



**Renaissance Charter High School for Innovation**  
**Minutes for Meeting of the Board of Trustees**  
**September 15, 2014**  
**410 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10029**

**Agenda:**

**1. Roll Call**

Frank Saia called the meeting to order. George Sarkissian, Sona Karia and Stacey Gauthier were present. Also present were Mike Jolley-Development & External Affairs Coordinator, Terence Joseph-Principal, Pablo Torres-Director of Community Engagement, Dru Collins-Vice Principal and Debbie DaGiau-Associate Director of Finance/Human Resources.

**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. Mr. Saia motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Karia seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

**4. Updates by SMT on changes to pedagogical program for 2014-15**

Mr. Joseph reported that there aren't many updates to the pedagogical program beyond those described in the last meeting, which include more electives offered and the addition of blended learning options.

**5. Update by SMT on start of school year**

The SMT provided an update regarding the start of the year, noting that students are enjoying school and voicing this by coming to the main office. More programs have been added that have continuity across classes – such as AVID/Cornell notetaking – which students are finding helpful. The student information system will be changed and the transition is in process, which teachers are dealing well with after some initial difficulty. Parents were informed of schedule changes due to going from a term to semester system and the SIS change.

**6. Update by SMT on preparation for DOE site visit**

The SMT and staff are preparing for the DOE visit on Thursday September 18, 2014, with advice from Stacey Gauthier, Principal of Renaissance Charter School. A renewal hearing will be held in the evening and the Community/Parent Engagement team is creating a plan to ensure parent engagement and attendance.

**7. New Board Member recruitment**

The Board is planning to expand its membership. Board candidate Matthew Washington is Chair of



Community Board 11 and will be given an opportunity to participate in a project per the Board Recruitment plan. An Innovation Parent is also in the pipeline as representative. Board candidate Brendan Boerbaitz also expressed interest via the United Way posting and will be scheduled for a school site visit followed by a call with the Board. As part of the vetting process he may also be asked to provide a service or participate in a project working with Innovation staff and/or students as a volunteer.

#### **8. 2014-15 Budget**

Debbie DaGiau, Associate Director of Finance/Human Resources, provided an update to the Board on the 2014-15 budget. Ms. DaGiau noted that she, Sona Karia, Board Finance Committee Chair, Stamm and Bader, Innovation's accounting firm, and Mike Jolley, Development & External Affairs Coordinator, held a meeting to walk through the budget in detail. Ms. DaGiau explained that the main budget increase resulted from price increases in Benefits from our 3<sup>rd</sup> party Benefits provider. While the increase was going to be 31%, Innovation negotiated it down by 14% - to a net increase of only 17%. Rate changes due to the Affordable Healthcare Act contributed 4-6% of the increase, while staff usage contributed to the rest of the increase since Innovation's plan is experience-based. The negotiation included the addition of a deductible to the hospitalization part of Innovation's plan.

Ms. DaGiau noted that while most staff members have single coverage, usage was high with one particular incident with an abnormally high charge. Innovation will absorb 90% of increase on lower plans and 80% of increase on any higher plans. Out of 88 employees, not everyone has bought into healthcare, and for those that do not, they receive a bonus at year-end. Ms. Karia noted that a thorough assessment should be done to understand what resonates most with staff in order to better use the budget in an effective manner – this could include lower deductibles or Innovation contributions to Health Savings Accounts. Ms. DaGiau and the Finance Committee will assess options and optimization of benefits over the next several weeks to provide a recommendation to the Board.

Other budget usages include programming, Chromebooks pilot, adding teachers and counseling staff. Ms. DaGiau noted that the budget presented does not have the updated student count of 470 – this will be updated and provided to the Board.

#### **9. Update from Director of Student & Community Engagement on Meet-the-Board parent event**

The Director will organize an opportunity for parents to meet the Board at the next Board meeting. It was also discussed that it would be great to have students from each class council come to present at Board meetings to keep the Board abreast of student projects and curriculum as well as provide a leadership and presentation opportunity to the students.

#### **10. Other New Business**

No other new business was discussed.

#### **11. Adjournment**

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