



THE ROSALYN YALOW CHARTER SCHOOL

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Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
116 E. 169th Street
Bronx, NY 10463

Trustees Present

Miguel Balbuena—Chair, Sandra Hayes – Vice Chair, Gregoria Feliciano, Donna Friedman (by phone), Ivan Lee, Michael Rosen, Treasurer (via Skype), Benjamin Yalow, board candidates Dr. Ross Lyon and Lakiesha Howard

Staff: Alec Diacou, executive director, Shannon Burton, principal, Kim Smaw, chief data officer

Guests: Collin Raymond, CSBM, Anthony Largie, CSBM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Miguel Balbuena, Chairman. A quorum was present.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Executive Session

Executive Session was called to discuss the current state of the Board, financial challenges, and potential fundraising options.

Mr. Balbuena informed the Board that one candidate fingerprinted and vetted through the Board approval process has been flagged by the NYSED for an area of concern and has been asked to undergo deeper a background check. Although Mr. Balbuena and Mr. Diacou looked in to the matter and found nothing severe, additional reports will be requested. Additional information, if any, will be shared with the Board.

Due to the holiday season, Mr. Balbuena suggested scheduling the Board Retreat in January 2019. Saturday, January 12th appeared to work best for everyone.

Mr. Balbuena reiterated that the school should vigilantly avoid an appearance of a conflict of interest as specified in Yalow's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual (approved February 2015, including July 2015 Addendum). These documents are available for review on BoardOnTrack.

Executive session concluded at 7:05 p.m.

Board Approval Items

Resolution: Approval of Minutes for September, 26, 2018 meeting

Resolved: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes for the meeting held on September 26, 2018 were unanimously approved as amended.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Collin Raymond from CSMB has been promoted and introduced his replacement Mr. Anthony Lergie.

On October 12, the finance committee met for a quarterly budget review to confirm the veracity of the underlying assumptions in the FY 2018-19 budget approved by the board in May 2018 and the ways significant deviations may affect the overall budget.

Three significant deviations exist on the revenue side of the equation and one on the expense side: student enrollment is down significantly from the target enrollment of 456 students used to budget revenues—as of October 12, Yalow has 430 students. On September 4, 55 students (12.0%) never showed up for classes without officially withdrawing from Yalow, mostly in the 3rd and 4th grades, but also some new kindergarten students. (By comparison, in September 2017 Yalow had 36 “phantom” students—9.6%.)

Charters receive \$15,307 per student. A loss of 26 students equates to a reduction of \$397,982. At this point we are assuming a *weighted-average* student head count of 440 students (reduction of \$245,000), although our goal remains achieving full enrollment of 456 students by November 30; we are actively recruiting kindergarteners. (The committee requested a parent survey to tease out possible reasons for parents withdrawing students from Yalow.) The board recommended installation of kindergarten recruitment banners at the Third Avenue campus.

Federal grants will be over our budget by \$118,700 due to unanticipated increases in Title I and Title IV grant funding for NYS schools.

For the first time in three years Yalow has a full teaching and administrative staff. We are also hiring two non-budgeted positions—one additional teacher-social worker, beginning October 22, and an office secretary. Salary and benefit expenses for the fiscal year 2018-19 will be solid by October’s finance report, after we know which employees have elected to receive Yalow’s medical benefit packages.

Total expenses are currently under budget by \$309,088; net income currently forecast at \$79k—\$12k over our budgeted surplus of \$67k; as of October 12, we have \$3m in the bank and currently expect to end the 2018-19 fiscal year with approximately \$2.7m in cash. Final student enrollment and special education classifications could reduce net income by c. \$200k.

Academics

Ms. Smaw stated the school is in “good standing” with the State Education Department, although this classification isn’t not based on the test results, which haven’t been received. The state is looking at alternative data, such as attendance and parent/teacher survey’s. It’s important to note that Yalow’s classification could change yearly based on the ELA and Math proficiency scores. Typically, a school would have to have 3 consecutive years of high performing proficiency ratings to be a reward school. If this does not happen the school would become a priority and focus school.

