

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

Meeting of March 24, 2011

Members Present: Joseph Sciame; Patricia Bramwell; Victor Rivera Jr.; Angel Charriez; Thomas Alwood; Kevin Nesbitt; Leticia Theodore-Green (by phone).

Members Absent: Cecelia Russo; Mike Nieves.

Also Present: Joshua Morales (COO); Kashani Stokeley (Dir., Ops.)

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A quorum being present, the Meeting commenced at 6:05 pm.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Bramwell and seconded by Mr. Alwood, the minutes of the February 11 meeting were adopted with all necessary corrections by a vote of 6 - 0, with Mr. Nieves, Mr. Nesbitt and Ms. Theodore not present.

Mr. Morales noted that Ms. Jones' Academic Report had been distributed to the Board before the meeting and noted that, in light of the academic problems of the student body, Ms. Jones was adjusting her reading proficiency standard for the school downward from 100% to 85%. Mr. Morales noted that the change would result in the School being out of compliance with its charter, but stated that the adjusted level better reflected the academic performance of the initial student body.

Mr. Morales noted that he was preparing a "dashboard" prototype for the Board's use for progress reports in the future.

Mr. Nesbitt arrived.

Ms. Theodore was conferenced in by phone.

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Mr. Morales took the Board through the Academic Progress reports, noting that the KG and 1st Gr. classes were doing well, with difficulties appearing in the 2nd and 3rd Grade classes. Mr. Nesbitt noted that the performance of the KG/1st Gr. classes spoke to those children and parents adapting to the standards set by the school and believed that such success would carry forward. Mr. Morales noted that school culture had led to improvement in all grade levels.

Mr. Morales noted that there were 22 existing IEP students, with 8 IEP designations pending. An additional 8 students had IEP designations on hold, meaning that parents were not approving of the designation or that other issues had arisen. The 38 students represent approximately 20% of the students, which is high for the area. Mr. Rivera questioned about the additional cost for services for IEP students and was advised such funding will be provided, but per-pupil allocations may be cut in the new State budget. The Board noted that the School could not financially continue to provide enhanced services to children who deserved IEP designations, but whose parents were unwilling to approve them.

Mr. Morales noted that \$40,000 in grant money had been received from CSP and that some, but not all, of Title 1 money had been received from the school. Mr. Morales stated that he would seek an additional \$150 - \$200,000 in grants from E-Rate, for electrical upgrades for the school. Mr. Morales was confident that the grant would be received. A grant application for DYCD had also just been resubmitted.

Mr. Stokeley noted that present enrollment was 183 students, but was expected to fall to 182 when a child suspended for disciplinary issues was relocated.

Mr. Stokeley reported that the lottery was going to take place in two weeks and that 42 children would be on wait lists at present application levels. He stated that his past history was that about 50% of wait listed children eventually made it into the school and that approximately 5% of enrolled students would be lost through attrition. The board then discussed various ways to publicize the School and the lottery, including social networks, print ads in papers and mass mailings. Ms. Theodore noted her experience that an active social network site for the school likely would require 5 people to maintain it and keep it up-to-date and timely.

Mr. Stokeley reported that the computer lab had been set up and Mr. Charriez advised the Board that the School needed to apply for a computer aid grant. Mr. Morales advised that the School had only just received its Tax Exempt Number, which would allow it to put the grant application in.

Mr. Stokeley reported that two new T-1 lines had been installed for the School, but noted that the school had been hit with telephone line issues that day which the provider was saying would take several days to repair. Mr. Morales noted that the School only had two phone lines and needed about three more.

Mr. Morales noted that the School had thus far spent about \$55,000 for oil the past Winter and projected that, absent a solution to the boiler/heating issues, the School would spend another \$70,000 for oil next year.

Mr. Stokeley reported that one teacher was staying after school each day to oversee after-school programs. Mr. Morales then advised the Board that there may be a need to increase school hours to 7:30 am - 4:00 pm next year to account for the increased academic needs of the community.

Mr. Morales advised the Board that the organization which was responsible for organizing the after-school programs had approached him about leasing a room in the School to serve as its hub for all of its programs in the area. The room would be inhabited solely by program officials, and only during regular office hours. The Board discussed the security and insurance concerns of such an arrangement. Mr. Morales noted that the organization, in exchange for the office, could be asked to provide free after school programs for the School, which savings could then be passed on, in whole or in part, to the parents of the participating families. On motion made by Mr. Nesbitt, seconded by Mr. Charriez, the Board, by a vote of 7 - 0, authorized Mr. Morales to enter into negotiations with the organization and explore the creation of an appropriate contract.

Mr. Stokeley reported that fund-raising efforts had brought in \$4,050, the majority of the funds being used to pay for a School Field-Trip and School T-shirts for the attendees.

Mr. Morales then noted that the next Board meeting should be devoted primarily to strategic planning for the upcoming school year.

Mr. Morales advised the Board that approximately \$250,000 worth of repairs and improvements had been made to the Building, and that approximately \$150,000 still needed to be paid to Gabriel Associates ("Gabriel"). Mr. Morales noted that present receivables for the School were approximately \$80,000 and that he had imposed a freeze on the purchasing of new supplies for the time being. The principal of Gabriel was then introduced by Mr. Morales to brief the Board on the physical condition of the School and the efforts, past, present and future, to deal with building issues. The overall assessment by Gabriel is that approximately \$7 million in repairs were potentially needed to the Building, and needed to be prioritized. Mr. Morales stated that his preferred order of importance was to deal with heating, fire protection, the electrical panel, a roof recess space and the boiler. Mr. Rivera noted that any repair that required a DOB license would likely trigger a demand by DOB that other repairs, calculated to cost approximately \$600,000, would be required to bring the Building to Code. Mr. Sciamme noted that he had heard that money for capital improvements was still available from NYS, and pointed out that Mr. Nieves needed to be approached to see what was going on. Gabriel noted that, if the HVAC system improvements were going to be done for this school year, approvals needed to be almost immediate to allow the proper time.

Mr. Sciame asked Mr. Charriez about the possibility of a loan for the School and was advised that the availability of any such loan would likely require personal guaranties and depend on the School's track record. Mr. Morales advised the Board that it was building a good credit standing, but that it usually took about two years of operation to have a considered track record to submit for a loan application.

Mr. Sciame advised the Board that Ms. Russo told him that there was nothing new to report from the Education Committee, but that he was speaking with people at SJU regarding professional development for the teachers. He further noted that the Financial Committee needed to have a special meeting to discuss the concerns raised at this Board Meeting.

Mr. Nesbitt reported that the Outreach Committee had contacted the PTO and requested an opportunity to sit with them to discuss the School and was still waiting for a response.

Mr. Morales noted that the Spring Fundraiser would need to be cancelled and that fundraiser should be scheduled for either the Summer or the Fall. Ms. Theodore advised that either (or both) was possible, depending on the target audience, suggesting that fund-raising from individuals might be better in the Summer, while seeking money from corporations was better in the Fall.

Mr. Rivera requested that Mr. Morales update the website to include the dates of the upcoming Board meetings. Mr. Morales advised the Board that there was an access problem with the site at the moment, but that he would address it.

On a motion by Mr. Charriez, seconded by Mr. Alwood, the Board unanimously voted to recess the meeting at 7:47 p.m.