

The Elmwood Village Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday December 16, 2015

Trustees Present: Mimi Barnes-Coppola, Jennifer Bernacki-Smith, Kathy Franklin-Adams, Ingrid Knight, Pamela Pollock, Matt Moscati, Matt Ryan, Natalie Stoyanoff

Trustees Excused: Marguerite Battaglia, Liz Santacrose

Trustees Absent: None

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

1. Mimi Barnes-Coppola called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. She presented the agenda for the meeting. There were no changes. Approved.

2. Minutes from the Board of Trustees meeting held on November 18, 2015 were presented.

Natalie moved and Matt Moscati seconded that the minutes be accepted. Approved unanimously.

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Matt Moscati reported that the financial statement for the month of October, 2015, arrived this afternoon. For the five months ended November 30, 2015, EVCS showed a decrease in net assets of approximately \$180,939 versus a budgeted decrease in net assets of approximately \$392,875. The result was a favorable variance of approximately \$211,936. John noted that the budget line for office supplies was still incorrect. He will be working with the accountants to correct the coding of certain office and classroom supplies in order to keep them on the appropriate budget lines. **Matt Ryan moved and Jen seconded that the financial report be accepted. Approved unanimously.**

4. REPORT ON PARENTAL CONCERN

Kathy moved and Matt Ryan seconded that the Board enter executive session to discuss a specific, confidential issue involving a student. Approved unanimously. The Board heard a detailed report regarding the management of the issue by the Director and a Committee of the Board. The matter was discussed. **Jen moved and Matt Ryan seconded that the Board exit executive session. Approved unanimously. Ingrid moved and Jen seconded that the Board approve the findings of the committee and the actions taken. Approved unanimously.**

5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Personnel

John proposed two personnel actions:

1. Health Insurance (as previously discussed)

-After reviewing many different health insurance plans offered by several providers, John recommended that EVCS switch from Blue Cross and Blue Shield to the Standard Platinum Plan offered by Independent Health. The increase in premiums will be 1% from the 2015 rate paid to Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

-He also recommended that the school continue to pay 100% of the premium for single employees, and 85% of the premiums for the various family plan options.

-In addition he recommended that EVCS continue the \$2000 buyout option for employees who elect to opt out of the school's health insurance plan.

2. Vacation-Day buyback

-In the Director's Contract there is a provision to allow the Director to buy back up to five

vacation days in a given year so as not to exceed the maximum allowed accrual of 20 days. John recommended that the provision be extended to all twelve-month employees.

-Proposed resolution: With the approval of the Director, twelve-month employees, who have accrued more than twelve vacation days, may, in any given year, sell a maximum of five days back to the school at the employees's current rate of pay.

Matt Ryan moved and Natalie seconded that all personnel actions be approved.

Approved. Pam abstained citing a potential conflict of interest..

Academics

1. On November 23, charter school leaders met with Dr. Cash, newly appointed superintendent of the Buffalo Public Schools. This was the first meeting of charter school leaders with a Buffalo Superintendent since the inception of charters. John expressed three concerns to Dr. Cash:

- The busing schedule that discriminates against students in charter schools
- The District-wide Emergency Plan that does not include charter schools
- The need to collaborate with community groups, religious organizations, healthcare organizations and healthcare providers to help parents better prepare their children for school and to help parents acquire the resources to help their children succeed in school

Topics raised by other charter school leaders included:

- Facilities
- Diversity in the teaching and administrative staffs and a unified recruitment effort
- The insufficient number of charter schools on the Eastside of Buffalo
- The need to work with institutions of higher learning to improve training of new teachers to work in urban schools.
- The desire to move beyond the historical adversarial relationship between the District and charter schools, and move toward a relationship of cooperation and sharing of best practices

2. On January 19, charter school leaders will be meeting with David Mauricio, Chief of Strategic Alignment for Superintendent Cash. The agenda includes the following topics:

- Collaborating to address special education needs, especially the establishment of self-contained classrooms in charter schools.
- Improving communication between Central Office and charter schools, especially in regards to special education testing and access to data.
- Collaborating to better address the needs of students with limited English proficiency, and to improve access to charter schools for this population of students.
- The issue of charter school students returning to the District either because of expulsions or parent choice.

John noted that this is the first time in his thirteen years in charter school leadership that leaders of the District have engaged charter schools in open dialogue and expressed an interest to work collaboratively to better address the needs of all students in the City of Buffalo. He was very pleased with Dr. Cash's willingness to include charter schools in his overall plan for improving the quality of education for all Buffalo students.

3. In October, during data management meetings, the results of the new interim assessments, along with data from STAR assessments, were used to assess which students were meeting standard and to identify gaps in learning. Teachers then used this data to plan re-teach activities and to make adjustments to instruction. Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings are now being used to compare the data from interim assessments between classrooms. The goal is to identify similarities and discrepancies in the data across both classrooms at each grade level. In

cases where students in both classrooms are struggling adjustments to the curriculum are made. When there is a weakness in one class only, methods of presenting the material and teacher collaboration are examined.

6. REPLICATION COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

The formal letter of intent to replicate EVCS at a second location has been submitted to the SUNY Charter School Institute. The school was notified that only two submissions were received from Buffalo. The other was a proposal for a high school. The Leadership Team is now working on preparing the formal application. Much of this material will be taken from the Charter renewal document. Jen and former Board member, Greta Masetti, have both offered to proofread the application prior to submission.

7. RE-BRANDING; CSI Board Training; Grants

-Liz and some BOT members met with Julian Montague to further discuss the logo design and colors. Some requested an alternative to the block design which will be forthcoming. Colors will be flexible.

-Liz announced that she can forward the power-point from the CSI Board Training. She raised several points of interest from the event:

a. The number required for a quorum is based on the total number of Board seats; not the number of seats currently filled.

b. There is considered to be a “collar of enrollment” for charter schools. The number of students must be within 20% under or over the target.

-EVCS has been approached by several foundations about applying for grants.

a. All six members of the Knox Foundation reached out to the school offering money for technology. EVCS plans to use the grant to purchase the Fast ForWord Program and five I-Pads for each K-2 classroom.

b. The Cullen Foundation has also scheduled a second visit at the school. This is a bell-weather educational consulting company which is looking at the role of charter schools.

8. COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Parent representative, Liz Santacrose was unable to attend this evening. Liz Evans read from her report:

-Fund Raising: There is no reported total from the wreath sale yet. The bulb sale had \$1974 in total sales. The book fair was a success having sales of approximately \$6000 against a goal of \$5000. The school spirit sale is scheduled to begin January 1, 2016.

-After School Enrichment: Programs begin in January with yoga for grades 3-5. Other programs will occur throughout the spring and will include all grade levels.

-January Events: These will include a Teacher Appreciation Lunch on 1-14-16 and the always popular roller skating party on 1-16-16. The Days Park Block Club will be giving a presentation on the history of Days Park at the January meeting of the CA.

9. NEW BUSINESS /ANNOUNCEMENTS

John and Matt Ryan met with the Days Park Block Club on November 24. Several items were discussed:

- Neighbors have been surprised by an influx of people to the Park at certain times. EVCS will send the Association a copy of the school calendar so they will know when groups related to the school might be present.

-The Days Park Block Club will meet at EVCS on January 14 and on February 10.

-EVCS will look into the possibility of using additional traffic cones to assist with the flow

of traffic in front of the school and also at the crosswalks at Cottage Street, especially at arrival and dismissal times.

-The Olmsted Parks Association has given EVCS blanket permission to use Days Park for children playing. Use of the fence will continue until the newly seeded grass is established.

-The sign at Elmwood and Cottage Streets still says "School #36". That needs to be changed to read "Elmwood Village Charter School".

John had his first opportunity to work with the school's new attorneys at Hodson Russ. He reported that it was a very positive experience.

Mimi proposed some Business for the February agenda. She has asked the Finance Committee to study and make some recommendations regarding the money EVCS has banked. Questions: Should the school invest or pay down loans? Is it better to have cash reserves or no debt?

Natalie moved and Kathy seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Pollock

Future meetings - Meetings at 6:00 p.m.: Jan. 20, 2016; Feb.17, 2016; Mar.16, 2016; April 20, 2016; May 11, 2016; June 15, 2015