Survey Monkey.

Board Approval Items

Resolution: Approval of Minutes for August 21, 2018 and September, 7, 2018

Resolved: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes for the meetings held on August 21, 2018 and September 7, 2018 were unanimously approved as amended.

Resolution: Modification of Student Family Handbook as requested by the State.

Resolved: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, modifications to the Student Family Handbook requested by the state were approved.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee with the exception of Mr. Carr reviewed the results of the audit with auditors from Mengel, Metzger, Barr & Co. LLP and requested minor changes. Mr. Balbuena also participated in the audit meeting. Mr. Diacou stated the school is financially strong and has close to 3 million in assets. Mr. Yalow reminded the board that the huge accumulated surplus was largely due to unfilled positions. Further, now that the school has filled all budgeted positions for FY18-19 we can easily fall into the red due to unforeseen issues. The auditors strongly suggested the Finance Committee meet more regularly and record minutes of each meeting. Mr. Balbuena recommended that the Finance Committee schedule quarterly meetings for “deep budget dives” and report their

findings to the Board on a quarterly basis in lieu of the lengthy line-by-line discourses at past monthly meetings; the board will continue receiving monthly year-to-date financial statements in sufficient time for review prior to each regularly scheduled board meeting. If particular financial issues arise between the new quarterly budget dives, Board members should continue to prepare questions and voice concerns at scheduled board meetings. Going forward, Mr. Balbuena asked the Finance Committee to provide the board with preliminary dates for the quarterly budget dives.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the following resolution was unanimously approved:

Resolved: The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School Board of Trustees, having reviewed the draft, dated September 21, 2016, titled Audited Financial Statements, Report Required by Government Standards and Independent Auditor's Reports, Report to the Board, and Advisory Comment Letter for the period ending June 30, 2018, approves the reports and authorizes the Executive Director and Treasurer to sign the Representation Letter to Mengel Metzger Barr & Co., dated September 26, 2018.

Personnel Committee

With the assistance of BoardOnTrack, the procedure for evaluation for the executive director has been formalized. Once Mr. Diacou completes his responses to the agreed-upon self-evaluation questionnaire uploaded to BoardOnTrack, the board will be given the opportunity to add their individual comments via BoardOnTrack. The Personnel Committee is in the process of creating methodologies for evaluation of the principal and deputy principal.

Social-Emotional Program and Development Committee

The scope of this committee is to codify the social-emotional concepts embedded in Yalow's charter: what the model should look like and develop metrics to assess effectiveness. Given the diversity of student needs, Ms. Friedman stated she would like to find a mechanism to measure how many children are being helped, and how.

Going forward, Ms. Friedman stated a comprehensive look at a student's family will be another way of identifying underlying needs.

Ms. Friedman informed the Board that a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) are now equally qualified and credentialed to do the same job as a teacher-social worker. The school requested approval from NYSED to hire LMFTs in addition to LMSW certified teacher-social workers. NYSED granted its approval today subject to certain conditions. Ms. Friedman stated she would like to schedule staff from the Family Support Center run by Mosaic Mental Health and a clinician from Mosaic's NYS Department of Mental Health licensed clinic at Yalow to explain in detail what services are offered in each venue and how these services are fully integrated.

Once Dr. Ross Lyon and Lakiesha Howard officially join the Board both would like to become members of the committee alongside Ms. Friedman and Principal Burton.

Education Committee

Yalow's improvement plans

Mr. Balbuena stated he is planning to submit Yalow's improvement plans to NYSED by October 31, 2018. The school has made significant progress; we now have clear indicators to measure progress toward goals and academic outcomes. Apropos of Yalow's charter, Yalow is a data driven school and the board's goal is to make decisions based on data. Along with the appointment of Ms.

Smaw as Chief Data Officer, a plan for accumulating and disseminating necessary academic data is now in place.

Principal Report

Mr. Burton stated that he is addressing each of the concerns raised by NYSED during its 2018 Mid-Term Site Visit. Since August 2018, every newly teacher hired will hold a NYS teaching certification.

After discussion with the education committee, two additional teachers/teacher social-workers—not included in the FY18-19—will also be hired so that classrooms will be fully covered when a teacher is out for any given reason. Returning teachers and teacher social-workers who have not been certified are all actively enrolled in graduate teaching certification programs. Mr. Burton stated the school will be close to the exemption threshold of employing no more than 10 uncertified teachers by the end of school year. At that time, most remaining uncertified teachers will be from Yalow's cohort of 10 teacher-social workers, who are LMSWs working toward their NYS teaching certifications.

Mr. Burton is utilizing Yalow's professional development vendors: Bank Street, CKLA, STEP and NWEA. A full year onsite professional development training schedule was submitted to the board. Teachers will be continuously trained. Each Wednesday following early dismissal of students, teachers collectively participate in professional development as grade level teams.

