

THE ETHICAL COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL OF JERSEY CITY  
95 BROADWAY  
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07306

**PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

December 18, 2010

**NOTICE OF MONTHLY MEETING**

A monthly public meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Ethical Community Charter School was held on Saturday, December 18, 2010 at Ethical Community Charter School – 95 Broadway, Jersey City, NJ 07306. The Board met in open session.

**NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT ANNOUNCEMENT**

“Pursuant to Section 4 of the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was advertised and posted.”

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Howard Radest, Board Chairperson, at 9:40am.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Roll call was taken, and the following (voting) Board Members were present:

- Howard Radest
- Edward Goodall
- Fred Miller
- Funmilayo Brown
- Nicole Stratemeier

The following (non-voting) Board Members were present:

- Marta Bergamini, Principal
- Nick Puzo, School Business Administrator
- Jean DeSimone, Faculty Representative
- Jessica Adamo, Board Clerk

The following Board Members were absent:

- Ann Wallace
- Elizabeth Phillips Lorenzo
- Hiral Patel

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the November 20, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.

Voice vote: Aye – 5 Abstain – 0 Nay – 0 Absent – 3

## **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

### **Letter Regarding Funding**

Dr. Radest read a letter drafted by Dr. Wallace to the Board that will be circulated to parents requesting their signatures, and then sent to Mayor Healy and Governor Christie. The letter explains the current status of the budget, and demonstrates the dire need for increased funding. Board Members agreed that it is now necessary for this information to be disclosed to parents in an effort to obtain their support in contacting New Jersey politicians.

The movement to disseminate this letter to parents was approved unanimously, as moved by Mr. Goodall, and seconded by Mr. Miller.

Voice vote: Aye – 5 Abstain – 0 Nay – 0 Absent – 3

### **Board Training**

Dr. Radest mentioned that the required Board training session recently took place, which he and Mr. Miller attended. They noted that the training was geared more toward public school Boards, rather than charter school Boards. Dr. Radest explained that complete board training consists of a series of three sections to be completed in the first three-year term: the first session in-person, and the following two sessions can be taken in person or via distance learning (i.e. online).

### **Board Resignations**

Dr. Radest recommended that Hiral Patel be considered to have resigned from the TECCS Board of Trustees due to more than three consecutive absences without excuse as provided by the TECCS by-laws. Dr. Radest also announced that Elizabeth Phillips Lorenzo has submitted her resignation from the Board. Therefore, Dr. Radest requested the Board's approval to accept both Ms. Patel's and Ms. Phillips Lorenzo's resignations, and both were approved unanimously.

### **Board Nominees**

Dr. Radest explained that there are fifteen slots for voting members on the TECCS Board of Trustees, but only six slots are currently filled. Recruitment for additional members is imperative at this time. Several Board Members noted that they will follow up on leads they currently have. Dr. Radest stressed the need for diversity on the Board and noted the preferred qualifications of candidates, including being active in the community, being savvy with finding and securing external funding, and/or having a professional career (i.e. attorney, realtor, etc.).

### **The Sophie Case**

A list of "lessons learned" from this incident, as well as a list of recommendations for any future situations similar to this one, will be created and disseminated to the Board, to parents, and to the community. Mr. Miller has put a summary together, and will be leading the effort to gather this additional information with assistance from any volunteers who are encouraged to contact him to offer their help.

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Ms. Bergamini provided information about current enrollment numbers (currently at 158 students), the recent visit by Schomburg Charter School to TECCS, and the \$500 staff award recently given to Danielle Blakely through AAE. She also raised a discussion regarding the proper Board procedures for public participation during a public Board Meeting. A variety of guidelines were discussed, including the protocol for roll call, formally opening and closing public participation, and the amount of time that each guest is allotted to speak. Mr. Puzo will develop a list of recommendations, with assistance from Dr. Radest and Ms. Bergamini, to be presented at the January meeting.

