

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, January 26, 2016
Our World Neighborhood Charter School
Middle School
31-20 37th Street, Astoria, NY 11106
7:00 pm

The Trustees present were:

Charles Guadagnolo, Treasurer
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary
Rich Bogle
Olubunmi Emigli
Sarah Espanol

Also present were:

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director
Lisa Edmiston, Principal
Mark Crusante, Director of Development
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director
Yvette Strachan, Executive Assistant
Anna Evenhouse, PTO Co-Chair

Charles Guadagnolo, Treasurer of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

Development Committee

Mark Crusante

Mr. Crusante updated the board on the research done regarding which district to select for our replication application. District 27 emerged as the location that most closely met the criteria established at the Strategic Planning Meeting. There is a clear need for an additional school since the existing schools are overcrowded, and there are no other charters on the mainland portion of the district. The demographics are such that the population is both ethnically and socio-economically diverse, with a large proportion of economically disadvantaged families. In addition, the political climate is positive, and we have been invited to open a school there by local political representatives.

Mr. Crusante requested the input of three Board members to review the full application when it is prepared. He intends to circulate the proposal in sections in late February through early March. The attendees agreed that the best reviewers, based on their professional experience would be Jeanette Betancourt, Rich Bogle and Melissa Chin. The Board also asked Sarah Espanol to review the proposal from the perspective of her Special Education expertise. Mr. Crusante forecasted that, assuming our proposal is successful, at least three to four board members would need to be available for an interview in the Spring.

The working group formed to study the legal structure of a CMO vs. an Education Corporation reported their recommendation that we proceed with plans to propose an Education Corporation in our application. The CMO structure would create unneeded complexity since it requires the creation of three separate entities, each with their own Board, whereas the Education Corporation model would allow us to function as a whole with a single Board to ensure unified administrative and financial management, consistency, and the application of our experience with OWN I. The working group clarified that while Finance and Administration would be merged under an Education Corporation, each school would have its own separate accountability plan. The group recognized that this means we will not be eligible for a grant from the Charter Growth Fund but stated that it does not make sense to apply for a grant for something that does not serve our needs.

Upon motions duly made, seconded and carried, the Trustees:

RESOLVED to approve the selection of District 27 for our replication application pending any inputs from our Board Chair who was unable to be present at the meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation of the working group to structure our replication proposal as an Education Corporation.

Education Committee

Sarah Espanol

Ms. Espanol re-introduced the subject of Integrated Co-Teaching (or Collaborative Co-Teaching) as an alternative approach for our Special Education students in which a SPED teacher is paired with a General Education teacher in an inclusive classroom. She noted that this approach has the advantage of reducing stigma by addressing learning needs in a classroom instead of pulling students out for special services as we currently do. Regardless of which approach we choose, our program needs to be driven by IEP mandates in order to meet student needs.

Ms. Espanol and Special Education Director, Ms. Greco engaged the Board in substantive review of the internal and external implementation challenges and constraints ranging from team teaching, parental buy-in, economic feasibility, scheduling, quality assurance, etc. On balance, however, they believe that this would be a good shift for OWN that would demonstrate our commitment to our special education population, and recommend we pilot the program next year. They are still debating what grades to launch the program with as they consider student need and where it could have the most impact.

PTO

Anna Evenhouse

Ms. Evenhouse stated that the Kaiju Big Battel Spectacle fundraiser was great fun and that students joined in the audience participation activities. She also reported that the Read-a-thon raised a whopping \$8,241!

Members of the PTO are organizing to help at the Elementary and Middle School Open Houses. She also confirmed that the PTO is bringing back Free Art Saturdays. They have some volunteer teachers and are seeking additional volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees