

Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation
Minutes for Meeting of the Board of Trustees
August 19, 2014
410 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10029
Tel: 212.722.5871

Agenda:

1. Roll Call

Chairperson Frank Saia called the meeting to order. Trustees George Sarkissian, Sona Karia, and Stacey Gauthier were present and formed a quorum. Also present were Stephen Falla Riff (Executive Director), Terence Joseph (Principal), Dru Collins (Vice Principal), Pablo Torres (Director of Community Engagement), Mike Jolley (Development & External Affairs Coordinator), and Shalia Stockstill (Professional Development and Learning Specialist).

2. Filing of Notice of Meeting

In accordance with the law, a notice of the meeting was published on the school's website, sent via fax to the New York Times and also posted publicly at M99 School Building where Innovation HS is located at 410 East 100th Street New York, NY 10029.

3. Review and Approval of Prior Board Minutes

The Board reviewed the Board minutes. Ms. Gauthier motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Karia seconded the motion.

4. Presentation by the School Management Team (SMT) on student retention, promotions and graduations

The SMT provided a breakdown of graduation statistics, stating that 60% of the cohort class graduated and 67% of the overall class graduated as compared to the charter goal of 75%. This was a strong statistic compared to the peer index (schools with students entering with a similar 8th grade level) of 49% graduation rate and the city-wide graduation rate of 60%. The students who have not graduated in June 2014 will be put on a plan to graduate in January 2015. The SMT noted that the term system potentially hinders efforts as well as the summer program was condensed due to building renovations. The focus will continue to be on student attendance and providing a supportive, safe environment for learning. Each teacher gets assigned a student to provide additional support while specific sections provide a forum for which staff can answer students' questions on graduation, LEAP, etc.

5. Discussion of SMT composition

With the departure of Ms. Silbia Pagan, Dru Collins (Vice Principal) is assisting in SpEd, given that he is a certified SpEd teacher. A SpEd coordinator with extensive experience has been hired.

6. Space and building utilization issues

According to Mr. Falla Riff the school is currently working on the assumption that next year one of the other schools co-located in the MO99 building, Democracy Prep, will be moving out as planned. The Board noted that there is no guarantee that this will happen and that with the new state law regarding charter school space allocation and the impact of universal pre-K, there has been considerable confusion regarding space utilization decisions in NYC DOE buildings.

7. Approval of the budget

The preliminary working budget was shared with the Board in a separate Excel document. The Board Finance Committee will conduct long-term projections to determine reserves, review with the school's accounting firm and will present a recommendation at the next Board meeting.

8. Board membership: expansion and need for upcoming elections

Mr. Saia, Board Chair, and Ms. Karia, Board Treasurer, have served on the Board for 5 years since the School's inception. Their terms and Board positions are up for re-election in January 2015. The rest of the Board members thanked and commended Mr. Saia and Ms. Karia for their contributions and commitment to the school over the past 5 years. Mr. Saia and Ms. Karia will let the Board know of their decision to re-run for election by November 2014. The Board discussed several possible new members including replacement of the parent representative who will likely be leaving the Board soon.

9. Board retreat

The Board retreat will be deferred until the spring of 2015.

10. Executive Session: Update on staffing matters: retention and solicitation

Mr. Saia motioned to move into Executive Session and Mr. Sarkissian seconded the motion, bringing the Board officially into Executive Session. REDACTED. Mr. Saia made a motion to move out of Executive Session, which was seconded by Mr. Sarkissian and unanimously approved. Following the Executive Session it was noted that the solicitation issue appears to be resolved, and that steps have been taken by the School Management Team to address the issue of retention. It was also noted that staff attrition in 2014-2015 was significantly less than staff attrition during early periods of Innovation's history.

11. Executive Session: Consideration of renewals and contracts for Principal and E.D. positions.

Mr. Saia motioned to move into Executive Session and Mr. Sarkissian seconded the motion, bringing the Board officially into Executive Session. REDACTED Mr. Saia made a motion to exit Executive Session and Ms. Karia seconded the motion. Following the Executive Session, it was noted for the record that the the Principal and E.D. positions have been renewed on a month-to-month basis, on the same terms and conditions that currently exist, until their evaluations can be completed and a decision made on providing them with new offer letters.

12. Set calendar of Board meetings for 2014-2015 school year

The Board decided that meetings will continue to be held on the third Monday of every month. If the third Monday is a holiday, the Board meeting will be held on the following Monday of the month.

13. Other New Business

No other new business was discussed.

14. Adjournment

Mr. Saia motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Karia seconded, the motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting was concluded.