Mr. Burton has formed a teacher Consultation Committee that includes Principal Burton, five teachers, 1 teaching assistant, 1 fencing and chess coach, and 1 operations staff member. The Consultation Committee will meet every other Monday, where members are expected to voice concerns and/or make suggestions. Ms. Hayes stated it would be useful if the board could receive anonymous feedback from teachers on what could be improved.

Principal Burton stated each month teachers will receive a five-question survey via Survey Monkey that cover different areas such as instruction, leadership, and operations.

Teachers will receive informal evaluations in October and November consisting of a 15-minute classroom walk-through. Formal evaluations will take place in December for the full 3-month period.

Chronic absentee deliverables

Last year there were 90 students who have been chronically absent. For the first 3 weeks of September, 77% of those students have a 100% attendance rate. Parents are being contacted once a child has been absent for a second time. A third absence will initiate a home visit from the parent engagement coordinator.

The board requested that the school find ways of rewarding former chronic absentees for perfect attendance, in addition to mentoring parents of those 90 students.

Revamping Saturday Academy

Mr. Balbuena asked Board members to volunteer one Saturday though out the year to do training with parents on a subject matter of their choice.

A new Saturday intervention program will begin. This program will support students who performed in the lowest 3 percent of students in reading and writing skills. The program will run for 10 weeks. In addition, Saturday ESL classes for parents will begin in October.

Parent Coordinator Objectives

The parent coordinator's sole role is to engage parents—bridging gaps between the school, parents, and the larger surrounding community—addressing parent concerns and making home visits as necessary. The board requested that the new parent coordinator work on Saturdays in order to oversee classes geared toward for parents (e.g., ESL, Zumba, tax-prep), and greet parents when they are dropping off students for chess, fencing, or accelerated growth classes.

The board asked that the parent coordinator celebrate the parents of the 10 students attending the newly named Saturday programming, “Accelerated Growth Classes,” by offering coffee, tea, and coffee cake, and expressed a desire to find ways of supporting struggling parents.

Executive Director Report

Roof repairs are in process, although there are leaks emanating from some of some of the structure walls between the cafeteria and the gym. The church is taking the position that this is additional work beyond the agreed-upon scope of work and refusing to pay for the work. We are asking the contractor to make sure these leaks are remediated, as well.

Revision to Student and Family Handbook for the 2018-2019 School Year

NYSED responded to our revised request of September 11, 2018 to approve the new FY2018-19 Student and Family Handbook, suggesting additional changes.

Following a review of the September 26, 2018 comments made by NYSED to the Charter Revision Request approved by the board on September 7, 2018 and submitted to NYSED on September 18, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of trustees unanimously approved the following resolution.

Resolved: The Board of Trustees amends and approves the previously submitted redlined copy of the 2016-2017 Student and Family Handbook, as follows. The second paragraph on p. 32, under CSE Involvement and Alternative Instruction is modified to read:

If a student with a disability is suspended for more than ten days, for behavior that is not a manifestation of his or her disability, the Roslyn Yalow School will work with the CSE or a third-party service provider to ensure that the student receives his or her IEP services during any period of alternative instruction and will work with the CSE to arrange a new functional behavioral assessment or revisions, if necessary, of the student's behavior intervention plan. If the CSE finds that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will return to regular classes after ten days of suspension. However, if the behavior involved serious bodily injury weapons, illegal drugs or controlled substances. a student with a disability may be suspended to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to 45 days. In this event the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School will work with the CSE to ensure that the student receives appropriate instruction and IEP services. The CSE will determine the amount and kind of instruction to be provided. Instructional services should be adequate to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general education curriculum and to achieve the goals of their IEP. In addition, the CSE will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment, or a review if such assessment, and will prepare or update a behavioral intervention plan with behavioral services designed to address the behaviors that led to the disciplinary proceeding so that such behaviors do not recur.

In addition, on p.4, the sub-title “Our Name” shall be inserted.

NYSED Charter Renewal Process

The school is up for renewal next year. The school has been cited for not following the charter and not following the laws that are applicable. The school has acted outside of the by-laws by having the principal report to the board. The by-laws did not reflect this change nor did it receive approval from the state to do so. Ms. Hayes will assist with the application to request this modification to the state.

The current approved charter anticipates the school will go to the 8th grade. If this is still the goal a viable plan for having a facility to expand to the 8th grade will need to be provided. This could cost \$30 to \$50 million. Money will be needed from lenders. Lenders will need to see that academics and legal compliance are in order. More importantly we will need to show that the state will not shut down the school. Mr. Yalow stated that until we can show we are academically solid at being a K-5 school we should not consider expanding.

Introduction of David Nussenbaum, Bronx Arts

Mr. Diacou introduced David Nussenbaum, Executive Director of Bronx Arts Ensemble. He has provided all of the arts for the both schools and has been instrumental in keeping the Arts program alive. Mr. Nussenbaum is interested in many things taking place at the school and is considering joining the Board.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Submitted by Lakiesha Howard on behalf of
Shirley Saunders, Secretary

Approved by Board of Trustees

October 16, 2018