

**MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF THE BOARD
OF TRUSTEES
for the
BEDFORD-STUYVESANT NEW
BEGINNINGS CHARTER SCHOOL**

Meeting of March 17, 2015

Members Present: Patricia Bramwell, Marlina Mondesir,
Kevin Nesbitt, Cecelia Russo; Joseph Sciamè

Members Absent: Angel Charriez; Victor Rivera Jr. (excused); Leticia Theodore-Green

Also Present: Nicholas Tishuk (Executive Director), Sabrina Del Sherpa (Lower School Director of Instruction “LSDOI”); Anthony Thomas (Director of Culture); Jennifer Byrd (Ass. Director-Family & Community Engagement), Vicky D’Anjou (Ass. Director-Knowledge and Development), Jennifer Unger (Special Needs Learning Coach, SWD); Silbia Pagan (Middle School Director of Instruction)

Mr. Sciamè started the meeting at 6:18, with a quorum present. The minutes from the February meeting were presented for approval.

Clarification: the son of Sen. Dilan referred to in the minutes is Assemblyman Dilan.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Russo and seconded by Ms. Bramwell, the minutes of the February 12, 2015 meeting were adopted, with all necessary corrections, by a vote of 3 with Mr. Nesbitt abstaining.

Mr. Tishuk started the school status update with informing the board of the dates the school will be closed due to the Easter holiday and spring break, April 3-13. The Tuesday of the Scholars’ return, April 14, the 3-7 grades start state assessments. In preparation, the 3-7 grades are taking mock exams. The school has set up protocols to help have the staff and the Scholars’ practice, which is being tested and refined as necessary. The mock exams allowed the staff to notice issues and resolve before the actual exam date. For the middle school, since many of the teachers are new, it is allowing the teachers to practice the proctoring for the exams.

The school is also preparing for the April lottery for the 2015-2016 school year, focusing on kindergarten but pulling for K-8. Currently the school has over 250 applications for the 2015-2016 school year. The school also has the application on the school website which is tracked through a Google Form. Ms. Byrd is and has been going to daycare

centers. The school has also purchased a 10 second advertisement on News Twelve Brooklyn between 6am-midnight, starting March 18, 2015.

Mr. Thomas reported that Scholars have attended several field trips, which is used based on the amount of thrive tickets they received as a bonus. One trip was to Reconnect Café. This is a nonprofit organization that allows young men who have been incarcerated to change their course of life. Scholars were able to meet these men and talk about the “bad” decisions they made in their lives. This is a proactive approach to dealing with the realities of the neighborhood our children live in.

The middle school Scholars attended a field trip to Hunter College. This is part of a program that allows the Scholars to experience and see college life so this becomes a reality for them. Another trip field was to Save Our Streets. This provided another opportunity for a proactive approach for life decisions. The focus of the school is anti-violence, which helps when the Scholars met those who did use violence in their lives and had serious consequences. Our Scholars also participated in Radio Rookies, which they did a story on bullying and being in middle school, which is available, online. Another trip is planned to John Jay College.

Ms. Pagan gave an update on the middle school. A new teacher was hired to assist the 6th and 7th grades. His role is to support these grades in small group instruction for Math and ELA. He will target the children that need additional help in Math, especially word problems. He will not target the students who get RTI and special services. He will focus on the kids “in the middle”. Nick advised us of the the year round hiring allows the school to hire qualified teachers and also acclimate them into the school culture.

Ms. Russo gave an update on the Education Committee. The notes were distributed to all. On March 12th, she, Nick, and members of the MGT team focused on the news of charter schools being closed near BSNBCS. The group discussed the proactive recruitment of the students and teachers but also being mindful of the sensitivity concern of this issue. For the children that transfer into our school from these schools, there will be a summer program and teacher/parent meetings to help acclimate to our culture. Ms. Russo wanted to be clear that we make sure that the new additions are exposed and trained in our culture before they start. (Teachers and students) Ms. Byrd will contact the families that had already applied to our schools from those schools personally.

