

SCHOOL IN THE SQUARE CHARTER SCHOOL

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

February 26, 2019

MEETING MINUTES

Location: School in the Square

Board Members Present (in alphabetical order): Michelle DeLong, Peter Gatof, Scott Levenson, Aaron Listhaus, Michael Pollack, Walter Rendon, Joel Talish, and Mindy Tucker

Other Attendees: Carrie Amon, Alan Dichter, Bob Keogh, Cristina Melendez, Evan Meyers

Materials provided to the Board prior to the meeting: January meeting minutes, January dashboard, Meeting presentation, ED report, finance package.

BUSINESS MEETING:

Mr. Pollack opened the meeting at 5:37.

Mr. Meyers presented a video created by RBC during an S2 trip to RBC. The trip opened students' eyes to many career possibilities in the business world. Jennifer Grazel organized the trip. The students loved the trip. Students have taken many field trips this year including to the Whitney museum and to Columbia University.

Principal's Report: Ms. Amon reported that students' scores from Q2 are trending up. The academic committee met with Ms. Amon to review second quarter data. The school has changed its grading system because grades felt inflated. Now student grades are based: 15% on homework, 35% on participation; 50% on test scores, essays and projects. The system allows students who work hard to do well even if they are not on grade level. But the system ensures that outcomes are also heavily weighted (so students cannot excel unless the substance of their work is at or above grade level). This quarter 13 students are on the Principals list (90+ in all classes) and 10 are on the Honor Roll (average of 90 or above). Ms. Amon is meeting with all parents and students who are failing more than two classes. Together they are coming up with individual plans for each student. Ms. Amon is working with students to come up with ways for them to ask for help. (e.g. for quiet students, they put a post-it on their paper when they need extra help. They do not have to raise their hands to ask for help.)

Academic Committee: Mr. Levenson reported three key takeaways from the academic committee's meeting with Ms. Amon on February 12. 1. The school is living its mission. There is a holistic rigorous curriculum that emphasizes social/emotional learning as well as academic learning. 2. The MAP data and F&P data are giving us very different results. We are attempting to discern the most useful data. 3. Grading policy: What does it mean to grade on effort as opposed to (or in addition to) objective measures. How do we best incentivize students. The academic committee is thinking about how to measure the school beyond test scores, attrition and attendance.

ED Report: Mr. Meyers discussed facility expansion. We continue to look at the possibility of taking space in the building next door (with a separate school entrance).

Summer programming is moving forward and is innovative and exciting. We will work on programming that will decrease summer slide. (We plan to have 60 students from the current 6th and 7th grade.) We will have a three-week program at S2 and a two-week program at the YMCA camp in Rockland County. (for 40 of the students) S2 will give every student in the school 2 books to read over the summer. Teachers will be hired to work on the online math program with students over the summer (including those not enrolled at camp). We hope to expand the camp experience in the future.

Expansion: 99 charters remain for the state. There is no indication at this point that the cap will be lifted. Our application to expand next year to kindergarten and fifth grade will not be considered by SED. We are disappointed but moving forward with plans for the school. We will reapply when our charter is up for renewal.

High School: Several students were admitted to Cardinal Spellman High School but were not given scholarships. The board discussed whether Friends might be able to set up some form of scholarship program in the future. The board also discussed a future alumni program.

Finance Committee: Ms. Tucker presented the Form 990 for discussion. She then presented the new Finance Dashboard, which the board agreed summarizes where the school is in a clear and concise way. A reforecast will be presented next month. The school is in good shape financially.

Board Voting: The board voted on the following items:

- **Approval of the 1-22 Meeting minutes.** Mr. Levinson made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January board meeting. Ms. Tucker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.
- **Form 990:** Ms. DeLong made a motion to approve the Form 990. Mr. Rendon seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm

Respectfully submitted: Michelle DeLong, Secretary