New Dawn Charter Schools Board of Trustees
June 20, 2024

12:00 p.m.: Full Board of Trustees Meeting

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

New Dawn Charter High School II
89-25 161st Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
547-505-9101

Board Members present: Mr. Ronald Tabano, Chairperson, Ms. Jane Sun, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Brian Baer, Secretary,

Board Members Absent: Ms. Katharine Urbati, Treasurer, Mr. Daniel Lewis, board member.

Staff Members/ Visitors Present: NDCS: Dr. Sara Asmussen, Executive Director; Mr. Steve Ramkissoon, Director of Finance and HR, Mr. Jose Obregon Director of Operations, Mr. Ashish Abraham

I. Resolution: June 2024 Agenda—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the June 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the June 2024, Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the June 2024 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

II. Resolution: May 2024 Minutes—Mr. Ronald Tabano

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the May 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the May 2024, Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the May 2024 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

III. Financials—Mr. Steve Ramkissoon
Benchmark 4: Financial Condition
Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Resolution or Discussion: 403 (b)

Mr. Ramkissoon reported to the board that because he is still trying to close out open invoices and other outstanding items, he does not have a financial report to present to the board for the month of May 2024. However, he reported that there are three hundred forty-six (346) students enrolled at the Queens school and two hundred and fifty-eight (258) at the Brooklyn school. He also stated that there is not a significant difference in the May 2024 financial report from the April 2024 report.

Mr. Ramkissoon also stated that he conducted an analysis of the school's 403B fund and obtained four different quotes from Voya, Lincoln Financial, Nationwide, and American Fund. He also stated that he discovered that with Mutual of America there is a lack of a "certain insurance." He stated that for an additional 1K per year, he can obtain insurance that will prevent employees from holding the school liable if their investment suffers any losses. Mr. Ramkissoon stated to the board that Nationwide Funds offers the school the most flexibility with more investment options and insurance should any employee suffer any losses. Nationwide will also provide a financial advisor that will be available to employees to advise them of the best investment options. Finally, Mr. Ramkissoon recommended to the board that they switch to Nationwide Investment Funds.

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept Nationwide Investment Funds as the new company to manage the school's 403B plan.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve Nationwide Investment Funds as the new company to manage the school's 403B plan.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve Nationwide Investment Funds as the new company to manage the school's 403B plan.

b. Resolution: Insurance Policies

Mr. Ramkissoon then asked for approval from the board to renew the school's general insurance which increased by 9% from the prior year. Mr. Tabano asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the renewal of the school's general insurance with an increase of approximately 9%.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the renewal of the school's general insurance with an increase of approximately 9%.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the renewal of the school's general insurance with an increase of approximately 9%.

Mr. Ramkissoon also informed the board that after researching costs, Mutal of Omaha offered the best prices for Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance even though medical and dental insurance is going to increase by almost 6%. Ancillary Insurance has increased by 9% but Mr. Ramkissoon stated that he was able to negotiate with Guardian to allow dependent children to remain on the insurance plan up to age 26. He then asked the board to approve the school to remain with Mutual of Omaha and the current health insurance plan.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to remain with Mutual of Omaha and the current health insurance plan.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve to remain with Mutual of Omaha and the current health insurance plan.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve to remain with Mutual of Omaha and the current health insurance plan.

c. Update on preparations for audit.

Not discussed.

V. Facilities Contracts—Mr. Jose Obregon
Benchmark 5: Financial Management
Benchmark 6: Board Oversight & Governance

a. Resolution or Discussion: Queens Cleaning Contract

Mr. Obregon informed the board that the cleaning contract at both schools is due for renewal. Mr. Obregon recommended to the board that the board keep the current company, Executive Cleaning. Mr. Obregon stated that thus far, the cleaning company has done an excellent job in both schools. The staff is happy with their work. Mr. Obregon asked the board that it considers one change and that is the addition of one cleaning person at the Queens school. Mr. Obregon explained that the additional person is needed because the student population at the Queens is growing school building is much bigger than the Brooklyn facilities. Mr. Obregon further stated that with the enrollment of additional students and the hiring of new staff, the two cleaners will be stretched to maintain the building adequately. Mr. Obregon then asked the board to approve the two cleaning contracts that were submitted for their review.

Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept and approve the Queens cleaning contracts as submitted for approval.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the cleaning contract for the Queens school.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the cleaning contract for the Queens school.

b. **Resolution or Discussion: Brooklyn Cleaning Contract**

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the cleaning contract for the Brooklyn school.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the cleaning contract for the Brooklyn school.

c. **Resolution: Queens Blinds**

Mr. Obregon then proceeded to inform the board that there is a need for window shades in the Queens school to block the overwhelming amount of sunlight that permeates the classrooms. The sunlight does not allow teachers to use projectors because of the brightness in the classrooms. Instruction is affected and students are also complaining that the sunlight coming into the classroom space is causing them to be uncomfortable. Mr. Obregon informed the board that he obtained two quotes from separate companies and he found that Alluring Windows offered a good product at a lower price than the other company. Mr. Tabano asked if the quality of the product was equal and Mr. Obregon responded that he believed that the material was comparable in quality. Mr. Tabano then asked the board members if there was a motion to accept the bid from Alluring Windows to install shades at the Queens School.

