

September 16, 2020 | 8:45am

via Zoom

Board members present: Lydia Adelfio, Jerenze Campbell, John Duncan, Gretchen Guffy, Betsy Hanlon, Margaret Horn, Roneal Josephs, Tom O'Hara, Art Moran, Neville Waters, JD Wilde
CCPCS Staff present: Russ Williams, Clarice Ulu

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
 - II. Chairman's Remarks
 - III. Routine Business
 1. Approval of Minutes
 2. Approval of Board Meeting Dates 2020-2021
 3. Approval of Board Members' Terms
 4. Approval of Officers
 5. Materials Contract Approval (if needed)
 - IV. CEO Update
 1. End of SY 2019-2020 - Review
 2. Start of SY 2020-2021 - Update
 3. Russ' Draft Goals SY 2020-2021
 4. Approval of Officers
 5. Materials Contract Approval (if needed)
- BREAK (8 min)
- V. Open Meetings Act Review/Discussion
 - VI. Committee Reports & Goals
 1. Academic Committee
 2. Development Committee
 3. Finance Committee
 4. Governance Committee
 - VII. Executive Session

Minutes

Lydia Adelfio, Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

Chairman's Remarks

Lydia indicated that it has been a wild ride since the June board meeting and thanked Russ and his team for all of the work they have done in redeveloping the educational model. The work that Center City PCS has done has not only helped students, but their families, too. Their work has helped not only educationally, but socially and emotionally as well.

Routine Business

Approval of Minutes

Action Requested: Approval of minutes from June 17, 2020 quarterly meeting

Motion approved

Approval of Minutes : Materials Contract - Bradleigh Mechanical

Action Requested: Approval of minutes from July 22, 2020 material contract approval. Purchase of air filters. Due to COVID-19, it is necessary to upgrade the air filters and change them more frequently at four of our six campuses to ensure a cleaner air flow for students, staff and families

Motion approved

Resolution to renew Directors terms

Action Requested: Resolution for Director Term Renewal
Resolution to renew Art Moran for his second 3 year term

Motion approved

Action Requested

Resolution to renew Neville Waters his his second 3 year term

Motion approved

Action Requested

Resolution to renew Roneal Josphehs for her second 3 year term

Motion approved

Action Requested

Resolution to approve Jerenze Campbell for 2 year term

Motion approved

Resolution for Officers renewal

Action Requested: Approval of officers for the 2020-2021 SY.

Betsy Hanlon - Chair

Art Moran - Vice Chair

JD Wilde - Treasurer

Neville Waters - Secretary

Motion approved

Resolution for board meeting dates

Action Requested: Approval of the SY21-22 board meeting dates.

Motion approved

This is John Duncan's last board meeting with us. Lydia thanked him for his service and the great work he has done while serving on the board, including chairing the Development Committee. John ensured all that he had gained a wealth of experience while serving, and stated that he will stay in touch and continue to support Center City PCS. Russ also thanked John for all of his amazing work as a board member.

Lydia handed the reins over to the new chair, Betsy Hanlon, and she in turn introduced Russ to give his updates.

IV. CEO Updates

Russ Williams updated the board:

End of SY19-20 - Review

- A lot of our staff and all of our leaders have returned. We saw only a small amount of turnover, and we are pleased to have all of our principals return.
- More than 88% of our effective and highly effective teachers returned with a little over 83% overall retention. This continuity has helped us cope with the abrupt shift we experienced in March and given us more time to effectively plan for the fall.
- Prior to the pandemic, we were on track to cut our suspensions in half from 2.5 to 1.3% thanks to the restorative justice work that we are doing, which is led by Jackie Green. As we move away from the pandemic and return to normalcy, we are optimistic that we can build on this moving forward.
- We are continuing to work on our re-enrollment and are closing in on 87% for re-enrollment for this school year, and hope to improve on that before the October headcount. Trinidad's re-enrollment has improved under the leadership of Brandy Tyson and has risen more than 10%+ from 73% to 86%.
- In March, when school closed, our attendance was close to 95%, the best it has been in years; suspensions were down; staff retention high and we were on a positive trajectory, so we were disappointed when the pandemic arrived and the 2019-20 school year changed. Our data and indicators were pointing to a strong year.
- Last August Demetria began honing in on developing a scope and sequence for developing our emerging leaders. We piloted a couple sessions in January and February but could not complete the program with the shut down. We can now revisit this work and get it going again so we don't lose the progress we were making.
- We spent March-June just trying to figure out if in-person education was going to be viable for the fall. We were one of the first schools in DC to decide to go all virtual this fall. This

allowed our curriculum and instruction team the time to plan for the fall and put things in place. We were prepared for the school year.

