

**Elmwood Village Charter Schools  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, March 16, 2022  
Meeting Site: EVCS Hertel**

**Trustees Present:** Jennifer Bernacki-Smith; Lacoie Brumfield; Ed Castine; Kathy Franklin-Adams; Ken Gholston; Joshua Pennel; Jacob Piorkowski; Pamela Pollock; Matt Ryan; Anna Sotelo-Peryea

**Trustees Excused:** Mimi Barnes Coppola

**Trustees Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Danielle Bruno, Director, EVCS Days Park; Liz Evans, EVCS Director of Operations; Liz Fisher, Director, EVCS Hertel; Anne Wechsler, EVCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Lisa Kirisits, CPA, of Kirisits & Associates, EVCS Accountants

#### CALL TO ORDER

Jennifer Bernacki-Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. She presented the agenda. There were no changes.

#### MINUTES

The Minutes of the Elmwood Village Charter Schools Board of Trustees meeting held on February 16, 2022, were presented. There were no changes.

**Josh moved and Jacob seconded that the minutes be accepted as presented. Approved unanimously.**

#### FINANCIALS

Lisa Kirisits presented the Financial Report. For the eight months ended February 28, 2022, EVCS showed an increase in net assets of \$337,600 vs. a budgeted decrease in net assets of approximately (\$511,800). The result was a favorable variance of approximately \$849,400.

Remaining significant is the special education recoupment. The SPED “claw back” issue came to light in May 2019 as a result of an audit the Buffalo Public Schools underwent from the State Comptroller’s Office. BPS has already recouped all of the \$501,328 in aid already paid that it claims to be excess. An intercept has been filed with NYSED for the deductions in 2019-20 to receive these funds directly from the state and is currently under consideration by them. In February 2021, NYSED recommended that the intercepts for the 5 of 6 and 6 of 6 for the 2019-2020 school year be approved for one school. This approval (for one school) was forwarded to the State Comptroller’s Office and was deducted from the district’s next payment. The assumption was the approval will be replicated for all charter schools affected including Elmwood Village. NYSED originally requested that 2020-21 related intercepts be held while 2019-20 was considered but has now released all remaining intercepts to be submitted for consideration

Treasurer, Ed Castine, congratulated Lisa for her continued excellence and advice in managing EVCS Financial matters over the years. The school has significant

funds in “cash” and can “wait and see” what the market brings before making future investments. The Financial Committee will meet in April to review the budget for next year.

**Ed moved and Matt seconded that the financial report be approved.**

**Approved unanimously.**

#### LAWSUIT UPDATE

Autism Services has been served with a Third Party Complaint. No date has yet been determined

#### DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors' Report was prepared jointly by Danielle Bruno, Liz Evans, Liz Fisher, and Anne Wechsler.

#### Reopening Update

##### **Challenges Updates:**

##### **-Health and Safety**

The mask mandate was discontinued on Wednesday, March 2nd, 2022. Families and staff were informed that masks were now optional throughout school spaces, but all other measures and procedures remained in place. A minimal number of cases have been reported. Students have adjusted well to mask/no mask policies.

##### **-Staffing**

EVCS sent out the intent survey on Tuesday 3/15 in order to help determine how many staff vacancies to expect in the coming year.

##### **-Vaccines and Testing**

EVCS is in the process of applying for the Limited Laboratory Services License and signed a two-year agreement with our medical director to provide oversight to any COVID testing procedures that EVCS decides to undertake.

#### Operations/Facilities

**Hertel:** Extra furniture that did not fit in classrooms due to physical distancing requirements has been moved to a rented trailer. The construction project is anticipated to begin in April, after bidding and application for permits.

The cost to repair the waterline break came to \$5,454, with a \$5,000 deductible. During this time it was discovered that the People Inc. House has been getting water from EVCS's line at no cost. Discussions are in progress with People Inc. to determine the average water usage for the property, bill them for water usage going forward, and determine a cost for their usage over the past 5 years and bill them for that usage. A

maintenance and shared repair agreement is being reviewed so that EVCS and People, Inc. can share the cost of any future damage or repairs.

**Days Park:** During a recent survey 17 rooms/spaces were identified that needed PA speakers and power units in order to broadcast school-wide announcement, including safety communications regarding drills and lockdowns. The quoted price is \$8,300 which we hope to encumber in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

**Shared:** Nothing to report.

### **Admissions/Student Enrollment**

EVCS is continuing to receive applications through Enroll Buffalo Charters. Below is the number of applications to date for each campus:

|           | K   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8   | Totals |
|-----------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|--------|
| EVCS      | 158 | 42 | 26 | 25 | 34 | 29 | 18 | 34 | 29  | 395    |
| Days Park |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |        |
| EVCS      | 170 | 35 | 19 | 32 | 31 | 29 | 15 | 28 | n/a | 359    |
| Hertel    |     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |        |

### **Total 754**

Last year at this time ( 3/17/21 ) EVCS had received 650 applications: 341 application at EVCS Days Park, and 309 at EVCS Hertel.

### **Technology**

Technology planning for next year has begun, including assessments of devices that have reached their end of life (end of support) and must be replaced.

SMART Boards at Days Park were replaced by Promethean Boards, which are now used across both campuses.

### **Grants**

EVCS's ESSER ARP grant applications were formally approved by NY State Education Department.

EVCS's Erate application was submitted and will cover 80% of broadband service at each campus, as well as cabling and new network equipment in the addition at Hertel.

## **HR Updates**

### **New Proposed Administrative Structure and Position**

The Administrative Team, along with the HR Manager, have been discussing a change to the organizational structure to create a Director-level position at the Leadership Team level. The reasons for this change are many.

Currently the School Leadership Team consists of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI), Director of Operations (DO) and the Principals of Days Park and Hertel. While this structure allows the school leader at each building to be in organization-wide communication, planning, and decision making it causes them to take on two focuses in their roles. The role of principal is already weighty and involves not only communication with families, students, and building level staff, evaluation of all instructional AND building level staff, being the safety leader at each building, etc., but also pulls them into organization-wide strategic planning, communication, evaluation planning, etc.

This position would mitigate the principal burnout factor and provide a more robust overall support for school leaders as well as the organization as a whole. An attached proposal detailed the rationale and draft job description.

After some discussion the Board agreed the matter was was complex and merited additional discussion at a future time.

### **New Hires**

| <b>Position</b>              | <b>Name</b>     | <b>Campus</b> | <b>Qualifications</b>   |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---|
| Custodian                    | Eh Super Kyaing | Days Park     | High School Diploma;<br>McKinley High School  |
| Nursing Support              | Diane Phillips  | Shared        | Certified Licensed Practical<br>Nurse; 35+ years of experience  |
| Substitute<br>Teacher        | Iyanna Williams | Hertel        | SUCB: Bachelor's Degree -<br>(in progress); Childhood and<br>Special Education  |
| Special Education<br>Teacher | Ashley Gehen    | Hertel        | SUNY at Buffalo: MA; - Literacy<br>SUCB: BA; Childhood Education<br>Certification:<br>Elem. Education (Birth-Gr.6);<br>Literacy Specialist (Birth - Gr. 12)<br>Special Education (Birth - Gr.6) |

**Pam moved and Ed seconded that all proposed hires be approved. Approved unanimously.**

**Currently Hiring:** Custodians, Middle School Spanish Teacher, Middle School Social Studies Teacher, Instructional Assistant

**Academics**

- The trimester ends on 3/18. Reports will go home on 4/1.
- NYS ELA Assessments are on 3/30 and 3/31.

**Professional Development/Strategic Planning**

- Book study with Dr. Hunter is complete. He expressed interest in working more closely with EVCS next year as he is interested in featuring EVCS teachers in his research.
- March 25th is a half-day for professional development. Teachers will collaborate on social justice themed unit plans. Special area teachers and related service providers will collaborate on plans for family engagement.

**Culture**

New clubs and activities are starting:

- Safety Patrol will be starting at Hertel soon (6th grade students will help with dismissal).
- Kindness Club is being run at Hertel by the school counselor.
- Newspaper club has started for middle school students at Days Park.
- Girls on the Run starts in April at both campuses.

**Other Business**

**Ed In Equity Campaign:** A letter was sent to Governor Hocu and the Western New York Delegation of the NYS Legislature to educate representatives on the inequity of the funding increases for charter schools throughout the state. One illustration that was shared was this chart of the difference in proposed increases for charter schools in the “big 5” school districts:

**Comparison of Projected SY22-23 Buffalo Charter School Tuition to other Big 5 Districts**

|                  | Rate SY21-22    | Projected Rate SY 22-23 | \$ Change    | %Change     |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Buffalo</b>   | <b>\$13,308</b> | <b>\$13,417</b>         | <b>\$109</b> | <b>0.8%</b> |
| <b>NYC</b>       | <b>\$16,884</b> | <b>\$17,633</b>         | <b>\$789</b> | <b>4.7%</b> |
| <b>Rochester</b> | <b>\$13,995</b> | <b>\$14,216</b>         | <b>\$221</b> | <b>1.6%</b> |
| <b>Albany</b>    | <b>\$16,179</b> | <b>\$16,653</b>         | <b>\$474</b> | <b>2.9%</b> |
| <b>Syracuse</b>  | <b>\$13,442</b> | <b>\$13,769</b>         | <b>\$327</b> | <b>2.4%</b> |

The letter advocated for one-time aid to give students in Buffalo charter schools better access to funding, which pays for high quality teachers, safe and comfortable buildings, and tools to educate and assess these students.

## HERTEL RENEWAL UPDATE

The vote is scheduled for tomorrow, March 17, 2022. The recommendation was for a five-year renewal .

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- Space Planning & Finance: The Space Planning Committee has met with the Finance Committee. It has been determined that the school's current assets (e.g., current assets consisting of cash, receivables and prepaid expenses = approx. \$7,545,700) to current liabilities (e.g., consisting of accounts payable, deferred revenue, accrued expenses, current portion of long term debt = approx. \$1,983,600) and measures the school's ability to meet current obligations as they become due. The creation of the new space on the Hertel Campus are projected to be completed sometime in August, 2022.
- Nominating: The Nominating Committee did not meet this month.
- Academic Excellence: The Academic Excellence Committee did not meet this month.
- Fundraising: The Fund Raising Committee has not met this month.
- EVCS Culture: The EVCS Culture Committee has been preparing a Vision statement and developing goals. These will be formalized and presented at a future meeting.

## COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Jacob reported from the Days Park CA. The meeting had to be re-scheduled and is being held this evening. Sign ups for recess duty and other teacher assistance activities continue using "Sign-Up Genius". A shared Chocolate Sale with the Hertel Campus raised a total of \$9600. The two campuses will continue to work together on fundraising activities including a Pampered Chef Party and a Book Fair.

Anna reported that Hertel is also seeking parent volunteers to assist teachers with recess and field trips. They are hoping to promote better family engagement using a survey. Another Chiavetta's Chicken Dinner fundraiser is being planned for May. The group is also selling gift cards for Anderson's Frozen Custard from which the school receives a portion of the profit. They are planning a Literacy Night in May.

## PERSONNEL MATTERS

**Matt moved and Ed seconded that the Board enter executive session for discussion of legal and personnel matters. Approved unanimously.**

Discussion ensued.

**Matt moved and Ed seconded that the Board exit executive session. Approved unanimously.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEW BUSINESS

There was no additional business and nothing to announce. **Ed moved and Lacle seconded that the the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Pollock

Future Meetings April 20, 2022; May 18, 2022; June 15, 2022; and July 20, 2022.

All meetings begin at 6:00 PM.