



Meeting of the Board of Trustees

August 24, 2020, 6:00 pm

Minutes

1. Roll call/sign in

Trustees Sona Karia, George Sarkissian, Latoya Massey, Jared McShall, Ramon Perdomo, and Alex Gallin were present, constituting a quorum, via Zoom videoconference, pursuant to the Governor's emergency regulation, at a virtual location open to the public via Zoom meeting and designated on the Notice of Meeting. Also present was board candidate Tavanie Perez, and several members of Innovation's school staff.

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 email to the New York Times and posted publicly on the Innovation High School Website. Physical posting at the school was not possible because the school building had been closed by orders of the Governor and the Mayor.

3. Review and Approval of Prior Board Meeting Minutes (5 minutes, Acting Chair)

Review and approval of July minutes is pending.

4. Consent Agenda (5 minutes, ED)

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes, 2/20-6/20

b. Charter Renewal, review and approval of:

- i. Bylaws**
- ii. Conflict of Interest Policy**
- iii. Employee Handbook**
- iv. Code of Ethics**

Jared McShall made a motion, which was seconded by George Sarkissian, and unanimously passed, to approve the meeting minutes, from February, 2020 to June, 2020. Sona Karia made a motion, which was seconded by Jared McShall, and unanimously passed, to approve the Bylaws, Conflict of Interest Policy, Employee Handbook, and Code of Ethics, as presented, for the purpose of inclusion in Innovation's Charter Renewal application, which is due to the DOE on October 1st.

5. New Trustee Candidate (Acting Chair, 10 minutes)

- a. Review**
- b. Executive Session**
- c. Vote**

Tavannie Perez, Innovation parent, spoke about her interest in joining the Innovation board, because of her interest in her son's education, in bringing information to other parents, and in bringing the entire school community together. Ms. Perez believes that she can represent the

views of parents whose voices would otherwise not be heard. She would also like to see greater parent involvement in the school. She would like to bring additional opportunities to the school, including partnerships and fundraising. Sona and George spoke about additional responsibilities that board members have and the need for active engagement.

After discussion, Ms. Karia voted to approve Tavanie's candidacy for the Innovation board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sarkissian and unanimously approved.

6. Equity in Action (5 minutes, Dir. of Student Affairs & FCE)

Pablo Torres, Innovation's Director of Student Affairs and Family and Community Engagement, spoke about the new equity group, which occurred originally as a response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others. The group started with over 20 goals. SEL, equity, and culturally relevant teaching are in the forefront of the work. The Morningside Center is training staff on equity and education issues. One goal is to make Innovation an anti-racist school.

Ms. Perez asked about parent involvement. Mr. Torres stated that they are working on opening the work to the broader Innovation community, including parents.

7. Enrollment Update (5 minutes, Dir. of Student Affairs & FCE)

Mr. Torres stated that enrollment is currently at 402: 92 9th grade, 114 10th grade, 89 11th grade, and 107 12th grade. A good deal of fluctuation in numbers has been seen. Some students are leaving NYC; also, schools are competing for students. Recruitment and enrollment are ongoing, and include phone calls to families on the waitlist. We have contacted an organization that assists with recruitment and we are also exploring social media options.

Ms. Perez asked for recruitment materials to hand out in the community and Mr. Torres stated that his colleagues would follow up with materials.

Ms. Karia asked about the distribution of students by grade. Mr. Torres noted that we are recruiting 11th grade students, because that number is low.

Ms. Karia asked about the relationship between enrollment and the budget. It was noted that the budgeted number was 405, and that the estimate of SpEd students was deliberately low, for conservative budgeting purposes.

8. Finance Update (5 minutes, ED)

Stephen Falla Riff, Innovation's Executive Director, noted that the Governor and the Office of the Budget, announced a 20% budget cut in aid to municipalities, including aid to school districts. However, this cut has not been implemented yet, and Innovation has received the full amount of the aid that it was scheduled to receive. The actual decrease will not take effect if federal assistance to the states is forthcoming. Otherwise, a budget modification will be needed. Mr. McShall asked about budget planning and Mr. Falla Riff replied that a 20% budget cut was one of the scenarios contemplated, and that the school's reserve fund was considered if the worst case scenario came to pass.

9. Reopening Plan Update (5 minutes, ED)

Mr. Falla Riff explained that a minor modification to Innovation’s Reopening Plan was made to comply with the Governor’s directive to put equity and health and safety considerations at the beginning of the plan.

10. Preparation for Annual Meeting of the Board in September & Election of New Chair (Acting Chair & ED, 10 minutes)

Mr. Falla Riff gave a preview regarding the elections that will be held in September: one trustee will be up for reelection; all officers will be elected; and committee members will be appointed. Terence Joseph, Innovation’s Principal, gave a short account of the reopening of school during the summer staff training period. Staff training on academics and trauma-informed practices went very well and the equity training is ongoing.

Ms. Perez asked about masks and cleaning supplies and Mr. Falla Riff explained that the school has substantial supplies of masks, PPE, and cleaning equipment, some of which is being paid for through the Coronavirus Relief Act aid that the school is slated to receive.

11. Charter Renewal Presentation (60 minutes, JPS Solutions)

- a. Overview**
- b. Executive Summary**
- c. Mission Statement**
- d. Name Change**
- e. Charter Renewal Project Summary**

Frank San Felice, Innovation charter renewal consultant, gave a presentation regarding the Innovation charter renewal. He reviewed the three fundamental renewal questions: Is the school an academic success? Is the school effective and well-run? Is the school financially viable?

Evidence of academic success includes high graduation rates for students with disabilities and strong growth in Innovation’s graduation rates since the end of the last charter term. Innovation has achieved most of its academic charter goals. Innovation’s focus on literacy and data driven approach to instruction were identified as key factors in school improvement. The school was effective and well-run and financially viable throughout the current charter term. Areas of improvement include enrollment, attendance, and individual learning places.

Innovation teacher Jamilah Abdul-Majid asked about community engagement strategy and Mr. Falla Riff spoke about engaging the community, elected officials, and the Regents.

Mr. Falla Riff spoke about the name change to “Innovation Charter High School”, to avoid confusion, and to use the name that we are known by in the community. Mr. San Felice agreed that branding is important.

Mr. San Felice spoke about making the mission statement clearer and to the point. He shared mission statements from three major nonprofit organizations that have shorter statements and suggested shortening the statement to the first statement only.

Ms. Karia suggested postponing voting on the name change and mission statement until September and Mr. McShall and other trustees agreed.

12. Public Speaking (5 minutes)

No one requested the floor to engage in public speaking.

13. Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.