The following resolutions were approved unanimously, as moved by Dr. Radest, and seconded by Ms. Brown:

- Approval to hire Judith Schteingart as a School Psychologist on an “as needed” basis at a rate of \$45/hour
- Approval to hire Roseangela Baca as a Substitute Teacher
- Approval to hire Allison Mintz as a Substitute Teacher
- Approval to hire Willa Goldthwaite for the After-School Program

Voice vote: Aye – 5 Abstain – 0 Nay – 0 Absent – 3

Ms. DeSimone (the Faculty Representative) provided an update about the School Leadership Team, and discussed the current happenings of the Team, including the new process for gaining feedback; the school discipline policy; the state’s trial program for portfolio assessment; and the discussion that took place at the recent Curriculum Committee meeting regarding K-8 curriculum. She added that the next Curriculum Committee meeting will take place in January.

### **SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Puzo provided the most recent Bill List, Check Register, Bank Reconciliation Statement, list of purchase orders, and a status update for the annual audit report.

Mr. Puzo gave an update on employee health benefits, noting the different proposals currently open to TECCS. He suggested that insurance agents be brought in to discuss the options of their respective plans with faculty and staff at a special staff meeting as soon as possible. Components of these plans to be discussed should include the policies for enrollment dates for spouses, dependents, and new hires; how resignation affects coverage; and the guidelines pertaining to marriage, death, or a new baby. Mr. Puzo will obtain a quote for the “donut hole” option that has been presented, and will aim for a start date of February 1, 2011 for the new policy.

The movement to proceed with plans for new health insurance benefits as discussed was approved unanimously, as moved by Ms. Brown, and seconded by Ms. Stratemeier.

Voice vote: Aye – 5 Abstain – 0 Nay – 0 Absent – 3

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **Fundraising**

Ms. Brown's fundraising event has been rescheduled for January 29, 2011. Any additional details will be given at the next Board Meeting.

Ms. Bergamini mentioned that one of the parents has volunteered to do grant-writing for the school, and has already begun searching for funding opportunities.

Mr. Miller reported that the Goldman Sachs Foundation that may be able to assist with funding for TECCS, suggesting that the school, along with other Jersey City charter schools, reach out to the Foundation for assistance.

Ms. Brown offered to accept the leadership of major fundraising activities, e.g. foundations, other grant opportunities, major gifts, etc. She noted that someone will have to replace her on the Curriculum Committee so that she may focus her efforts on long-term fundraising. FSA will continue to be responsible for regular parent-oriented fundraising activities, e.g. special events, book fairs, etc. Ms. Brown will present a preliminary set of recommendations to the Board at the February meeting.

### **Strategic Planning**

Ms. Brown presented the first draft of the revised Mission Statement for TECCS. After review by the Board and several revisions, the updated Mission Statement reads – *We provide our students with an education that integrates academic skills, moral instruction, and service to create a community that demonstrates an effective and inspiring model.* The statement remains open to further revisions and suggestions as needed.

Mr. Miller noted that the report for the curriculum piece of the Strategic Plan will be released in January 2011, while the report for the charter/facilities piece of the Strategic Plan will be released in February 2011.

### **FSA**

Mr. Miller gave a summary of all current FSA events, including the recent pancake breakfast; the upcoming multicultural event; the current collection of money for the teacher holiday fund; the upcoming Winterfest event; and the status of the fundraising efforts through Amazon.com (currently at approximately \$400 so far).

### **Facilities**

Ms. Bergamini spoke about the problem with the heat in the school, and mentioned that she is working with Father Michael to resolve it. She also reported that the water heater was recently replaced, so the school now has hot water.

### **Technology**

Ms. Bergamini spoke about the admissions lottery that will take place on January 19, 2011. There are currently 129 applications for the 40 kindergarten slots. The PowerSchool software program will be utilized to manage the data and applications. Suggestions were given as to who should draw the numbers for the lottery, and most notably, Mayor Healy's name was mentioned. All remaining details will be finalized in January before the drawing.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Next Board Meeting**

The next Board of Trustees Meeting was scheduled as follows –

Date: Saturday, January 22, 2011

Time: 9:30am

Location: Ethical Community Charter School at 95 Broadway, Jersey City, NJ

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was approved unanimously, as moved by Mr. Goodall, and seconded by Ms. Stratemeier. The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

Voice vote: Aye – 5 Abstain – 0 Nay – 0 Absent – 3