3rd-grade NYS math assessment data is broken down into 4 levels. Levels 1 and 2 are for students who do not meet proficiency rating and levels 3 and 4 are for those who do. 49.2% of 3rd-grade students scored proficiently in math for 2017-2018. Yalow out performed CSD 9. Schools that perform better than their district and better than their state are schools that will always be in good standing.

Similarly, English Language Art scores are also broken down into 4 levels. 51% of 3rd-grade students are proficient in ELA based on the 2018 NYS exam. Though a large portion scored very well, 49% of students did not, which raises a lot of concern.

Dr. Burton asked the Board to take the data carefully, noting that Yalow's 3rd-grade test results were essentially the same as those for public schools in NYC, generally. This is due to several issues that are now being corrected, such as, gaps between administration and academic leadership, teacher instruction, listening to teacher concerns, the evaluation system, holding teachers accountable in addition to providing professional development for teachers. Dr. Burton also informed the Board that the new laws with the state's Academic Interventions Services (AIS) states that students are actually one level below their reported assessment grades.

On August 29th Miguel distributed to administration a response to each area of concern the state expressed in their mid-term review. Dr. Burton stated this document will continue to be updated and changed each month accordingly. Mr. Balbuena commended the school's leadership on the progress that has made toward Yalow's improvement plan.

84 students from last year who had a chronic absentee rate (10+%) are consistently being monitored. Out of the 84 students, 35% have 100% attendance rate, 30% have 1 absence, 19% with 2 absences and 12% who are over 3. Dr. Burton expressed some of these absences are due to major busing issues during the first week school.

18 parents attended the 1st ESL class on Saturday, October 13th. The class was coordinated by Ms. Morales, Teacher-Parent Coordinator. Ms. Morales expressed how excited the parents were. CPR will be the next training scheduled for parents.

As noted previously, Dr. Burton stated each month a 5-question survey will be distributed to parents and teachers that will focus on operational approach, instruction approach, parent connection and safety of the school. Out of 45 teachers only 12 responded to the survey. The academic and operations leadership is looking into ways to get better participation. Ms. Morales suggested the Board meet with the teachers to discuss their concerns. Dr. Lyon suggested holding a roundtable discussion. The parent survey results were good. In particular 100% of parents strongly agreed they are greeted warmly when they visit or call the school. However, increased participation is necessary. In addition to other avenues, parents will be encouraged to complete the survey during teacher-parent conferences.

Operations

A 4th kindergarten class had been added to Yalow believing in anticipation of high student attrition in 2018-19 based on historic data. 120 completed applications had been accepted but only about 105 students showed up. In addition, 15 kindergarten students have now left the school following the busing debacles during the first two weeks of school. It's been a trend for two years that parents have been removing their children in the upper grades. Currently there are 430 children actively enrolled. The waitlist of 200 children for kindergarten classes have been exhausted. Ms. Smaw suggested attending Charter School Fairs to increase enrollment in addition to putting banners or outside tents stating that kindergarten seats are now available for immediate enrollment.

The roof is still not fixed. Mr. Diacou met with the contractors and they still have some work to do to improve drainage. There are also other repairs that need to be done but the church is unwilling to pay for it. The new HVAC units will not be installed until December.

Education Committee

Mr. Balbuena asked Ms. Smaw to join the committee.

Social Emotional Committee

Donna Friedman will reach out to the committee members to set-up a meeting in November.

Education Committee

Mr. Balbuena stated the evaluation for Alec is available on BoardOnTrack.

Other Business

Mr. Diacou informed the Board the school will be hosting a Thanksgiving dinner at the school on Thanksgiving Day, November 22 at 11:00 a.m. He invited any board members who are available to please join in serving food to the families.

Mr. Balbuena asked the Board to reach out to their contacts asking for book donations. He would like to hold a holiday celebration on December 14th where books can be distributed to the children.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Submitted by Lakiesha Howard on behalf of
Shirley Saunders, Secretary
Approved by Board of Trustees
November 20, 2018