Start of SY20-21 - Update

- Beyond making sure our staff and students' emotional health stays well, our biggest challenge this fall is all of the shifts that are happening on the DC educational landscape.
- Our current enrollment is at 1450 (the budget number was 1470) though this number has and will continue to shift. The count date is October 5. 1450 is a little lower than budget, but we are also seeing more at-risk students, therefore more supplemental payments than we have received in the past which will help us come close or meet our budget. We have a little capacity at Shaw and about 11 or 12 seats at Trinidad. We will keep the Academic Committee and the board informed of any improvement in numbers.
- The current attendance rate is based on the first two weeks of school. We are running close to 94% and are aiming for 95% or higher despite the challenging circumstances.
- Questions:
 - How is the attendance measured? Students have to log into our system and be engaged in a synchronous session. We want all kids logged in and present for each such session. We are still documenting live class and submission of exit tickets to ensure students are in class and participating.
- We are fully staffed. This year we filled 22 openings, plus 4 Dedicated Aides, and 3 NYU Fellows which are 29 filled positions total. We received 972 applications for the 22 open positions with an average of 40 applications per position. Our average days to fill a vacancy has reduced from 30+ days to under 20 days for this cycle.
- We submitted our Continuous Learning Plan ("CLP") to OSSE and the DCPCSB a few weeks ago and have received some feedback requesting minor updates. All LEAs had to update because the Department of Health issued new guidance after the CLPs were due on reopening plans. We have until September 25 to submit our updates which outline our academic plans, operations plan, modified assessment plans and all of the steps that we will take operationally and facilities-wise when we reopen.

ACTION: R. Williams will share the updated CLP with the Academic Committee and the full board once the CLP has been updated and approved.

- Kate and Demetria are making adaptations once they hear back from teachers and principals on what works well for our students and teachers.
- We are using a curriculum, SeeSaw, for our K-1 students. We are in a learning orientation situation since this is new to us, and we are working together with our teachers to figure out a collaborative way to improve on how they deliver materials to the students.

- Russ and his team have created a number of policies and procedures to address distance learning. .
 - We have a few high needs kids who come into the buildings at Brightwood (2) and Congress Heights (9) to socially distance and work with leaders and proctors to provide another layer of support. They also continue with their online learning.
 - The Operations and Facilities teams have outlined new safety protocols for use in the buildings. Every leader, teacher, and student has been asked to sign Covid waivers.
 - We have updated our family handbook, provided our families with an online learning addendum, and updated the employee handbook.
 - Our Operations team is continuing to build on the reopening guide which Alysia started this summer. This information was shared with the Board at our summer meeting.
 - The work on the Covid readiness is intentional and ongoing. We are working to manage and monitor the situation on what's happening here in DC in terms of the virus as some schools return to in-person learning (i.e Catholic and charters).

ACTION: R. Williams will share the updated reopening guide with the Academic Committee and the full board once it has been completed by the Operations Team.

ACTION: Russ will share the variety of online tools that the teachers are currently using with the Academic Committee and the full board.

- Technology
 - Laptops have been provided to all families and students who needed them. The large order that was placed in February allowed us to be ready for the fall.
 - All families who requested hotspots have received them, but we needed to order more due to needed additional bandwidth for families with multiple kids in the home.
 - Principals are continually checking in with families to ensure they have all of the technology they need at home.
- Questions:
 - *Technology:* Scott and Catherine have been providing phone assistance to those teachers who need it at home. We are fortunate to have a few tech savvy staff at each campus who have also been able to help each other with assistance. We have not had teachers report much trouble while working from home.
 - *Assessments:* We are deferring on MAP this fall and are going to use a few different other assessment tools in the interim such as Dibble, Great Minds, Edmentum, etc.

- *Connectivity*: Does the software allow our students to work offline in the case of a technical glitch or dropped connection? We have so many platforms, but there are some that allow this function.
- *Facilitation*: It was suggested that teachers use microphones when they go back to the classroom to help students hear them with their masks on. Russ will follow up with his team.
- Health and Welfare of Staff and Students
 - We are extremely focused on this and have partnered with a couple of other schools to form a consortium to send out a survey to middle and high school students to assess their mental health. This will go out this week via our counselors and the responses will be anonymous.
 - Will meet with small groups of our staff next week to ensure they have everything they need to get their work done and that they have a voice in this work.
 - We are currently piloting a program that's doing "farmers to families" work in DC to supply fresh vegetables and fruit to our families. We tried it with our Congress Heights and Trinidad families and Brightwood will join in this week. We have received great feedback from families and hope we are able to provide this through the spring.
 - We had a Central Office zoom meeting and are planning an outdoor socially distance meeting so staff can meet up and see each other.
- CEO Goals and Progress for SY20-21
 - When we take PARCC in the spring, we plan for students to master and improve their performance on grade level standards in math and reading.
 - Center City PCS will maintain high attendance rates and decrease chronic absenteeism.
 - We will continue with our strong "effective and highly effective" teacher retention.
 - We will maintain a low out of school suspension rate for our students.
 - Continue to engage with families - phone calls, text chats, zoom, etc. - throughout the year. This will help the school in the long run in maintaining strong relationships.

