

**Elmwood Village Charter Schools  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, August 15, 2018  
Meeting Site: Hertel Campus**

**Trustees Present:** Mimi Barnes Coppola; Lacoie Brumfield; Kathy Franklin-Adams; Evelyn Kerney; Pamela Pollock; Matthew Ryan; Elizabeth Santacrose; Jaime Smith

**Trustees Excused:** Marguerite Battaglia; Jennifer Bernacki-Smith; Matthew Moscati

**Trustees Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Danielle Bruno, Director EVCS Days Park; Kathy Jamil, Director EVCS Hertel; Anne Wechsler, EVCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Lisa Kirisits of Kirisits and Associates, EVCS Accountants

**CALL TO ORDER**

Board Chair, Liz Santacrose, called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. She presented the agenda. There were two additions: requests to Opt Out of Curriculum, and resignation of Dance Teacher, Kathy Skora.

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Elmwood Village Charter Schools Board of Trustees Meeting held on July 25, 2018, were presented. **Matt Ryan moved and Liz Santacrose seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. Approved unanimously.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT and FINANCIALS**

Lisa Kirisits gave the financial report in Matt Moscati's absence. She reported total assets of \$14,897,871.40 which she considered to be a "healthy balance". Nearly \$3,000,000 of that amount is cash. Her office does not provide a written narrative during the summer months, as there are no school events to discuss.

A small balance remains in the account for the original entity. That cash is being held in reserve to pay for contributions to the NY State Teachers' Retirement System. Once those contributions are complete, the remaining funds will revert to the current EVCS account.

Last week it was announced that an increase in Title II Funds had been an error. Corrections will be deducted from future allocations over the next five years. Title II Funds are funds allocated to pay for professional development.

Lisa noted that the annual financial audit is scheduled to begin on September 4, 2018. Lumsden-McCormick is expected to report to the Board at the October meeting.

**Pam moved and Mimi seconded that the financial report be accepted. Approved unanimously.**

**OPERATIONS UPDATE**

Liz Evans, EVCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction, was unable to attend this evening. Her report was presented by Danielle Bruno and Kathy Jamil.

**Facilities:**

**Days Park** – Building is on track for teachers to return August 20<sup>th</sup>.

Space is at a premium, and many employees will be sharing office space, but the Space Planning Working Group met 8/1/18 and devised a plan to document shortages, plan for programming needs, estimate needed space and devise a plan to move forward.

**Hertel** – Building has been cleaned and repairs made. An assessment of the boiler system is being undertaken to get recommendations on a long-term plan for repair/replacement to ensure systems remain continuously operational.

Fire alarm system needed electrical repairs, which were made, and the system is being reinspected 8/16. Final fire inspection will be performed after that and the Certificate of Occupancy will be issued. EVCS Hertel requires a yearly C of O, while Days Park has a permanent one.

United Way Day of Caring – today, 8/15/18. We had 8 volunteers from the Merchants Insurance Group scrape, prep and paint the former priest's residence that's front and center when driving up to the building. It looks great!!

**Technology: Days Park** –

New Firewall purchased with Erate funds (which covers 80% of technology equipment for broadband/networking). Decision was made to upgrade to have more control over filtering (which is required by law) as well as improved reporting capabilities.

New Chromebook monitoring program will be implemented for middle school classes. This will help faculty ensure that students are on track while using school technology.

New PA system is being installed throughout the building. It was funded through the annual appeal, and will increase safety and security by amplifying messages in classrooms, as well as common areas like hallways, gym, cafeteria, and outdoors in cases of emergency.

**Hertel** – New computers, iPads and Chromebooks were added for new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and new laptops were purchased for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers.

**Shared** – Student information was exported from EVCS’s new lottery/re-enrollment system SchoolMint into PowerSchool (the student information database.) The process was not as smooth as anticipated, and much information will have to be transferred by hand. Unless better transfer procedures are set up in the future, we are exploring the possibility of having families update their information directly in PowerSchool.

**Other:**

Liz Evans is attending a meeting tonight called by Nardin to include community groups, especially schools in the immediate area, in the development of their outdoor sports facilities, which will be located adjacent to their indoor athletic facilities at 1803 Elmwood Avenue near Hertel and Elmwood.

DIRECTORS’ REPORTS

Danielle Bruno gave the Director’s Report for the Days Park Campus.

**Personnel**

Retirement

Cathy Skora, EVCS’s founding Dance teacher, has retired from EVCS with 12 years of service. Her contributions to the school have been numerous. Cathy initiated a partnership between EVCS and the New York State Council on the Arts. She was instrumental in creating the partnerships between EVCS and the Theater of Youth and with Babeville. She branded “Village Art Works” as a way of communicating arts integration efforts and programming to the school community. Cathy created a comprehensive dance curriculum, organized community arts events and performances, and relentlessly advocated for the importance of arts education for all students. We wish Cathy the very best in her retirement, and thank her for her years of service to our students and our school. **Liz Santacrose moved and Mimi seconded that the EVCS Board of Trustees thank and officially recognize Cathy Skora for her years of outstanding service to the school. Approved unanimously.**

## Personnel Actions

Danielle requested Board approval of the following hires:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Education/Credentials</u>
Allison Stathius	Assistant Teacher	B.A. English and Education - Monmouth University M.A. Literacy - Niagara University (currently) Elementary Education (New Jersey Certification)
Anthony Martorana	Special Education Teacher	B.S. Education - Buffalo State College; M.S. Special Education - Buffalo State College (currently) Childhood Education (1-6) SWD 1-6 (pending) SWD 7-12 (pending)

**Matt Ryan moved and Jaime seconded that the proposed individuals be approved for hire. Approved unanimously.**

## Academics

As of Today, data from the NYS Assessments has not been reported by the state. The district data consultant from Erie 1 BOCES reported that the data is expected some time in September. The State Education Department released this statement in a recent memo:

In June 2017, the Board of Regents voted to reduce the number of sessions of the grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests from three sessions each to two. This reduction was first realized with the assessments administered in spring 2018. In order to maintain valid and reliable measurement of student achievement on the New York State Learning Standards, it was necessary to engage NYS educators certified in the content area to review the performance standards. The review took place over the summer. Given the additional analyses necessary both leading up to and following this educator review, the release of results will be delayed to late September.

## Professional Development

Professional Development for teachers begins on August 20, 2017. This year the Days Park Staff will participate in the full Responsive Classroom Institute, thanks to support from the Knox Foundation.

2018-2019 School Year

This year, we celebrate a milestone in the history of our fine school - **EVCS Days Park has reached its final year of expansion.** We now serve a total 450 students in the city of Buffalo and Western New York. With the support of our Board of Trustees, our families, our staff, and our community, we proudly continue to realize the vision of our founders.

Thanks to the support we receive, EVCS continues to expand in ways that nurture the whole child. For the 2018-2019 school year, we have been able to:

- Grow our middle school core academic team to full capacity and include opportunities for advanced math coursework
- Offer a **salad bar**\* as part of our school nutrition program
- Install a school-wide **PA system**\* for communication and school safety
- Receive support from the behavior intervention coach
- Expand our related services team in the areas of Speech-Language and Occupational therapy
- Expand our extra curricular offerings to include Soccer and Theater

\*Made possible thanks to our 2018 Annual Appeal

Calendar Notes

Thursday, August 30 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	Welcome Back to school Ice Cream Social EVCS Days Park Cafeteria and Playground
Monday, September 3	Labor Day Holiday
Tuesday, September 4	First Day of School
Tuesday, September 11 6:00 PM	First Community Association Meeting EVCS Days Park Library
Thursday, September 13 5:30 PM - 7:15 PM	Meet the Teacher Night EVCS Days Park Campus
Friday, September 21	12:30 PM Early Dismissal

Kath Jamil gave the Director's Report for the Hertel Campus.

## Personnel

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Education/Credentials</u>
Helen Danciu	1st Gr. Teacher	MS Childhood Elementary Education Certified Elem. 1-6
Matthew Lamb	3rd Gr. Asst. Teacher	MS Elementary Education
Gina Bergman	Spanish Teacher (part-time)	MS Special Education Certified Spanish 7-9; Childhood Ed 1-6; SPED PK-12
Katherine Bernys	1st Gr. Asst. Teacher	MS Childhood Education Certification 1-6
Alyssa Darrow (shared)	Dance Teacher	Bachelors Fine Arts - Dance BA Kinesiology
Tracy Thornton	Nurse	BS Nursing

**Matt Ryan moved and Liz Santacrose seconded that the proposed hires be approved. Approved unanimously.**

## Position Change

Madison Rainey was hired last month as the K SPED teacher. She resigned 8-14-18 for a position with another district. We are currently interviewing for the position.

## Code of Conduct

Andrew Freedman was asked to review the current Code of Conduct. He recommended that EVCS change the suspension policy for long-term suspensions to align with federal laws rather than with NYS laws. He recommended this change to charter schools to alleviate the frequency of needing hearings to take place with a hearing officer should the suspension exceed five (5) days. The federal law allows short-term suspensions to be defined as ten (10) days or less. Anything beyond ten (10) days would be considered a long-term suspension. Specific recommendations include:

-Under Short-Term Suspensions; “A short-term suspension is an out-of-school suspension for **ten days** or fewer.”

-Change any section related to parent notification from “**must**” to “**will**”. For example, changing the current: *the student and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) must be given a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension with whoever was involved in imposing the suspension*” to the recommendation: “*the student*

*and his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) will be provided a reasonable opportunity for an informal conference regarding such suspension.*

*-Under DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) adding: EVCS also prohibits off-campus conduct that creates, or would foreseeably create, a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment or where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.*

**Mimi moved and Pam seconded that the proposed changes to the code of conduct be approved. Approved unanimously.**

#### Proposed Change to the Attendance Policy

Kathy noted that under the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) regulations on chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more days of school), schools are now being evaluated partially on the students' attendance. Hence, the EVCS policy - "Ten (10) unexcused tardy days will be equivalent to one (1) day of absence" is hurting the school. Kathy suggested that this policy be changed. She noted that efforts to improve the tardiness will continue with more proactive communication with parents and a new attendance tracking plan.

#### Calendar Notes

Thursday, August 23	Family Welcome Picnic
5:30 PM	
Wednesday, August 29	Parent Orientation
5:30 PM	
Tuesday, September 4	First Day of School
Thursday, September 13	Meet the Teacher Night

#### REQUESTS TO OPT OUT OF CURRICULUM

Anne Wechsler reported that the school has had a number of requests from parents for their children to be excused from various aspects of the curriculum. She proposed the following statement to be included in the EVCS Parent Handbook:

It is the responsibility of each charter school to develop curricula based on the NYS Learning Standards, select textbooks, and instructional materials, develop pacing charts for learning (scope and sequence), and provide professional development for staff to ensure that all students have access to instruction leading to attainment of these learning standards.

When it comes to the academic curriculum a school chooses to teach its children, schools have broad latitude to determine appropriate instruction. EVCS makes decisions and takes particular actions to impart a broad spectrum of views to its students. Courts have recognized that if all parents had a fundamental Constitutional right to dictate individually what schools teach their children, the schools would be forced to cater the curriculum for each student whose parents had a genuine moral disagreement with the school's choice of subject matter. The

Constitution does not impose such a burden on educational systems.

“While parents may want extensive curriculum opt-out rights, federal Case law makes it clear that parents have no constitutional right to excuse their children from any part of public school curricula.”

EVCS was founded on the principles of diversity, with the express intention to form an inclusive community where all different types of students feel welcome and valued. To that end, EVCS strives to educate students about the diversity of people and ideas that exist in our society and give them access to information that will broaden their perspective to the world around them. When children learn about other cultures, it helps them to understand the world. They begin to understand how other people live, their traditions and values, religions and languages. They learn to appreciate the differences and similarities in how we and others live.

Time spent understanding and appreciating differences benefits everyone. It is equally important to stress the many things we have in common. Research shows that when students’ cultures are understood and appreciated by teachers, they do better in school. They feel more accepted and a part of the school community.

Therefore, EVCS does not entertain requests to opt out of curriculum. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

This policy will be printed in the EVCS Parent Handbook and will be available on the Website.

**Jaime moved and Kathy Franklin-Adams seconded that the Board empower Anne to make the necessary revisions to the EVCS Parent Handbook and circulate the final version. Approved unanimously.**

#### UPDATES ON AD HOC COMMITTEES

All new Ad Hoc Committees (by Laws; Space Planning; and Academic Excellence) have met. Goals have been set and future meetings will be scheduled. Committee notes are available under separate cover.

#### CHARTER BOARD PARTNERS

The link to the Charter Board Partners Individual Member Survey is now available. Many members have already completed it. Others are urged to do so as soon as possible.

#### COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Jaime noted that the Days Park C.A. has not met over the summer. There is no report.

Lacole reported that the Hertel C.A. has been meeting. The group raised \$10,275.06 over the past year. They have budgeted as follows:

40%	Events
35%	Instructional materials
15%	Teacher support
10%	Reserve funds

The money will be kept in the school bank account. Teachers can request money as the need arises. The Hertel CA will elect new officers at the August meeting.



#### ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEW BUSINESS

It was announced that the new Emergency Exit Plan for Days Park had been completed. The plan basically followed the guidelines outlined in the Hertel plan but uses exits and locations specific to the Days Park Campus. **Matt Ryan moved and Mimi seconded that the Days Park Emergency Exit Plan be approved. Approved unanimously.**

Kathy Franklin Adams commended and thanked the Administrative Team for the time and effort they put in to participate in the in the two-week RELAY Training Program over the summer. The Board unanimously concurred.

Matt Ryan and Liz Evans worked together on the graffiti in the parking lot at the Elmwood property. They contacted the owner, Sam Savarino, and made sure the property was cleaned to everyone's satisfaction.

**Liz Santacrose moved and Matt Ryan seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Pamela Pollock**

Future meetings: Sept. 19, 2018; Oct. 17, 2018; Nov. 14, 2018; Dec. 19, 2018; Jan. 16, 2019; Feb. 13, 2019; Mar. 20, 2019; April 17, 2019; May 15, 2019; June 12, 2019; July 17, 2019.  
All meetings begin at 6:00 PM.

