

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
April 23, 2013
7:00pm-9:00pm

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Our World Neighborhood Charter School was held on Tuesday, April 23, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Elementary School of Our World Neighborhood Charter School (36-12 35th Avenue, Astoria, NY 11103).

The Trustees Present were:

Steve Solinsky, Vice President and Treasurer
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary
Melissa Chin
Sara Geelan
Charles Guadagnolo

Also present were:

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director
Karinne Montaque, Business Manager
Mark Crustante, Development Director
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director
Lucille Ranchor, Admissions Coordinator
Sarah Espanol, PTO Co-Chair

Steven Solinsky, Vice President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

Director's Report - Brian Ferguson

Admissions and Enrollment

The annual lottery was held on April 11. We had a record number of greater than 1300 applications (more than 400 more than last year). The event ran very smoothly and wrapped up in under 2 hours thanks to the electronic process now in place. The Admissions Coordinator is in the process of sending out letters to families. In the meantime the school is already reviewing and improving the documents, forms and outreach materials to be used next year.

Testing

NY state testing started last week with the ELA portion, and ran smoothly. The Math tests are scheduled to start tomorrow. Brian explained that it takes a huge number of staff to administer the tests, and every location throughout the school is used.

One parent refused to allow his/her child to take the test. The school sought advice from the Charter School Institute on the best way to handle the matter, and clearly documented that this was the parent's decision. Note that the school has an obligation to test and participation of lower

than 95% of the student body can raise a red flag. Fortunately, this has never been an issue for the school.

Surveys

The school experienced a low response rate of 33% from parents on the Department of Education surveys, compared to 40% last year, which could affect our letter grade on our progress report. Next year we will try to tie the circulation of the survey into school events, and create options for parents to fill them out at school – perhaps at parent/teacher conferences or special meetings called to introduce the survey. The response rate from teachers was high.

The teachers were also asked to fill out a survey tied to our PICCS grant regarding Professional Learning Communities, teacher evaluations, and the bonus structure.

School Year 2013-2014 Calendar

The Director presented a proposed calendar for the upcoming school year. It tracks the NYC Department of Education calendar except for the early start. Returning teachers start one week before the students.

Board of Trustees Business - Steven Solinsky

Board Membership

New Trustee, Charles Guadagnolo will join the Facilities, Audit and Finance Committees.

Trustee Sara Geelan announced that has accepted a new job outside the NY metro area, and will, therefore, be resigning her position at the end of the school year.

Maura Fitzgerald attended another United Way board recruitment event where she met a promising candidate with a background in education and a specific interest in volunteering with a charter school. Steven Solinsky, Sara Geelan and Jeanette Betancourt have agreed to conduct an additional interview.

Facilities Committee Report - Brian Ferguson

While the EDC has let us know verbally that they have concerns with regards to the proposal we submitted, they have not formally rejected our proposal either. The project team is crafting a response to address their concerns, and present an alternative lease payment schedule. The Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday to review the new documents.

Upon discussion it was agreed that we could still make some upgrades to the size of some of the Elementary School classrooms and fill in the atrium to create an additional room regardless of whether the larger project gets approved by the EDC.

In the wake of Sandy Hook, the school has replaced classroom doors in the Middle School that can lock from the inside with the push of a button, and that can release from the inside without a key. The school will replace the locks on the Elementary School doors next.

Joint Finance & Audit Committee Report - Steven Solinsky

Annual 990

The draft 990 has been circulated to the full Board for review. It is due to be filed by May 15, so Board members are asked to submit any questions or comments by May 3.

Mid-Year Budget

The mid-year budget has been prepared and is scheduled to be reviewed by the Finance Committee.

General Business

The Business Unit is finalizing its updated Policies & Procedures manual, pending final review by the Committee.

The Business Manager has pointed out that we need to update our banking records to remove outgoing signatories (departing Board members), and add new ones for the school's operating account. The Board agreed to remove Doug Brody and Sara Geelan as signatories and to add Maura Fitzgerald and Lisa Edmiston.

Faculty Report – Lisa Edmiston

- Middle School students participated this afternoon in a global event to give away free books to foster the love of reading sponsored by the non-profit World Book Night. Participation was coordinated by Belinda Bean, our Middle School ELA coordinator; we were the 1st school in our area to participate. A group of teachers and students went to the local library and gave away hundreds of new books distributed by the World Book Night organization in under an hour. The library was an excellent partner, and the event was very successful. The kids loved it.

PTO Report – Sarah Espanol

- The PTO's big 10 year anniversary event – a joint Multicultural Day / Carnival Block party will be held Saturday May 4.
- Story Nook will be returning for the Spring book fair the 1st week of May, which is also Teacher Appreciation week.
- The PTO will be hosing Olweus as a guest speaker at their next meeting to speak about cyber-bullying.

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

RESOLVED to approve the calendar for the upcoming 2013-2014 school year.

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

RESOLVED to approve the removal of Doug Brody and Sara Geelan as signatories on the school's operating account.

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

RESOLVED to approve the addition of Trustee Maura Fitzgerald and school principal Lisa Edmiston as signatories on the school's operating account.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees