

**The Elmwood Village Charter School**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 15, 2015**

**Trustees Present:** Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Marguerite Battaglia, Jennifer Bernacki-Smith, Roy Clay, Kathy Franklin-Adams, Ingrid Knight, Andrew Mouw, Pamela Pollock, Matt Ryan, Natalie Stoyanoff

**Trustees Excused:** None

**Trustees Absent:** None

**Others Present:** John Sheffield, EVCS Director; Liz Evans, EVCS Operations Manager

Mimi Barnes-Coppola called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

1. Mimi presented the agenda for the meeting. There were no changes. Approved.
2. Minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on March 18, 2015, were presented. **Matt moved and Kathy seconded that the minutes be accepted. Approved unanimously.**
3. FINANCIAL REPORT

Andrew presented the financial report for the eight months ended February 28, 2015. For that period EVCS showed an increase in net assets of \$443,736 vs. a budgeted decrease in net assets of \$188,580. The result was a favorable variance of approximately \$632,316. A significant portion of this variance was attributed to the SSF grant monies related to the building expansion. The current ratio of the school's asset to liabilities was approximately 2.3 to 1. A ratio in excess of 2 to 1 is considered relatively good. Board members expressed confusion about several lines of the EVCS budget. Andrew will ask the accountant for a better breakdown. **Jenn moved and Marguerite seconded that the financial report be accepted. Approved unanimously.**

4. PROPOSED 403(b) PLAN

On behalf of the Board, Matt has been investigating the feasibility of instituting a 403(b) retirement program for non-instructional EVCS employees. He reported that the process has been set up and is ready to begin, contingent on BOT approval. He added that \$153,000 has been set aside to match employee contributions up to 4 percent. There was some discussion. Matt agreed to check further into details of the "last day rule". **Jenn moved and Natalie seconded that EVCS institute the 403(b) retirement program for eligible non-instructional employees, as described, at the end of the next fiscal year. Approved unanimously.**

5. RENEWAL AND REPLICATION

-Mimi affirmed that the New York State Board of Regents unanimously voted to grant EVCS a full five-year Charter renewal. It is not known exactly what effect last month's resolution regarding recruitment and retention had on that decision. The Board expressed appreciation to Ingrid for reaching out to new regent, Catherine Collins, and to assembly-woman, Crystal Peoples-Stokes. Both will be invited to visit EVCS in the near future.

-Replication conversations will resume. Liz has had one conversation with the SUNY Charter School institute, the other Charter School authorizer. She will continue her investigation of matters concerning replication. The replication task force will meet soon.

6. POTENTIAL BOARD VACANCIES

Natalie and Andrew are serving terms which are due to expire in June. Natalie has agreed to serve a second term. Andrew finds that the responsibilities of business and new fatherhood prevent his serving another term. The nominating committee will be looking for a new board member who

can assume his role as treasurer. Roy's term as parent representative to the board will also expire in June. As the parent representative is limited to a single term, the Community Association has already requested applications from the parent body to fill this position.

## 7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### Academics

-Two students officially refused to take the New York State Assessment, and there was one medical exemption. That gave EVCS a "refusal rate" of 1%, and a total "not tested" rate of 1.5%.

It was projected that EVCS would have a 98.5% participation rate which would be above the required 95%. John credited the following: teachers helping students to develop a positive view of assessments; teachers and administrators creating a positive environment around testing; individual meetings with parents who indicated that they were opting their children out of state testing; and his letter to parents putting the issue of state testing into perspective. Overall, students approached the state assessments with confidence.

-Scoring of state assessments with schools from Rochester, Syracuse and Buffalo will take place in Rochester. EVCS teachers will travel to Rochester for scoring on April 20, 22, 28, 29, 30 and May 6.

-The leadership team is proposing removing the DIBELS assessment from the battery of assessments for screening and bench-marking students. After using STAR Early Literacy and STAR Reading for the last few years, the team has become confident with the accuracy of the data these assessments provide. The DIBELS does not give significantly different information and it is very time-consuming to administer, as it must be administered one-on-one. In situations where more information is necessary for diagnostic purposes, more useful data would be derived from using tools targeted toward specific areas of need for each individual student (e.g. a phonics inventory, the Qualitative Reading Inventory, etc.). **Ingrid moved and Kathy seconded that the DIBELS be suspended from the battery of assessments routinely used for screening and bench-marking students at EVCS. Approved unanimously.**

### Lottery

The lottery was held on Thursday, April 2, 2015. The total number of applications was 541.

Breakdown was as follows:

232 applications for kindergarten; 18 siblings; 32 seats to be filled from general lottery

309 applications for grades 1-8

541 total applications received for all grades

Names were drawn by Olivia Merisola, an employee of the Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo, who had no vested interest in the outcome of the lottery. Melanie Lesswing, a teacher at Elmwood Village Charter School; Anne Landrigan, Special Services Coordinator; and Lea Gladys, Office Manager, verified accuracy. Approximately 100 parents attended the public lottery. John expressed appreciation to Lea Gladys for efficiency and for, once again, running a flawless lottery.

### Recruitment

-As a means of assessing recruitment efforts, Parents of new students will be asked to voluntarily disclose whether or not their children may be eligible for free or reduced price lunch. This will give us an indication of the percentage of economically disadvantaged students entering the school before the official free or reduced lunch application is submitted in the fall.

-In the previous discussion of recruitment efforts and the cost already associated with recruitment of target populations, John failed to mention that the school currently spends \$2000 annually on advertisements that emphasize special education and ESL services at EVCS.

-Liz plans to meet with the Oshei Foundation in hopes of gaining clarification regarding Buffalo's child poverty statistics.

### Title I Audit

EVCS has been selected for a Title I desk audit for the 2013-2014 school year, with the possibility of a follow-up on-site audit. John and Mrs. Landrigan have been compiling the necessary documentation for the audit. The accountants are creating a required FS-10f long form (short form had been filed at the end of the 2013-2014 grant period). John engaged the services of Valerie Nolan, the consultant who assists EVCS with writing the Consolidated Application, to help.

### AmeriCorps

John has again applied for the AmeriCorps Grant, which provides cost sharing for AmeriCorps members serving in EVCS classrooms. Five members were requested. However, the grant is becoming increasingly competitive as more schools learn of the impact that this program has on student achievement.

### Director's Evaluation

-Due to John's busy schedule during the recent NY State Assessment period, he and Kathy Franklin-Adams have not yet met to discuss the Director's Annual Evaluation. A meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 5, 2015.

-Since John serves as both Principal and Director, a portion of his evaluation is pre-determined by the State, based on assessment data. Currently, 20% of the overall evaluation is based on state assessments and 20% on other locally selected measures (STAR). It is likely that the percentage of his evaluation based on state assessment will increase to 50%.

### Proposed Academic Calendar

-John distributed copies of the calendar proposed for the 2015-2016 school year. The year would begin on August 17, 2015, with two weeks of professional development for staff. Students would return to school on Tuesday, September 1, and finish the year on Thursday, June 23, 2016.

**Marguerite moved and Jenn seconded that the proposed academic calendar for 2015-2016 be adopted. Approved unanimously.**

-John also discussed the possibility of changes to this year's calendar to make up for days lost to unusually severe winter weather. Instruction was originally scheduled to end Wednesday, June 24. However, school could continue as late as June 30. Details of the changes are still under consideration and will be announced at a later date.

### Personnel

-John expressed concern that the rate of pay for staff at EVCS has barely kept up with inflation. In some cases (depending on when a teacher joined the staff), salaries have failed to keep up with the rate of inflation due to the number of years when staff received no increase in pay, or an increase that fell below the calculated cost of living increase (Bureau of Labor and Statistics).

-At EVCS the current median pay for full-time teachers is \$40,800. This falls below the median salary for even the lowest paying school district in WNY. It falls \$12,500 below the median salary for the median paying district. The average teacher salary at EVCS is \$41,086.

Breakdown of salary ranges for full-time teachers is as follows:

\$35,000 - \$ 40,000	36%
\$40,000 - \$42,000	36%
\$42,000 - \$45,000	14%
\$45,000 - \$48,000	14%

In comparison to other charter schools, a seven-year veteran teacher at South Buffalo Charter School earned \$50,168 in the 2012-2013 school year.

-EVCS is in a good position to give staff a pay increase this year because the NYSTR percentage

has dropped from 17.5% to 13.5% (4%), which is 5.5% lower than the percentage that was budgeted for the 2015-2016 school year.

-Unlike traditional public school districts and many charter schools, teachers at EVCS do not receive step raises. Therefore, they do not automatically receive either pay increases or cost of living adjustments.

-Potential cost of Pay raises to the school would be as follow:

2% raise approximately \$43,000

3% raise approximately \$65,000

-Given a 3% increase, the median teacher salary at EVCS would increase from \$40,800 to \$41,616; the average salary would increase from \$41,086 to \$42,322.

**Jenn moved and Natalie seconded that EVCS teachers be granted a 3% salary increase effective for the 2015-2016 school year. Approved.** Pam abstained.

#### Three Proposed Salary Adjustments

-John proposed that, prior to any percentage increase, one teacher's pay be raised by \$2000, from \$41,000 to \$43,000. She is a veteran teacher who lags behind peers with the same experience due to the year she returned to EVCS from a leave of absence. She is a teacher in excellent standing.

**Matt moved and Pam seconded this proposed salary adjustment. Approved unanimously.**

-John proposed to raise the pay of a second teacher \$3,000, from \$35,000 to 38,000, before any percentage increase. Due to budget constraints at the time of her initial employment, she is lagging significantly behind others with comparable experience. **Marguerite moved and Natalie seconded the second proposed salary increase. Approved unanimously.**

-John proposed that, prior to any percentage increase, the salary of the Academic Program Coordinator be increased from \$31,215 to \$40,000 to adjust for the increase in hours from the time the position was created in 2006. There was some discussion. **Kathy moved and Roy seconded that the salary for the Academic Program Coordinator be adjusted to \$40,000. Approved.** Matt opposed. Pam abstained.

#### 8. COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Ingrid reported that the Community Association is organizing for upcoming elections. Several officers have expressed willingness to remain in their positions. Parents interested in serving as C.A. representative to the Board of Trustees have been asked to submit resumes to the Nominating Committee.

Upcoming activities include a discussion of the "Opt Out" movement, a family rock climbing event, and the year end field day.

#### 9. NEW BUSINESS/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

-The Days Park Block Club will use the EVCS parking lot to raise funds by charging people to park their cars during the Allentown Art Festival. The CA will use the lot at the original Elmwood Avenue site for that purpose.

-Recent construction has been completed. Landscaping will be done as weather permits.

-Liz plans to schedule a meeting with the Oshei foundation to follow up statistics on actual child poverty in buffalo.

**Matt moved and Marguerite seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Pollock

FUTURE DATES:

-Meetings at 6:00 p.m.: May 13, 2015; June 17, 2015; July, 2015 no meeting; Aug. 19, 2015