

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
November 27, 2012
7:00pm-9:00pm

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Our World Neighborhood Charter School was held on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Middle School of Our World Neighborhood Charter School (31-20 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11103).

The Trustees Present were:

Jeanette Betancourt, President
Steven Solinsky, Vice President and Treasurer
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary
Mary Bogle
Melissa Chin
Sara Geelan

Also present were:

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director
Lisa Edmiston, Principal
Abimbola Disu Olaya, Vice Principal
Karinne Montaque, Business Manager
Mark Crusante, Development Director
Lucille Ranchor, Admissions Coordinator
Sarah Espanol, PTO Co-Chair
Maria Robeson, Parent

Jeanette Betancourt, President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

REPORT on EXECUTIVE SESSION

Annual Review of Board Terms and Election of Trustees

- The Board conducted its annual review of board terms, which are as follows:
 - Expiring 2012
 - Jeanette Betancourt
 - Sara Geelan
 - Expiring 2013
 - Melissa Chin
 - Jeff Maclin
 - Expiring 2014
 - Mary Bogle
 - Maura Fitzgerald
 - Steven Solinsky

Upon motions duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to re-elect Jeanette Betancourt for a term ending in 2015

RESOLVED to re-elect Sara Geelan for a term ending in 2015

Annual Election of Officers

- As per OWN by-laws, officer positions are elected each year at the annual meeting.

Upon motions duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to elect Jeanette Betancourt as President.

RESOLVED to elect Steven Solinsky as Vice President and Treasurer.

RESOLVED to elect Maura Fitzgerald as Secretary.

Annual Review of Committee Assignments

- The Board reviewed the Committee assignments and appointed Committee Chairs as follows:

Education

Melissa Chin, Chair

Jeanette Betancourt

Sara Geelan

Finance

Steven Solinsky, Treasurer, Chair

Maura Fitzgerald

Audit

Maura Fitzgerald, Chair

Steven Solinsky

Development

Jeff Maclin, Chair

Mary Bogle

Jeanette Betancourt

Facilities

Mary Bogle, Chair

Maura Fitzgerald

Sara Geelan

Steven Solinsky

Executive

Jeanette Betancourt, Chair

Steven Solinsky

Maura Fitzgerald

Board Business - Jeanette Betancourt

Strategic Plan

Board President Jeanette Betancourt reiterated her request for comments on the strategic plan draft in preparation for officially adopting the plan at our next meeting.

Open Meetings

In support of our commitment to Open Meetings, Board President Jeanette Betancourt reminded Committee Chairs to submit agenda items each month with enough time to allow us to circulate an agenda one week before meetings are scheduled.

Director's Report - Brian Ferguson

Calendar

Due to the fact that the school was closed for a full week in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Director conducted research to determine whether we need to adjust our school calendar. Our charter agreement commits to, and the school calendar includes 190 instructional days per year, whereas NY State law requires 180 days. Even with the loss of 5 days, we will be well within the State's legal threshold if we make no changes. According to the Charter School Institute, under the circumstances, it is okay to meet the lower threshold this year. Therefore, the Director recommended, and the Board concurred that we should not make any changes.

Charter Schools Institute Comparative Performance Analysis Reports

The Director summarized the results of the annual SUNY CSI comparative performance analysis report he circulated that measures our effectiveness as a school by examining our school's performance compared to other demographically similar public schools. CSI uses a nationally accepted methodology (a regression model) to compare us to schools with similar Free and Reduced Lunch populations. Our charter expects us to perform above the norm to a small degree. The overall results show we performed above the norm to a large degree. The Director noted that our grade 4 performance did not keep pace with the rest of the school, and that the Administrative team is paying close attention to possible changes needed at that level. Nevertheless, we did very well overall. In prior years, we performed above the norm to a small to medium degree, so the school is showing constant improvement.

The Education Committee conducted a thorough review of the report. They are working on distilling the complex language of the report into a clear message that can be posted on our website. The results will also be added to our Annual Report.

High School Graduation Rates of OWNCS Alumni

The Department of Education is tracking NYC students from elementary school through high school, and can even tie into college records for students who attend CUNY schools.