Motion: Mr. Brian Baer motioned to accept and approve the bid from Alluring Windows to install shades at the Queens School.

Motion Seconded: Ms. Jane Sun seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the bid from Alluring Windows to install shades at the Queens School.

VI. Educational Contracts—Dr. Sara Asmussen
Benchmark 1: Student Performance
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning

a. **Resolution: BARR Contract**

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board this is part of the New York State stronger connections grant. Dr. Asmussen applied for $1.2 million and the State granted $450,000. Dr. Asmussen stated that she had to slightly change the contract. For example, two (2) things that are required are the use of What Works Clearinghouse and evidence-based intervention. The use of minority women business enterprise will also be required. Dr. Asmussen stated that BARR is the only high school intervention program, but it is perfect for NDCHS. The program is based on eight (8) building blocks where all existing school initiatives are pulled together. The school currently has Read 180 and Math 180 as well as the PBIS, Restorative Justice, and mentoring initiatives. All these initiatives work in their silos and the cross over among initiatives is not always clear to staff. What BARR will facilitate the alignment of all initiatives into one model. The project director (new hire) under BARR will take all these initiatives that the school has and integrate them utilizing an existing program. Dr. Asmussen also informed the board that the State has asked the school to measure SEL and how these initiatives impact student behavior and this is the perfect opportunity to do this. The Stronger Connections project director will be the mentor support for staff, collaborating with staff on how you integrate all these initiatives into the classroom. Mr. Tabano asked what the cost was. Dr. Asmussen stated that it costs $80K annually. Mr. Tabano asked if there was a motion to accept the BARR contract.

Motion: Ms. Jane Sun motioned to accept and approve the BARR contract.

Motion Seconded: Mr. Brian Baer seconded the motion.

Vote: The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the BARR contract.

b. **Discussion: READ 180 & Math 180 Contracts**

Mr. Tabano also asked Dr. Asmussen to speak to the board about Math 180 and Read 180. Dr. Asmussen informed the board that Math and Read 180 is an intervention program and will be paid for with grant funding and the schools will use it for the next five (5) years. Dr. Asmussen explained that the reason we use these two programs is that they are an evidence-based tool and it is listed on What Works Clearinghouse. These are the only high school intervention programs available. The program is available in Spanish as well, which will benefit the approximate eight-six (86) ELL students in Queens and approximately thirty-four (34) ELL students in Brooklyn. These two programs will become part of the school's ELL program.

VII. Staff/Student Recruitment—Mr. Ashish Abraham
Benchmark 2: Teaching and Learning
Benchmark 5: Financial Management

a. Status of Current Hiring

Not discussed.

b. Status of Student Recruitment

Mr. Abraham reported that over the course of the last few weeks, there are a total of thirty-one (31) new student enrollment applications including nine (9) for the Brooklyn school and twenty-two (22) for the Queens school. These new students will start in the summer or the fall semester.

VIII. School Updates

Dr. Asmussen reported to the board that Regents exams are complete and that scoring is still in process. Additionally, both schools are preparing for summer school. There are many students who are already enrolled for summer school and especially those students who only need one (1) or two (2) credits to graduate.

Mr. Tabano asked how many students were graduating this year and Dr. Asmussen replied that there are at least one hundred seven (107) between the two schools. Mr. Tabano stated these are substantial numbers. He also congratulated Dr. Asmussen on the five (5) year renewal that the Queens school was able to obtain from New York State.

IX. Discussion of Land Use Attorney

Mr. Baer is currently meeting with potential candidates.

X. Facilities—Mr. Jose Obregon

a. COO Update

Mr. Obregon confirmed to the board that he has reached out several times to Kayla Leibman from the Metropolis Group to try to get an update on the final COO. Despite several attempts to reach her, she has not responded. Mr. Obregon also stated that he has not heard back from her since he provided her with plumbing diagrams that she requested, about a month and a half ago. Mr. Baer also stated that he has reached out to here and that she has not responded. Mr. Brain Baer also confirmed that that everything has been submitted to Metropolis that they requested. Mr. Baer stated that he will keep on pressuring Metropolis until they respond.

b. Kitchen

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that Barone completed the asbestos removal but has yet to start on the demolition phase of the project. He suspects that Barone is still working on permits to begin that phase of the construction project.

c. Roof

Mr. Obregon reported to the board that Mr. Brian Baer, a construction contractor representative, Mr. Jester, the project architect, and he met last week at the Brooklyn school to survey the roof top. An idea that was discussed was the storing of the construction material on the rooftop itself since there is no other place to store the material. Mr. Brian Baer also commented that he has reached out to three (3) attorneys, which include two (2) that Dr. Asmussen identified and is waiting for them to return his call.

XI. New Business

There was no new business discussed.

XII. Public Comment

There was no public comment made.

XIII. Adjournment

Mr. Tabano asked the board members if July 23, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. was acceptable to all for the next board meeting. Ms. Jane Sun stated that she would be out of the country. All other board members agreed on that date and time. Mr. Tabano wished everyone a good summer.

The board adjourned at 12:31 P.M.