

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Our World Neighborhood Charter School  
December 18, 2012  
7:00pm-9:00pm

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Our World Neighborhood Charter School was held on Tuesday, December 18, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Elementary School of Our World Neighborhood Charter School (36-12 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Astoria, NY 11103).

**The Trustees Present were:**

Jeanette Betancourt, President  
Steve Solinsky, Vice President and Treasurer  
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary  
Mary Bogle  
Melissa Chin

**Also present were:**

Brian Ferguson, Executive Director  
Abimbola Disu Olaya, Vice Principal  
Mark Crusante, Development Director  
Lucille Ranchor, Admissions Coordinator  
Jamey Greco, Special Education Director  
Jayme Pabon, Teacher  
Sarah Espanol, PTO Co-Chair

Jeanette Betancourt, President of OWNCS Board of Trustees, chaired the meeting.

**Director's Report - Brian Ferguson**

**Safety & Security**

In light of the recent Sandy Hook tragedy, the school is engaged in a thorough review of its security protocols. The administration has set up a meeting with its security company to review the safety plan.

As a first step, it is planning an intruder drill at the Elementary School; this is something that the Middle School already does. In the past, parents sometimes misunderstood these drills, and at the elementary school, students can be upset by them. However, given recent events, the administration feels it's important to proceed.

The front door of the school will be replaced and electronic ID cards will be issued. The security guard at the front door will continue to request ID from visitors. It's important to note that the Department of Education does not allow doors to be locked from the inside for fear of students locking themselves into the room.

Everyone agreed with the approach being taken to protect the students and school community and of the administration's express intent to remind teachers of the current protocols and to provide them with support.

### **Joint Finance & Audit Committee Report - Steven Solinsky**

#### **Special Audit**

The Audit Committee has requested that our auditors conduct a special review of MetroCard distribution to staff and accounting. The Committee has agreed on a protocol for the review. The Committee also hopes to explore more efficient alternatives to manual distribution.

#### **General Business**

The Business Offices has provided all relevant documents to the consultant selected to update our finance manual.

### **Facilities Committee Report - Brian Ferguson**

The Executive Director expressed his appreciation for members of the project team who prepared the response to the RFP issued by the EDC, in particular Florence Adu and the architectural firm Sage & Coombe. The proposal is being printed for submission. We expect to be invited to a meeting with EDC to present the proposal. A preparation session to review the highlights of the proposal will be scheduled ahead of time.

Overall it is felt that the proposal is strong, sensible, realistic and manageable. The new building proposed would increase the value of the property. Should it be approved we would need to flesh out some final details of design, and develop a communications plan about the juggling of space, timelines, safety during construction, etc. We would also try to get involved with an EDC sponsored architecture curriculum program designed for public schools.

### **Board of Trustees Business - Jeanette Betancourt**

#### **Strategic Plan**

The President has incorporated comments from Trustees and is handing the final document over to the Executive Director for next steps.

#### **Open Meetings**

The President reminded us once again that we need to publicly post our agenda. She is requesting bullet points from all Committee Chairs one week before each monthly meeting.

## **Director's Report - Brian Ferguson**

### **APPR and PICCS**

The first round of teacher observations/evaluations has been completed. Now the evaluators need to fill in spreadsheets that connect each student to each teacher. As required, the administration has added numbers to the ratings this year. It has made every effort to communicate this very clearly to the staff.

The faculty is already engaged in Professional Learning Communities, holding grade level meetings with a leader/facilitator where they get help from one another with lesson plans and/or student issues that may arise, though it's felt these meetings could benefit from being somewhat more formally structured and documented to better demonstrate what's being achieved. The Executive Director explained some of the recommended protocols for problem solving and creating solutions to be used at these meetings.

Another option available to teachers is that they can bring in a lesson plan that they think is strong and share it with their peers in a formal structure in which the group assesses the plan against a rubric. If approved by their peers, the plan can be posted and shared, and the teacher can receive a monetary incentive.

The teachers are also working on establishing Student Learning Outcomes. They are expected to review performance data and set honest, realistic targets for reaching the learning targets, and to craft plans to address them.

Since students are not tested in the subjects taught by the Specials teachers, the administration is working with them to connect their curricula, and their Student Learning Outcomes with test results for one of the core subjects.

### **Free and Reduced Lunch Applications**

According to the data received to date the school has approximately 55% of its student body receiving free lunch, and 71% receives free or reduced priced lunch. However, we are still missing applications from 80 families. The administration is reviewing the process for how these forms are collected, as sometimes parents report they were sent in but went missing. It seems they may be coming in via too many different avenues.

### **Testing**

The Administration has decided to revert to administering Terra Nova tests to the younger grades in the spring only. Going forward they will only test students who are new the school in the fall.

## **Education Committee Report - Melissa Chin**

The Committee is preparing teacher surveys. It is adapting the North Carolina version, and since it has used parts of this version in the past, the Committee will have some base line data to compare the results to.

## **Development Committee Report - Mark Crusante**

Planning for Advocacy Day in Albany on February 5 is under way. There will be a training session on January 12

OWN is preparing an application for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant. Elements to be highlighted in the application include our range of after school programs including academic support programs, and connecting our programs to student learning outcomes, suggested additional programs for adult literacy, STEM programs, and arts education. The application will also seek to leverage our existing partnerships with groups such as the NYJTL that runs an after school program at the Elementary School.

## **Faculty Report – Jayme Pabon**

- There was an excellent turn out at the Father's Breakfast
- The student government is preparing for Advocacy Day as well as toy, coat and book drives
- The football team was undefeated this season and won the championship
- The boys basketball team is off to a strong start, winning its first two games
- The school is working with the SUNY-Urban partnership to select student teachers from rural campuses seeking an urban experience. They have found this program produces good applicants for the jobs.
- There was a faculty party last Friday

## **PTO Report – Sarah Espanol**

- The Talent Show was a lot of fun – very well done. There are pictures posted on the school FaceBook page.
- Family Nights are being planned for different grade levels
- Donations for victims of Hurricane Sandy have been collected – both for the general public and for individual staff affected by the storm.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Maura Fitzgerald, Secretary, OWNCS Board of Trustees