

**New Dawn Charter High School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Minutes**

**Place:** New Dawn Charter High School  
242 Hoyt Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217

**Date:** April 8, 2014

**Time:** 3:00 p.m.

**Present:** Sara Asmussen, George Crowley, Lisa DiGaudio, Michelle D. Millán, Samir Souidi, Ronald Tabano, Leslie Winter, Phillip Weitzman

Visitor sign in sheet attached.

**Absent:** None

Meeting came to order at 3:00 p.m. A quorum was present

**I. Resolution: Minutes from February Meeting**

Mr. Tabano asked if everyone was able to read the minutes and if anyone had anything else to add.

**Motion:** Dr. Weitzman motioned that the minutes be accepted as written.

**Second:** Mr. Crowley seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Unanimous

**II. Compensation Committee Plan from November 2013**

**a. Career Ladder**

The Compensation Committee consists of Dr. Asmussen, Zach Flory, Donna Lobato, Tameka Jackson and Inessa Novik. The committee presented at the November meeting. There are two issues that need to be discussed: compensation payouts and the Career Ladder. Compensation is being tabled at the moment; however the Career Ladder needs to be discussed. Mr. Tabano asked who is on the committee and how are the decisions made regarding teachers specific timeframes. The committee consists of two administrators and two teachers and Dr. Asmussen. The Principal is not on the committee because it's a conflict of interest. The committee took the PICCS model, and applied it to New Dawn's teaching staff. The first step is the Aspiring Teaching. NDCHS does not have any this year, but might get one for next year. This person may not be fully certified, but is working towards their certification. The second step is the Novice Teacher. Currently, NDCHS only has novice teachers. After two years, a discussion is

made to see if someone can move on to the third step be an Associate Teacher, which is a teacher who has had enough classroom observations and outcomes that they're on their way to becoming a Master Teacher. The committee has not fully discussed how many years someone could be an associate teacher. After that, there is the Master Teacher. This is someone who has gone through the other two ladders. The master teacher can take on leadership roles. As NDCHS only has novice teachers, they are allowed to take on leadership roles. Finally, a Teacher Leader is someone who has demonstrated they are a master teacher and they continue to be effective in the classroom. They have had three years of evaluations at the master teacher level and they have now become more of a classroom observer. The only person that is currently in that position is the Special Ed Coordinator who has 15 years of experience.

Mr. Tabano asked what the basis is for the eventual movement from novice teacher to associate teacher to master teacher. Advancement is based on evaluations, classroom observations and student outcomes – the HEIDI score. Mr. Tabano asked what other decisions were made by the committee regarding teachers. This is the only decisions that were made on the hierarchy.

Dr. Weitzman asked about the relationship between the ratings and the ranks. Teachers must score 75 and above to move from one ladder to the next. A score of 75 is considered minimally effective.

In regards to the three years that a teacher would need to move to the next ladder, Mr. Crowley asked about a teacher's experience prior to joining NDCHS. Dr. Asmussen stated that everyone is at the novice level because their experience ranges from student teaching to substitute teaching. Mr. Crowley asked where a teacher would be placed if they came with two years of experience from another school. Dr. Asmussen stated that they would still be placed as a novice teacher for the first year, but based on their HEIDI score they would be able to move on to be an associate teacher in their second year. However, if a teacher starts with five years of experience, they will probably be placed as an associate teacher.

The committee decided that a teacher has two years to remain a novice. If a teacher is not beyond the novice stage after two years their contract will not be renewed.

Dr. Weitzman requested that any further discussion on this topic be tabled until the Executive Session.

**b. Salary Compensation**

In light of the process the school is going through, it was agreed that this topic will be tabled for a later date.

### **III. NYSED Visit**

Overall, NDCHS did very well with the visit, other than the Regent scores. There were some questions regarding the level of rigor in instruction in the classroom and the attendance problem. The school has two more chances to get the regent's score up (June and August). Ms. Jackson will later be discussing the school's attendance problem.

During the visit, it was made clear that next year is the renewal year and although the school is in year three this is when the clock starts ticking. At this point, everything should be focused on regent's scores and attendance.

Mr. Tabano stated that the Board was also disappointed and concerned with the Regent results and they will also be looking for improvement in June.

### **IV. Financial Report**

Mr. Bahl would like to meet with Mr. Crowley and anyone else in order to review the budget format.

Mr. Tabano requested that Mr. Crowley meet with Mr. Bahl to discuss the financials and for Mr. Crowley to report back to the Board.

### **V. Facilities Report**

Dr. Asmussen spoke to the person at Industry City and they do not want a high school. They are looking down the road for a college. Industry City suggested that NDCHS go to the section that is owned by the City – Dr. Asmussen has not figured out who to contact yet.