Ms. Bramwell brought up a news articles that the South Bronx and Bed Stuy are subpar. “Where are we receiving our teachers or educators?” she asked. Mr. Tishuk informed those who had not read the story in the Daily News that District 16 was the lowest rating and least experience by their supervisors. It is hard to find certified teachers to work in the South Bronx and Bed Stuy. Vicky D'Anjou-Pomerleau stated that there are a few incentives: Building BSNBCS- hiring incentives; Silbia, Anthony and Nick are teaching fellows. Ms. Unger stated that she started in a school in the South Bronx and the morale was rough. One thing she noticed that makes BSNBCS different is the new teacher alliance, which helps the morale and boosters self-confidence; there is also a shadow board that allows the staff to praise each other.

Mr. Sciame asked if there were programs to praise the staff; Mr. Tishuk mentioned that he tries to incorporate into staff events.

Mr. Tishuk gave a brief update on the visit with the State Senator Martin Dilan and Assemblyman Eric Dilan. The meeting was 45 minutes, Ms. Pagan discussed the middle school and our political representative discussed how we are not on the same financial par as the other schools. We are hopeful that they will advocate on our behalf for other projects that will assist the school. We asked that they support the House 1 bill.

Mr. Tishuk gave an update on the audit being performed by the City Comptroller. The school will have their first interview with the comptroller on March 18, 2015. Vito, Nick and Angel will be interviewed.

The finances will be presented at the next meeting on April 21st. Evaluations are done for the staff excluding the Executive Director. If you were in good standing for two evaluations in a row, an early offer letter was presented. By May, all eligible employees will receive offer letters.

Mr. Nesbitt gave an update on the Engagement Committee. He focused on three items:

- a. Projects for the fall 2015- The Committee has begun the process of consulting with the ED to ensure that while we stay focused on supporting the more pressing issues of academic improvement and rigor and local parent engagement, we do not lose focus on larger more collective projects for the fall 15. Nick and Kevin will meet on Tuesday 3/18/15 (evening) to make a plan that may be brought forward to the Board.
- b. Ms. Bramwell's attendance at Councilman Cornegy's State of the District meeting- Ms. Bramwell reported that she attended Councilman Cornegy's State of the District on February 21st and gave an update. She attended two sessions, the multiple pathways to graduation and affordable housing. Senator Schumer attended and spoke at the event. Ms. Bramwell shared the information she received with the school.
- c. A parent complaint- Mr. Nesbitt was approached by a former parent leader about some concerns she had with the school. He advised us that while his typical protocol is to refer folks to the ED to then follow the approved plan for parent/family complaints, as this parent served with us in prior years, he decided he should chat with her. They chatted quickly during the week of 2/28/15 and also set up a subsequent meeting. The nature of the complaints were around the Common Core, lack of access to information and responsiveness, and a concern with additional students being brought to the school and requests for active parent recruitment and engagement in the process that she and other parents deserved a responsive and accountable exchange. General concerns were about push for family involvement in principle while in practice a dismissive sense of how faculty was being treated and in particular as related to the upper-school leader.

The parent wrote up her concerns which Mr. Nesbitt will present to the school for discussion and follow up with the appropriate school members and then report to the Board.

Ms. D'Anjou submitted the request for Councilman Cornegy's discretionary funding of \$137,000 for laptops and laptops carts. The school is thinking of having a festival, the third Saturday in June to which legislative members can be invited. This will be followed up and reported to Board.

At the conclusion of the committees, Chairman Sciame recommended we go into Executive Session and Ms. Russo seconded. All accepted.

After Executive Session, the Board members present decided to use the job description that was used for choosing an ED; and that the email from Chairman Sciame sent on March 2 concerning the timeline should be reviewed by all Board Members. Any concerns can be sent to the Chair.

Since the school uses the Kim Marshall rubric perhaps the Board can review and incorporate in the review of the ED. The ED provided a two page summary self-evaluation, which he will also send by email to all the board members.

The Board members present agreed to a conference call on **Wednesday, March 25th at 5pm.** to begin the process of the ED's review. The conference call number to be provided by school. The Chair stressed the importance of this call, so that we can have an assessment ready for the ED's review.

Next Meeting: April 21, 2015

Submitted by Marlena Mondesir and Cecelia Russo