

DISCOVERY CHARTER SCHOOL

Board Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2015

A Board of Trustees Meeting was held on September 17, 2015, at the Discovery Charter School, 133 Hoover Drive, Rochester, NY 14615.

Trustees Present: Sarah Armignacco; Dan Aureli; Yoshida Blackman; Donna Dedee Doyle; Lisa Lewis; Joseph Martino; Robert Stiles; Sara Varhus; David Vigen; Olivia West

Trustees Excused: Scott Adair

Also Present: Joseph Saia, School Director; Valerie Nolan, Independent Consultant; Steve Gleason, Administrative Consultant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and it was determined that a lawful quorum was present.

2. Proof of Public Notice of Meeting

Public Notice was provided in the Messenger Post.

3. Conflict of Interest Reminder

The Chair read the following statement: “The Chair reminds everyone that if a potential conflict of interest exists concerning a subject under discussion by the Board that you have an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse yourself and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject.”

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2015 meeting was made by Mr. Stiles, seconded by Ms. Blackman and unanimously approved. A motion to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2015 meeting was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Ms. Armignacco and unanimously approved.

5. Executive Committee Report

Mr. Vigren reported that the Executive Committee reviewed and approved, on August 21, 2015, a request from the School Director to extend an employment offer to Jenna Cortash. **Resolution #222** approving the hiring of Ms. Cortash was moved by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Ms. Blackman and unanimously approved.

6. Goals – 2-16 NYS Assessments

The board discussed NYS Assessment goals for ELA, Math and Science for 2016 in light of actual 2015 results and goals approved on August 28, 2015 for 2017 through 2021. As a percentage of the NYS Assessment proficiency average across the state, a motion to approve the following 2016 goals was made by Mr. Martino, seconded by Mr. Stiles and unanimously approved.

- ELA – 38% of the NYS average
- Math – 24% of the NYS average
- Science – 100% of the NYS average

7. Academic Improvement Actions

- a. Staffing and Tutoring.** Mr. Vigren and Mr. Saia reviewed a status sheet for this improvement action. The objective is to increase classroom staffing and tutoring in order to increase learning time. In place for the current academic year are an increase in the number of classroom teachers from 3 to 4 and an increase in the number of intervention teachers from 2 to 3, with a limit for each of 2 grade levels. It was the consensus of the board to add 2 tutors from Nazareth College as quickly as possible to the 14 already serving the school from the College. Tasks to be accomplished before the next board meeting are:
 - Create a position description for tutors (Armignacco)
 - Evaluate Saturday tutoring (Director and Staff)
 - Evaluate adding tutors to the after-school program (Martino and Hiley)
- b. Experienced Teachers.** Mr. Vigren and Mr. Saia reviewed a status sheet for this improvement action. The objective is to hire experience teachers as vacancies arise in order to increase the amount and effectiveness of mentoring and coaching of teachers early in their career. In place for the current academic year is a successful 10-year urban teacher. Networking to identify additional candidates is underway.
- c. Curriculum and instruction.** Mr. Vigren and Mr. Saia reviewed a status sheet for this improvement action. The objective is to refine curriculum and lesson plans in order to more effectively deliver instruction. Staff spent time during the summer to refine

curriculum, specifically to improve expeditions. Peer observations are being scheduled. The first “walk-through” by individuals from outside the school is scheduled for this week.

- d. Schedule Outside Evaluations.** Mr. Vigren and Mr. Saia reviewed a status sheet for this improvement action. The objective is to schedule regular outside evaluations of instructional methods and practices in order to benefit from critical oversight and perspective. A list of outside evaluators is in process of being created. An additional consultant is being evaluated.

- e. Develop Mentor School.** Mr. Vigren and Mr. Saia reviewed a status sheet for this improvement action. The objective is to develop a strong mentoring relationship with one or more successful schools with a profile similar to DCS in order to share best practices and lessons learned. A list of possible schools is in process of being created. It was the consensus of the board that the relationships need to bring to the school two primary elements: ideas and relationships. It was agreed that the following would be finished before the next board meeting:
 - Gather information about KIPP schools and Uncommon schools (Martino)
 - Identify likely schools in NY (Nolan)
 - Identify 3 large areas of need for help (Director and Staff)

- f. Parent Development.** Ms. Armignacco led the board in a discussion of how we might be able to help parents further support their children who are in the school. It was the consensus of the board that workshops should be scheduled on the following topics:
 - The value of NYS Assessments
 - Expeditionary Learning
 - Ages and stages of children

8. Performance Incentive

After discussion relative to the background pertaining to the Performance Incentive and results achieved during the past year, **Resolution #223** to not pay an incentive for the year just concluded but indicating it is the board’s intention to pay one at the conclusion of the current year if certain goals are achieved was moved by Ms. Varhus, seconded by Mr. Aureli and unanimously approved.

9. Director’s Report

Mr. Saia reviewed the highlights of his report with focus on attendance during the weeks in August when the school was open. Despite letters and calls to encourage attendance, the attendance rate was only 88%. Policy changes are being evaluated.

10. Business Matters

- a. Enrollment Report.** Mr. Saia presented the August 31 Enrollment Report, noting that we are on plan.
- b. Board Meeting Schedule.** Mr. Vigren presented a proposed board meeting schedule for calendar 2016. A motion to approve the schedule was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Mr. Martino and unanimously approved.

11. Finance Committee Report

- a. July Financial Statements.** Mr. Vigren reviewed the August Financial Statements with the Board, noting results favorable to budget.
- b. Key Financial Indicators.** Mr. Vigren reviewed the Key Financial Indicators report.
- c. Check Detail Report.** Mr. Vigren asked if there were any questions concerning the 2-page Check Detail Report, totaling \$94,912.19, for the month of August. There were none.
- d. Checks Over \$5,000.** Mr. Vigren presented *Resolution #240*, detailing non-routine payments of \$5,000 or more. The Resolution was moved by Mr. Adair, seconded by Ms. Varhus and unanimously approved with Mr. Martino recusing himself.

12. NYSED Visit

The October 6-7 visit of NYSED representatives was discussed.

13. Old Business

The Chair asked if there was any old business. There was none.

14. New Business

The Chair asked if there was any new business. Ms. Nolan reported that the Federal Entitlements Application was filed on time.

15. Motion to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Aureli, seconded by Mr. Martino and unanimously approved at 10:00 pm.