Dr. Asmussen met with Paul Llamas, who puts bond packages together so that you can build out your own space. He is more than willing to work with the school; however someone needs to be hired to run a capital campaign.

Dr. Weitzman asked if there is anything in the new legislation regarding space. Mr. Tabano stated that unless the school is expanding or adding a grade, there is no facilities relief. This was not a win for charter schools.

### **VI. Student Status**

#### **a. Attendance**

Ms. Tameka Jackson presented on student's attendance.

At the end of March, NDCHS's attendance was at 45%. Ms. Jackson has surveyed students to find reasons why they are not coming school. The attached PowerPoint document lists the various reasons that students gave as their reasons for not coming. Part of the plan to increase attendance is to plan monthly/annual field trips, because students stated that they have no connection to the school. Therefore, if students feel

like they are a part of something they become more vested and come to school. Another plan is to have banquets and pizza parties for students who have done well, as they explained that they would like to be recognized for their accomplishments. Another plan, which is currently in place, is student contracts. Ms. Jackson and the attendance committee have met with students and/or parents regarding student expectations.

There is an upcoming field trip to Medieval Times for students who have made the Honor Roll.

Mr. Tabano asked that a breakdown of attendance be made according to credits. Based on his experience, those students who have 0-9 credits have the most problems with attendance – they are the more difficult population. He stated that students with higher credits have better attendance because they are close to graduation.

Dr. Weitzman asked Ms. DiGaudio expand upon a statement she made regarding a culture shift as to a reason why students are not attending school. Ms. DiGaudio stated that there is a combination of understanding our students and having the cultural intelligence to react to our students who are equally sensitive. She stated that some students don't come to class because they were told (heard) negative things. She stated that perception of what is said in correlation to what is heard is something that the school needs to focus on.

Mr. Winter asked how the attendance compared to last year. Dr. Asmussen stated that the numbers are much lower and she can gather that information for the Board. Mr. Winter also asked for comparative numbers from another new school, i.e., Urban Dove.

**b. Internships**

Mr. Dumar Paden presented on internships. NDCHS has been working with Brooklyn Community Services; a partnership was created with them. They have a work readiness program. They will take 24 students and train them intensively for 6 weeks. During the second 6 week period, they will place them in various sites in Brooklyn. They will also assist students in finding permanent employment opportunities. Students that have been targeted are those who are not doing well in their internship, which includes absences of 3 out of 5 days and those students who have been let go from their internship. This program helps them get back on their feet and start fresh.

There are 21 students who are in the training phase. These students are an at-risk group because they are still in the training phase because they constantly miss appointments. Mr. Asher has continued to increase internship sites and will continue to look for more sites over the summer.

**c. College**

A bulletin board was created on the first floor that highlights students who have been accepted to college. Thirty-six students have completed and applied to a CUNY school. Of those 36 students, 21 of them have paid the \$65 application fee. Thirteen students have received acceptances thus far and eight applications are under review.

NDCHS have established a partnership with Mercy College. Mercy understands the population and is an SAT optional school. The SATs have been a big barrier to the students of this population trying to get into a four year institution. Establishing this partnership with Mercy allows students to have an opportunity and become competitive by getting into a 4 year institution. According to statistics, students have a better chance of graduating from a 4 year institution versus going to a Community College.

Mr. Crowley asked if students are having difficulty paying for the application fees. Mr. Paden stated that the only application fee that students have to pay for is the CUNY application; students meet the financial fee waiver guidelines for private schools and SUNY schools. Mr. Paden stated that CUNY has allotted two fee waivers for NDCHS. The CUNY fee is already significantly discounted because students are able to apply to six schools for one fee. Three students have been accepted to Mercy College and plan to attend in the fall. Mr. Tabano suggested that NDCHS looks into getting a grant to pay for applications; there should not be a barrier for students to apply. Last year, NDCHS paid for two students applications.

College NOW: 30 students took the pre-college course that is taught by a CUNY adjunct professor, 70% of the students passed the class. Five students took college courses at Borough of Manhattan Community College; they all passed with at least a C grade. This year, 15 students took the SATs and 11 students took the PSAT. Mr. Paden has been doing outreach to students to take the SATs in June. Dr. Weitzman asked if students received SAT/PSAT prep classes for support. Mr. Paden stated that he receives PSAT support booklets from the College Board that he passes along to students so that they can prepare on their own. Last year the school offered a SAT prep course; attendance was not good, only one student showed up consistently. Mr. Crowley asked if there are outside sources that students can attend and the school pays for it. Mr. Tabano stated that there are free programs offered on Saturdays and online.