ACTION: R. Williams will inform the Academic Committee and the full board when the planned coat drive has been scheduled.

Further discussion of the points above:

- Are you familiar with the hybrid approach where the teacher is in the classroom? Yes, we have some teachers in their classroom teaching in an empty class via zoom.
- Do we have some of that technology? We currently have an OWL camera that follows the teacher around and we are currently piloting this at Congress Heights
- What about Martha's Table at Congress Heights? They are no longer doing the Joyful Market, but it has been modified. They are still providing food to families.
- Are the farmers donating or they paying the farmers? Not sure how their program is being funded, but it's good fresh food and we are hoping to expand it to all six campuses.
- How do you let families know? Each campus' operations person is the onsite contact and we are currently informing families via an email blast.
- Do they have to show that they are families of the school because some distribution sites allow anyone to come and retrieve food because of their need? Not sure if we have had community distribution, but many of our families and friends have responded to the 150 box distribution per campus..
- From a parent perspective, the technology that's being used is working well. Google Meet has a function where parents are alerted or notified when there is a missing assignment. We hope this function continues when we go back to in-person learning.

ACTION: R. Williams to finalize goals and share it with the board at the Dec. board meeting.

V. Open Meetings Act

- This act was passed in late July by the DC Council because they wanted more transparency from charter schools.
 - The DC Charter School Alliance is working on some one-pagers for boards to follow. Starting October 1 and moving forward, meetings will be subject to this guidance. All meetings will need to be recorded and minutes posted.
 - Meetings are subject to OMA if there is a quorum.
 - OMA defines what it means to be open. If there is an emergency, we need to have it available soon after the meeting.
 - The virtual meetings are allowed as long as you record it and take a roll call.
 - Closed meetings (i.e. real estate, attorney consult, training and development, etc.) are allowed, but you need to cite the reason, move to close and record it.
 - We will need to post the minutes on our websites and maintain records for five years.

- The recording is the biggest change for us. We can also still have conference calls or virtual meetings as long as we record them.
- Board business is approved by the full board.
- We need to ensure that all procedures are followed because a lack of compliance could impact a school when it is up for charter renewal.

ACTION: R. Williams will circulate the one-pagers as he receives them from the DC Charter School Alliance on the OMA.

VI. Committee Updates

Academic Committee - Margaret Horn

The chair noted that given the changes to instruction and all of the other things that are happening at our schools, the September meeting was cancelled to discuss issues with the full board. Because parents are now co-educators with teachers, we need to ensure we engage them deeper on matters of academics, seeing the families as a resource and ensuring our students are not caught up in the covid-slide. The committee has encouraged everyone to continue supporting teachers in this work.

Development Committee - Art Moran

The committee will establish their goals in the October meeting. In lieu of the Global Ambassadors program, Russ is talking to the principals and working to come up with a cause this year that will help all students. All board members are expected to donate to CC each year. Art indicated that he would like a newsletter to go out to all of our past donors showcasing all of the events that happened last year, including how the new school year was rolled out and the different things we are doing to assist families.

Finance Committee - Betsy Hanlan

The audit for SY19-20 started this week. The committee shared with the full board all of the projects, including photos of the completed renovations, such as tiling work. Some of this maintenance was pushed into this school year. Although we have not had a full review of the financials, it looks like we will maintain our budget. We need to think about how we are going to tighten the budget when we are back in school with regular costs, including teacher increases. We have hired a few more dedicated aides to help the increased at-risk students. The buses have a high cost of insurance so we are working to receive a credit. Information on the PPP loan forgiveness has not been released. It's currently listed as a refundable contribution on the books. The committee goals will be shared at the December board meeting.

Governance Committee - Neville Waters

Neville shared that we are prepared to be in compliance with OMA. Moving forward with recruitment, it looks like we have two strong candidates that we would like the board to also vet. With Russ' assistance, we will find an additional parent board member. The committee has to replace John Duncan, whose term will end today. The chairman noted that 15 is our maximum board number and we currently have reached out to Education Board Partners to recruit a few more members.

Russ thanked Lydia for chairing the board and all of her great work.

Meeting adjourned for closed Executive Session.