

New Dawn Charter High School Board of Trustees Meeting

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

Date: October 27, 2015

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Board Members Present: George Crowley, Esosa Ogbahon, Samir Souidi, Ron Tabano, Phillip Weitzman, Leslie Winter

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: Sara Asmussen, Lisa DiGaudio, Alex Lis-Perlis, Eleni Salony

Staff Members Present who left early: Renee Eddy, David Gorkhover, Ariel Laureano , Alexandra Lis-Perlis, Avilene Tiscareno

The members of the Board of Trustees had been visiting classes and meeting with students since 1 p.m. Mr. Tabano called the official Board of Trustees meeting to order at 2:55 pm. A quorum was present with six out of six members present.

I. Resolution: Minutes from September Meeting

Mr. Tabano asked if everyone reviewed the meeting minutes. The group reviewed a few points from September's minutes. Dr. Asmussen questioned a vote held in September. The missing information will be added to the September minutes.

Mr. Tabano requested a motion to accept the minutes with the outlined changes.

Motion: Mr. Winter motioned to accept the September minutes.

Second: Mr. Souidi seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous.

II. Child Find

While it was acknowledged that this is really not part of the job of the Board of Trustees, the NYSED wanted to make sure the Board was aware of how the school was doing with IEP

reviews and students. Dr. Asmussen reported that there had been three (3) annual reviews due and all had been completed; there were 34 Triennial Reviews of which 17 had been completed; and six referrals to CSE of which three (3) had been resolved and two (2) were in process. The final one is waiting for CSE to respond.

III. **Welcome new New Dawn staff members**

- a. All new staff members introduced themselves to the board and stated their position.
 - i. Renee Eddy, Social Worker
 - ii. David Gorkhover, Math
 - iii. Ariel Laureano, Aspiring Teacher
 - iv. Alexandra Lis-Perlis, Executive Assistant/AT
 - v. Avilene Tiscareno, Guidance Counselor

- b. The Board had questions for Ms. Tiscareño about college applications and access.

Mr. Tabano asked which colleges students show interest in. Ms. Tiscareño shared a list of SUNY schools that seniors seem most interested in.

Mr. Souidi asked about funding options for students going to SUNY/CUNY. Mr. Tabano highlighted that 'incidentals' can be the hardest thing to fund for students due to funding issues. Ms. Tiscareño shared that CUNY is more financially supportive of incidentals.

- c. Dr. Asmussen highlighted the upcoming "New Dawn to College" event being hosted at the Clover Club on November 19. Invitations are forthcoming.

IV. **PBIS Conference**

Dr. Asmussen and Mr. Tabano recently attended PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support) conference and shared some reflections with the board.

Overall the tone of the conference was very receptive to the challenges faced at alternative schools and by the students in such schools. The conference had particularly strong resources on trauma experienced by students. Dr. Asmussen expressed being glad to have attended. Mr. Tabano seconded her sentiments and hopes that in the future these workshops will address social media and online traumas.

Dr. Asmussen believes the conference affirms our current model. Mr. Souidi asked if it would be integrated more in the curricula and Dr. Asmussen and Mrs. DiGaudio confirmed that it already has been. They also highlighted that Renee Eddy is a new hire that has been particularly focused on implementing this model. This just allows the school to put the discipline and culture policies into a nationally recognized framework.

V. **Program Report**

a. **Enrollment and Student Status**

Dr. Asmussen stated that Free and Reduced lunch numbers are still being processed and collected. IEP students may increase depending on the accuracy of enrollment forms. Low attendance could be accounted for by poor attendance procedures in classrooms. Dr. Asmussen stated that there was 56% attendance on the day of this meeting, which may have been impacted by shooting which took place in the neighborhood the previous night. A young man was killed and was a friend of several of our students.

b. **Internships**

Mrs. DiGaudio explained the shift in the structure of the advisory classes to include an internship portfolio and a research project. The advisory portfolios help students build skills to show in a portfolio-style piece. This is a pilot that will hopefully roll out next fall in a larger scale. Mrs. DiGaudio also explained that certified teachers have been pushing in to the Advisory classes to teach skills.

