



**Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation
Agenda for Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 16, 2013
410 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10029**

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Filing of Notice of Meeting**
- 3. Review of November Board Minutes**
- 4. Review of Board Calendar**
- 5. Proposal to Increase Innovation's Matching Contribution to Pension**
- 6. Update on Parent Board Member**
- 7. Public Speaking**



**Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation
Minutes for Meeting of the Board of Trustees
November 26th, 2012
410 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10029**

Agenda:

- 1. Roll Call**
- 2. Filing of Notice of Meeting**
- 3. Review and Adoption of September Board Minutes**
- 4. Presentation of Audited Financial Statement by Accountants**
- 5. Report on the results of literacy assessments and academic performance**
- 6. Introduction to the Columbia Law School Clinic Team and Basecamp Tutorial – how to use Basecamp in connection with committee work**
- 7. Signing of the Innovation Conflict of Interest Policy Annual Disclosure Form**
- 8. Board Meeting Schedule**
- 9. Other business**
- 10. Public Speaking**

1. Roll Call

Sona Karia, Frank Saia, Leanne Sajor, George Sarkissian and Nicholas Tishuk were present. Also present was Stephen Falla-Riff, Innovation High School's Director of Operations and Legal Counsel, Dennis Stamm, Innovation High School's CPA and Rita Tishuk, Director of Development and Communications. The Columbia Law School Clinic Team came later with Professor and Supervisor Mary Marsh Zulack, David Lefebvre and Prashant Rai.

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 newspaper 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 Adoption of September Board Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes and Mr. Tishuk motioned to approve. Mr. Sarkissian seconded and the Board approved the minutes from the September meeting.

4. Presentation of Audited Financial Statement by Accountants

Mr. Dennis Stamm presented the audited financial statements to the Board, which he reviewed ahead of time with Director of Operations, Steve Falla Riff. Mr. Stamm talked about refining some internal control procedures with Innovation High School. He explained that the purpose of the adjustments is to create some redundancies with important school processes regarding finance and operations.

Mr. Stamm went over the audited financial statements with the Board. Mr. Saia inquired what would be a good amount to have on reserve. Mr. Stamm advised to have 2 months on reserve. Mr. Stamm encouraged the board to think about investing the money. He recommended the board and Stephen Falla-Riff to look into Sweep Accounts with HSBC, which allows the school's finances to stay liquid but at the same time, receive more interest.

Ms. Karia inquired if Innovation is still looking for another bank since Debbie DaGiau, Associate Director of Finance and Human Resources, had issues with the current provider. Mr. Tishuk felt comfortable staying with Innovation's current bank since Ms. DaGiau's concerns have since been resolved. Ms. Karia said that the Finance Committee will discuss this for the next meeting to make a recommendation to the whole board.

Mr. Stamm pointed out that the largest expense remains to be staff and payroll. Mr. Tishuk explained the line item for School Management also included non-pedagogical staff members in addition to the management team. Mr. Tishuk told the board that we may consider paying more for 401K plans, to build more equity for staff members. Mr. Saia encouraged Mr. Tishuk to look into this with Ms. DaGiau and perhaps present this as an opportunity for returning staff members.

Mr. Tishuk also reported to the Board that he has been working with Mr. Falla Riff to bring in a third party to look at Innovation's financial practices. This will help further improve the financial practices of the school in addition to the support and advice of Innovation's CPAs.

5. Report on the results of literacy assessments and academic performance.

Mr. Tishuk reported 98% of the students were assessed for literacy. Innovation used STAR literacy assessment that looked at phonics, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary. Mr. Tishuk explained that Innovation was concerned about students' reading and writing abilities based on their performance for the mock regents. The school found that large parts of the student population were coming in with 2nd or 3rd grade levels for reading and writing. The assessments were implemented schools wide, one-on-one for about forty-five minutes and the results were used to inform curriculum, designing rosters for each of the classes, and behavior management. This also provided data for freshman students. Mr. Sarkissian

asked how teachers are involved with the literacy assessments. Mr. Tishuk explained teachers are being trained and they also hired extra literacy teachers.

Mr. Tishuk shared the progress report for 2011-2012. Innovation does not have a grade yet. A grade will be assigned after the first graduating class in the school's fourth year. The progress report showed that Innovation is placed 6th from the lowest bottom peer index.

6. Introduction to the Columbia Law School Clinic Team and Basecamp Tutorial – how to use Basecamp in connection with committee work.

Mr. Rai and Mr. Lefebvre introduced themselves and Prof. Zulack of the Lawyering in the Digital Age Clinic at Columbia University. They explained that their particular project with Innovation HS is to help create charters for each of the committees and to research and begin work on a project management system. Mr. Lefebvre introduced Basecamp to the Board of Trustees and explained all the different committees that were set up for the demo. Mr. Rai and Mr. Lefebvre showed the different functions of Basecamp to the board including the email notices, the calendar, the to-do list, and uploading documents that need to be shared.

Mr. Rai went over the charters for each of the committees and explained that these could be a launching point for action items. Mr. Saia asked if the board is in compliance with the Open Meetings Law by using Basecamp. Mr. Falla-Riff replied that any formal meeting needs to be made available to the public; this includes decisions and resolutions by the Board of Trustees. Since the nature of the work on Basecamp would be in preparation for the formal meetings, Innovation remains compliant with the law.

7. Signing of the Innovation Conflict of Interest Policy Annual Disclosure Form

The Annual Disclosure Form will be arranged for the next meeting.

8. Board Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17th.

9. Other business

Mr. Saia explained that as of today, Ms. Gauthier sent her resignation from the Board of Trustees of The Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation. Mr. Saia noted Ms. Gauthier to be tremendously valuable and dedicated to the Board and the school. He explained that the board learned an incredible amount from her service and she was essential to the founding of Innovation.

Mr. Tishuk made a motion to go into executive session to discuss a matter pertaining to staffing. Mr. Sarkissian seconded the motion and the Board went into an executive session.

Mr. Saia motioned to get out of the executive sessions. Mr. Tishuk proposed Mr. Sarkissian to be vice- chair of the Board of Trustees and the Board deliberated on his candidacy. Ms. Sajor seconded the motion to elect Mr. Sarkissian and the board voted George Sarkissian as the new vice-chair.

10. Public Speaking

There were no public comments.

11. Adjournment

George Sarkissian motioned to adjourn. Ms. Sajor seconded and with the unanimous decision of the board, the meeting was adjourned.