



**Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation
Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Meeting held: January 27, 2014
410 East 100th Street, 2d Floor, New York, NY 10029**

1. Roll Call

Trustees present were Frank Saia, Ivan Fraser, Sona Karia, and George Sarkissian, constituting a quorum of the Board.

Also present were Stephen Falla Riff, Innovation's General Counsel and Executive Director; Stacey Gauthier, Principal of the Renaissance Charter School, in Jackson Heights, New York; all of the member's of Innovation School Management Team; Stephanie Murphy, the President of Innovation's Parent Teacher Organization; Sean Pawelec, Innovation teacher; Karen Schein, Innovation teacher; Matthew Boyle, Innovation School Designer; and Andrea McLean, from the New York City Department of Education.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order.

2. Filing of Notice of Meeting

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

3. Appointment of an Interim Acting Secretary for this Meeting

Mr. Saia motioned to approve the appointment of Ms. Karia as Interim Acting Secretary for this meeting and Mr. Fraser seconded the motion.

4. Nomination and Voting on the Appointment of Stacey Gauthier to the Board of Trustees

Ms. Gauthier was asked several questions by the Board regarding her nomination to the Board of Trustees. Mr. Sarkissian asked Ms. Gauthier about her time availability and how she will assist Innovation as it approaches charter renewal this year. Ms. Gauthier replied that she is committed to seeing the students of Innovation be successful – both professionally and emotionally. Innovation is the sister/brother school of Renaissance. She served for 3 years on the Board and then took an

advisory role – however, both schools have continued to work in partnership on enrichment weeks, college trips and other programs. Ms. Gauthier said that she will give all she can the Board and to the school to ensure its success. Ms. Karia asked Ms. Gauthier about her view on educational programming success. Ms. Gauthier replied that she believes in preparing students for college and developing leaders. Ms. Gauthier believes that we need to keep students continually engaged in school, however, if they stay in school too long, they will drop out. She explained that while Innovation’s college bound program is shared with Renaissance, it should shift to accommodate students who are unable to graduate within 4 years. Ms. Gauthier hopes to continue the good foundation laid around enrichment weeks and college trips while also reflecting over the past 4 years to analyze what worked and what did not in order to make swift adjustments. For example, Ms. Gauthier mentioned programs such as pre-math and pre-English could be beneficial. Mr. Saia asked Ms. Gauthier regarding the support she could provide to a interim principal. Ms. Gauthier noted that since she is a principal herself, she deeply understands this role. “Principal to Principal,” she will share best practices, stories on what did not work well and ongoing conduct one-on-one sessions to ensure open communication and feedback. She also said she will be able to make introductions to her many contacts in the education space – resulting in visitations to others schools as well as joint program opportunities. Frank Saia then made a motion to approve Ms. Gauthier’s nomination to the Board of Trustees, Mr. Fraser seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Public Speaking

Terence Joseph provided an SMT update, noting that the current week was important for the Regents exams – in addition to June and August. He explained that the Innovation term system enables students to earn more credits in one year versus other schools. Therefore, there are a significant number of students that have taken care of their credit responsibilities, others with core classes remaining, and still some others who may not have enough credits to graduate. The specific numbers will be presented at a future Board meeting. Mr. Terrance also provided an overview of the Regents exams and noted that the LEAP Class Program has been helpful for students.

Mr. Fraser asked for a better understanding of the Student Support Team (SST). Mr. Torres first answered the question by stating that the goal is to create a positive school environment and build communication. Mr. Fraser refereed to a student issue he heard through his child and Mr. Torres assured him that the SST is working together to ensure the baton is passed off at the right time regarding student matters. Mr. Falla Riff also noted that he has reviewed all of Innovation’s policies – including educational laws and the disability act. He said all incidents are thoroughly

investigated and they gather all the evidence, facts and witness accounts to ensure the Innovation report is accurate and thorough. If parents have a question, they may go to Mr. Torres or Mr. Falla Riff. The current model used for communication and handling disciplinary issues comes from the newly adopted Capturing Kids Hearts model. Ms. Gauthier suggested that the school staff and Board of Trustees revisit the policies and present them to parents, teachers and at a future Board meeting. Mr. Torres provided an update regarding the current sentiment – stating that it is positive. Mr. Torres, Mr. Falla Riff and Mr. Sarkissian have met with community members, CBOs, school program partners and elected officials – who have all been supportive of the current transition and the work of Innovation. Sean Pawelec voiced his interest in serving as a teacher representative on the Board- stating that he would like teachers to have a voice on the Board. Mr. Sarkissian asked how Mr. Sean plans to be the link between the Board and the teachers. Mr. Sean responded that he will be both a formal and informal link – ensuring that he is gathering teacher feedback collectively and bringing all viewpoints to the Board. Ms. Gauthier asked what he would like to see the Board do to increase teacher retention. Mr. Sean stated that since the transition, the school atmosphere has been more positive. Teachers feel that there is support, collaboration and they are aligned with leadership. Ms. Gauthier commented that she supports the democratic environment – and that the school must now be a community vision versus a founders’ vision – making a comparison for how this was for The Renaissance School in Queens in its 5th year. Mr. Saia concluded public speaking by thanking everyone and applauding them for all the hard work and dedication to Innovation. H

10. Adjournment

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