VI. **Financial Report**

a. **Finances ending September 2015**

Mr. Crowley pointed to the fact that the school's contribution to the 403b plan should be higher. It was clear that members of the Board had differing thoughts about how to support staff with the 403b plan. There was a lengthy discussion about how the Board wanted to move forward. The issues are: 1. the match, 2. contributions by the Board on top of the match, and 3. whether the match is for the last year or the current year. Dr. Asmussen suggested that Mutual of America be present at the next meeting to answer questions so that the Board can resolve the issues.

Mr. Winter suggested we get Mutual of America on the phone rather than setting up an in-person appointment for the next Board meeting. Mr. Tabano suggested we do either phone call or in-person appointment, based on ease for Dr. Asmussen.

Mr. Souidi asked how rent gets allocated in the budget. Mr. Crowley referred everyone to page 10 of the financial report to review the numbers that have been allocated. Mr. Souidi asked where the numbers came from and Mr. Crowley stated that the origin of these numbers are in the report and that these numbers had been negotiated between the accountants and the Finance Committee earlier in the year.

Mr. Winter asked about the future of the budget surplus and what the plans for a surplus in the future might be. Dr. Asmussen stated that Paul Lamas will be joining the next board meeting to review different building options for the future which is how this money will be spent. Several board members had follow-up questions about the financing options and Dr. Asmussen reiterated that Mr. Lamis will be able to explain several options and field questions at the next meeting.

b. Audit Report

The auditor, David Ashenfarb of Schall & Ashenfarb, shared his findings via phone. His audit team was able to review the school’s financials in detail and was able to vet the numbers closely. Mr. Ashenfarb emphasized the surplus for the past year, more than \$2 million dollars, which is a strong, positive indicator. He stated 80% of all money spent goes to program services, another strong indicator. A strong liquidity ratio is also present, which is positive. Mr. Ashenfarb stated that they reviewed all the processes and structures at the school concerning the finances. The comments from the last year’s audit have all been corrected. It was recommended that the School develop a Reserve Funding Policy over the coming year. Overall, Mr. Ashenfarb stated it was a successful audit which showed positive strong results—it was a very clean audit. Mr. Ashenfarb will send the final audits needed for submission to NYSED tomorrow.

VII. Principal’s Report

Ms. DiGaudio reviewed the incoming Scantron scores of students in both math and reading and explained that these low scores mean more challenges for teachers. The scores are as follows and are presented as the percentage of students who are functioning at each grade grouping:

Grade Level:	<5 th Grade	5-6 Grades	7-8 Grades	High School
Math	48.4%	37.2%	10.6%	3.7%
Reading	36.5%	44.1%	13.5%	7.1%

These results show that in math only 3.7% and in reading only 7.1% of the students are at grade level. A full 48.4% in math and 36.5% in reading are functioning below the 5th grade level. This is very difficult for teachers who are preparing students who are already behind for Regents exams, graduation, and college. Ms. DiGaudio stated that staff is being supported in these challenges through many different type of professional development. Ms. DiGaudio handed out a sample packet of a PD and how the teachers rated it.

Mr. Weisman praised the integration of the internship program and stated that he is encouraged and excited by the increased rigor of the internship program. Mr. Tabano agreed with Mr. Weisman.

Mr. Souidi asked if other staff have been trained in the new internship/advisory curricula. Ms. DiGaudio stated that all the staff is receiving training and support on the new curricula and they are meeting weekly to review the course and the progress.

VIII. **New Business**

Since there was no new business, the Board went into the Executive Meeting. All non-Board members recused themselves, except for Dr. Asmussen.

IX. **Executive Meeting**

- a. Building update – Mr. Tabano (following this update Dr. Asmussen recused herself)
- b. Evaluation of the ED

X. **Adjournment**

Mr. Tabano requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Mr. Weitzman motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Mr. Crowley seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on December 1, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. at New Dawn Charter High School.