**VII. Principal's Report**

**a. Regent's Prep Update**

Every Regents class distributes 5 multiple choice test questions every day. This data is reviewed in TERC to review trends. According to Vickie Smith, the most important thing for the school to focus on is closing the gap by half between June and August. The

projections from each of the departments, except the Science Department, are above that projection.

Mr. Souidi asked if the Special Ed students can be separated. Mr. Winter asked to see the total number of students, per subject, who will be taking the tests.

**b. Institutional Rounds – Peer Version**

NDCHS has been involved in the Institutional Rounds; we started with the PICCS group. Peer groups observed each other's classes.

**c. Summer School Proposal**

The Board packet includes a plan for summer school, which incorporates professional development in addition to course offerings. We will be running two cohorts through the building. Only regent level courses will be offered to those students who have earned 25+ credits and need a regent's exam to graduate in January 2015. In addition, we will be offering music and phys ed and a study skills class for the freshmen. The design will be for the first marking period; one set of teachers will teach while the other set is in professional development and then flip it.

Mr. Winter asked if teachers will get a stipend for working the summer. Dr. Asmussen stated that teachers would not receive additional compensation as they receive a salary 10% above the UFT scale.

**VIII. Albany Visits**

Dr. Asmussen and Ms. DiGaudio went to Albany with a coalition. The school's reps, Felix Ortiz and Joan Milman would not meet with them at that time. Later, they received a call asking them to go back to Albany the next day at 9:30am and that the entire Brooklyn Delegation was going to meet with them. They did go back with seven other schools and the meeting went well. There were a lot of misconceptions about charter schools. The meeting did not result in anything for NDCHS, but they are willing to meet with them on a regular basis. Joan Milman was very supportive of New Dawn. Felix Ortiz represents Sunset Park and is not supportive of charter schools.

Mr. Crowley asked who was in charge of the school while the administrators were out of the building. Dr. Asmussen stated that Donna Lobato, Tameka Jackson and Dumar Paden were each in charge of a floor. Mr. Crowley stated that he would have preferred that one administrator remained on site.

**IX. New Business**

Mr. Tabano addressed a document that was received from the Public Employment Relations Board. He stated that a group of teachers have approached the school to form a union as part of the UFT. The Board respects their right to apply to petition and

be recognized as a union. Historically, the UFT will petition PERB and it is determined who will be a part of the collective bargaining group (teachers/staff). Once that's determined, then they will decide on how it's measured to get the votes. Once the majority of the members vote on it, then the UFT will be recognized by PERB as the bargaining unit for the teachers. At that time, NDCHS will bargain in good faith. The hope is to reach a collective bargaining agreement that is fair to the teachers, the Charter and the mission of the school. Mr. Tabano stated that it is important to be mindful that during the process, students shouldn't get caught in the middle, as it can be dangerous on both sides. Mr. Tabano does not believe that this is not a matter of discussion for the students and they should not be involved. Mr. Souidi asked if the Board needs to be present on April 30<sup>th</sup> for the PERB meeting. Mr. Tabano stated that it appears that they will meet in person, most likely at the Public Relations Employment Office and that the entire Board does not need to appear, but someone from the Board will be there along with legal counsel.

Ms. Connors, addressing the UFT representative, stated that it was her understanding that NDCHS can voluntarily recognize the union without going to PERB. The UFT representative stated that the school does not have to go to PERB and that there is no voting in New York as long as 80% agree to the union. She further explained that the only time you go through PERB is when the Board or school administrators refuse to voluntarily recognize.

Ms. Jarvis, ELL Teacher, addressed the Board and requested a voluntary negotiation date. Mr. Carlic, ELA Teacher, also addressed the Board to request a voluntary negotiation date. Mr. Tabano reiterated that the Board will go through the legal process of the Public Employment and Relations. Ms. Connors, Health Teacher, stated that she would like for the group to continue on with their personal statements. Mr. Tabano stated that he would allow another person to speak and that they would move to Executive Session. Ms. Trakhtenberg gave her personal statement. Mr. Tabano thanked the staff for their comments. Ms. Desai, Math Teacher, stated that legally, they each get two minutes of the Board meeting and that they would like to continue. Ms. Connors, Health Teacher, gave her personal statement. Mr. Linden, Spec Ed Teacher and Ms. Desai, Math Teacher, gave their personal statements.

Mr. Tabano stated that Board was going to go into Executive Session and asked all non-members to leave.

The Meeting ended at 4:50 p.m. to go into Executive Session

## **X. Adjournment**

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. at New Dawn Charter High School.