They are particularly interested in high school graduation rates and correlating data from earlier in a student's academic life. For instance, the attendance rate in 9th grade is a key indicator of graduation rates. Through the DOE we have data on how our OWNCS alumni are doing back to the first group that graduated high school. Our alumni are outperforming city averages in virtually every category every year. We don't have data on the students attending Catholic high schools, but can assume they are doing well, since the city's Catholic schools have a 90% graduation rate.

Facilities Committee Report - Brian Ferguson

Fortunately our facilities were not affected by the storm other than a phone outage on the first day back. There were no leaks in spots where we experienced problems in the past, though staff are continuing to keep a close eye.

The submission deadline for our response to the EDC's RFP has been delayed due to Hurricane Sandy. We are waiting for confirmation that the new deadline is December 16. We are in the Q&A period of the process. We submitted a series of questions asking for clarification on certain details. We are also continuing to seek letters of support from the community. Brian Ferguson and Jeanette Betancourt met with the head of Kaufman Astoria studios and confirmed they are not submitting a bid; we are asking them for a letter of support. We have received a referral for a Real Estate attorney with experience working with the EDC to help us shape the lease proposal.

Education Committee Report - Sara Geelan

Much of what the Education Committee discussed was already covered by the Director's report. In addition, the Committee is tracking the schools transition to Common Core. This has been complicated by the fact that the State's instructions keep changing. The Math standards are concrete, but they are still interpreting standards for ELA. In the meantime, the school is reviewing new curriculum maps and testing a \$19 application for the i-Pad.

Development Committee Report - Mark Crusante

The Committee is providing input to an Annual Report for donors and general outreach. They will try to add information about data as discussed in the Director's report. The Committee is also reviewing an Annual Appeal scheduled to be mailed to list of about 1000 recipients.

Joint Finance & Audit Committee Report - Steven Solinsky

Annual Audit

As reported last month, the audit of fiscal year 2011-2012 has been completed and once again, we have received a clean audit. Since our last meeting the management letter that accompanied the report has been finalized. In it, the auditors point out that we should be aware of the risks entailed when a staff is small and cannot fully segregate duties. This is not a risk that is unique to OWNCS, but it can be mitigated by being aware of it. The Finance department is engaging a consultant with charter school experience to review our policies and procedures, as well as our job descriptions who will make recommendations for changes, if any are needed.

1st Quarter Financials

The Committee reviewed the 1st Quarter financials. A summary report detailing all variances for financials through September 30, 2012 was circulated to the full Board for review. Everything is

as expected for this time in the school year, and the school continues to be in solid financial shape. During the 1st quarter, we normally need to make some good faith estimates regarding the school population. These estimates should be solidified shortly, and income will even out accordingly.

Faculty Report – Lisa Edmiston

- The Middle School flag football team is going to the semi-finals this Saturday
- The Middle School hosted a volleyball team for the 1st time this year, and they played very well
- The Quarter 1 honor roll is scheduled for November 28
- A Fathers' Day breakfast is scheduled for Wednesday, December 12
- The first Parent Teacher conferences are being held next week.
- The students are preparing a wall with college banners to encourage them to think about attending college someday.
- The Middle School parent representatives just held a joint meeting with Middle School Science program representatives and the PTO to which Ms. Edmiston was invited. They plan to hold a meeting each month the hour before the Board meeting to make sure they have a forum to enhance communication.
- The school partnered with the church next door to collect donations for those affected by Hurricane Sandy. Many students volunteered to help and collected over 30 boxes of canned goods and toiletries to distribute to the block of residents adopted by the church.
- A few teachers were very affected by Hurricane Sandy. A collection has been taken up by the staff and to which the Board is welcome to contribute. The PTO also took up a collection.

PTO Report – Sarah Espanol

- The Talent Show is coming up in a few weeks, and tickets are available.
- The PTO has invited Story Nook back for the fall book fair. 25% of proceeds come back to the school. They invite feedback on the selection of books provided by Story Nook, especially as compared to Scholastic.
- The PTO is hosting a Teacher's luncheon at both schools next week during the Parent Teacher conferences.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations for July, August and September 2012, per the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to approve the 1st Quarter Financial Report.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees