

**Elmwood Village Charter Schools
Board of mTrustees Meeting
Wednesday, September 20, 2023
Site: EVCS Hertel**

Trustees Present: Mimi Barnes Coppola; Jennifer Bernacki Smith; Lacle Brumfield; Ed Castine; Ken Gholston; Kathy Franklin-Adams; Nicca Lebeda; George McLean; Joshua Pennel; Pamela Pollock; Matt Ryan; Anna Sotelo-Peryea

Trustees Absent: None

Trustees Excused: Patti Anderson; Jake Piorkowski

Others Present: Liz Evans, EVCS Director of Operations; Anne Wechsler, EVCS Director of Curriculum and Instruction

CALL TO ORDER

Jen called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. She presented the agenda. There were no changes.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Elmwood Village Charter School Board of Trustees meeting held on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, were presented. There were no changes.

Matt moved and Ed seconded that the minutes be approved as presented. Approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

In the absence of EVCS Accountant, Lisa Kirisits, Treasurer, Ed Castine, presented the Financial Report. He noted that EVCS is basically financially healthy. However, the school may become financially short as it is slightly under-enrolled, as are most local schools at this time.

Investment is increasing. There has been investment in treasury bonds which tend to yield good income with low risk. The Goal is to increase investment from \$1 million per school to \$1-1/2 million per school.

BOARD RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Elmwood Village Charter Schools ("School") held on this 20th day of September, 2023, a lawful quorum being present, the **following Resolution was adopted by the Board of Trustees:**

WHEREAS, Elmwood Village Charter School has a "Reserve for Dissolution" account in which they are required to hold no less than \$150,000 in an escrow account as required by their authorizer,

WHEREAS, this escrow account is located at M&T Bank and the school would like to transfer the entire balance to UBS Financial Services, Inc., in order to maximize the earnings on this account, with the understanding that a separate account will be maintained at all times in order to comply with the authorizers requirements,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THE BANK ACCOUNT #15004243254858 with M&T Bank will be closed and all funds transferred to a separate account at UBS financial Services, Inc

FURTHERMORE, the School would like to appoint the following individuals as signers on the account:

- Elizabeth Evans, Director of Operations
- Danielle Bruno, Director of Schools
- Jennifer Bernacki-Smith, Board President
- Edward Robert Castine Jr., Board Treasurer

Lacole moved and Anna seconded that the proposed resolution be approved. Approved unanimously

The Financial Committee has also been working to develop an investment policy which specifies elements such as intent, safety, liquidity, compliance and authority. The goal is to remain "safe and conservative but consistent with strategy". The plan is to bring the completed policy to the Board for approval next month.

The full financial report was tabled until the October Board meeting.

BOARD RETREAT - Update

The fall Board retreat has been postponed due to the sudden unavailability of the scheduled speaker. The plan is to try to reschedule for a date this winter.

Matt will present an overview of basic Board responsibilities to to new members.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Director of Schools

School Leadership and Culture

New Student/Family Orientations - Each campus held events for new students and families in Grades 4-8. The event included a presentation by school leadership, Morning Meeting circle, and a campus tour provided by student ambassadors and CA volunteers. Over 90% of new students enrolled at those grade levels were in attendance.

Open House and Supply Drop Off - A successful welcome back event was held at each campus. Students and families visited classrooms, met their teachers and toured the school. School leaders held orientation meetings specifically for Kindergarten families and those who may have enrolled during the pandemic years. The Community Associations and After School Providers were present to provide information and answer questions. Ice cream trucks were present on campus and all attendees received a ticket for an ice cream treat. This event was well attended at both campuses.

Meet the Teacher Night - This event was also well attended at both schools. Two informational sessions were held to accommodate families with students at more than one grade level. Specialists, resource teachers and related service providers were tabled in the Gym to provide access for all families to meet them and learn more about their roles and programs.

Instrumental Music at Hertel - The Hertel Campus introduced instrumental music to its programs for students in grades 5-8 this year. EVCS received a generous grant from Foundation 214 to build a lending library of musical instruments for this campus.

Panther Press - The Link to the weekly Panther Press is now sent out through a platform called S'More to provide a more mobile-friendly experience for the reader.

Clubs and Activities - Clubs and activities are underway already at EVCS. The cross-campus soccer team has kicked-off its annual season and other clubs and activities are starting soon. These include Flag Football and Board Game Club at Hertel.

New Staff and Coffee - All new staff will be invited to have coffee with their building leaders throughout the year to build relationships and a strong staff culture.

Weekly Huddles - Building leaders at both schools hold weekly staff huddles to recognize employees, provide short bursts of key information, and build a strong staff culture.

Whole School Morning Meetings - begin at the end of September at each campus to build school-wide community and pride.

HR/Hiring

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Campus</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>
Instructional Assistant	Sophia Nanulala	Hertel	-Bachelor's Degree: SUCB; Elementary Education and Mathematics
Special Education Teacher	Zoe Jones	Hertel	-Bachelor's Degree: New York University; Childhood/Special Education -Master's Degree: The George Washington University; Human Development -Certifications: * English to Speakers of Other Languages *Students with Disabilities
Instructional Assistant	Zoe Huffman	Days Park	-Bachelor's Degree: SUNY at Buffalo; Health and Human Services
Physical Education Teacher	Matt Territo	Days Park	-Bachelor's Degree: Medaille College; Business Administration -Bachelor's Degree: SUNY Brockport; Physical Education -Certifications: Physical Education (Grades K-12)
Special Education Teacher	Kaitlyn Reilly	Hertel	-Bachelor's Degree: SUCB: Exceptional Education - Master's Degree: SUCB; Exceptional Education
Instructional Assistant	Michala Baker	Hertel	-Bachelor's Degree: SUCB (in progress) Special Education; Mathematics Concentration
Music Teacher	Moshe Shulman	Shared	-Bachelor's Degree: Rubin Music Academy; Music Composition -Master's Degree: Rubin Music Academy; Music Composition -PhD; SUNY Buffalo; Music Composition -Certifications: Music Education
Receptionist	Linda Perrello	Days Park	-Bryant & Stratton: General Studies; (no degree) -High School Diploma: Leonardo DaViinci H.S. + 15 years Customer Service

Evening Custodian	Keiona Reid	Days Park	-Associates Degree: Bryant & Stratton; Applied Science
Instructional Assistant	Michael McCormick	Hertel	-Bachelor's Degree: Allegheny College; English -Master's Degree: Canisius University; English Education (in progress)
Evening Custodian	Rebbie Nelson	Hertel	High School Diploma -3+ years custodial experience

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

Promotions

No promotions in September.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Academics

New Curriculum:

- K-3 knowledge building curriculum - Wit and Wisdom
- 6th-8th grade math curriculum - Desmos

Reading Reconsidered Data Cohort:

EVCS has been invited to be one of a select group of schools with the ambitious goal of digging more deeply into curriculum implementation, while also strengthening connection with other pilot schools. The groups focus this year will be supporting reading fluency within the Reading Reconsidered Curriculum. Participant will engage in professional development through responsive meetings, video study, and student work analysis over the course of the 2023-2024 school year.

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STAR Administration has been moved up this year to allow for for an earlier start to AIS Instruction.

-STAR ELA administration - week of 9/11

-STAR Math administration - week of 9/18. Data meetings will begin next week. and AIS groups will start immediately after.

Professional Development

-August PD was a very successful two weeks of professional development. The heavy emphasis placed on classroom management, teacher moves, and Responsive Classroom is paying off.

-Teachers are well on their way to accomplishing the goal of one positive phone call home per student before "Meet the Teacher Night" (goal set out during Family Communication PD session).

-9/15 was 1/2 PD day which included differentiated topics such as literacy professional development, curriculum planning, and planning for family engagement nights.

Director of Operations

Operations/ Facilities

Hertel: The sound system is in the process of being installed and should be completed by Mid October

Days Park: Days Park is still searching for a Building Manager

Shared: The Operations Manager and Data Manager devised a checklist for Operations Rounds. The OPS Team will do regular walk-throughs at each building to check facilities, technology and safety compliance.

The Temporary Facilities Manager left one week prior to the start of the school year. Efforts are being made to secure a replacement.

Admissions/Student Enrollment

There were a number of no-shows and last minute withdrawals at both campuses. The Admissions Coordinator is working on filling these seats as quickly as possible.

Enrollment Projections:

-Hertel 423 projected enrollment (22 under-enrolled)

-Days Park 437 Projected enrollment (8 under-enrolled)

Last year at this date, Hertel was 19 under-enrolled and Days Park was 7 under-enrolled.

Enrollment goals at the Hertel Campus are currently being met for grades 1-7. However, there were significant drops for enrollment in grades K and 8. This issue at K

is not specific to EVCS - see summary from the NYCSA below. In the meantime, here is the strategy to combat these issues going forward:

Kindergarten:

To begin prompting applications now (rather than waiting until applications formally open in December). The campaign to increase awareness of EVCS kindergarten will culminate in the launch of the application on December 1st with the launch of the digital billboard. The previous use of the digital billboard was successful in attracting more applications post-lottery.

Seventh Grade exits:

Kelly met with the instructional coaches to develop a plan to educate the rising 7th grade class about what makes 8th grade at EVCS special. It is felt that students and parents need to be better informed about the preparation and support the 8th grade class receives as they move up and that will lead to a choice to remain that final year. Packet is being prepared to go home with 7th grade students (in approximately February) that will outline the 8th Grade Camp, Middle School Leadership Opportunities, Regents/Academic opportunities, and lastly, 8th grade Rites of Passage.

The New York Charter School Association engaged a data analyst to look at demographic and enrollment trends in Erie County. The slide show is available for anyone who would like it, but some of the key takeaways are:

- Birth rates in Erie County are declining, so there are fewer kindergarten-age children enrolling in schools.
- The population of Erie County is growing older.
- Erie County population trends suggest further enrollment declines are likely
- Births have dropped considerably in the last five years, a decrease not yet being felt by schools but soon to be.
- The percentage of population under age 18 has begun to shrink as well, indicating an aging population.
- Historically, charter schools have added students post kindergarten, helping their sustainability even when kinder enrollment targets are not met. However, this trend has slowed in recent years.
- This slowing of elementary enrollment growth, coupled with a likely decline in the number of kindergarten students in the areas, could pose future challenges for charter enrollment. Charters may want to consider more targeted recruitment efforts at the mid and upper elementary grades in addition to at kindergarten.

Charter Schools will be using the time scheduled for the common application convening meeting to discuss strategy on working together to attract the shrinking number of kindergarteners entering school in the coming year. The slide show and data set are available to any board member who would like to review it.

Technology

Station 28 is managing purchases from technology funds distributed through the district. They are fine tuning the bells in the classrooms (volume). They are collaborating with the alarm company to ensure the smooth transition to the new vendor.

Grants/Finance

Grants: EVCS submitted an application for the Stronger Connections grant administered through NYSED to strengthen SEL programming.

Finance: Compensation study is continuing, and will be shared with the Board when a draft has been finalized.

EVSC is participating in a cohort studying talent development in Buffalo charter schools, particularly teachers of color.

HR Updates

Action item: Title IX policy needs consideration for approval. Currently, EVCS does not have an approved Title IX policy in place so any changes can be incorporated, considered, and formally approved when available. A Draft was submitted for perusal.

Kathy moved and Lacle seconded that the Draft Title IX Policy be approved as circulated. Approved unanimously.

The policy must also be approved by attorneys and may be awhile in coming.

Other Business

None.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Space Planning Committee -Nothing new to report.

Finance Committee -See Treasurer's report.

Nominating Committee -Nothing new to report.

Academic Excellence Committee -Nothing new to report.

**Development and Advocacy
Committee**

-Nothing new to report.

EVCS Culture Committee

- Nothing new to report

124 ELMWOOD - LAWSUIT UPDATE

The potential conflict of interest in this property may no longer exist. People Inc. has come in to clean out after Autism services. It is speculated that Autism may close shop or perhaps merge with another agency. However things work out, their lease expires in 2026.

PEOPLE INC./Hertel Campus Waterline Issue

This issue remains problematic. Messages are being sent weekly, but there has been no response.

SPED Funding - Update

EVCS has been trying to make BPS to provide Charter School students who have IEPs with the special services that are required by law. A roster of EVCS students specifying their special needs was sent to BPS in July. To date, BPS has made no move to implement these requirements. Negotiations continue. Options might be;

- allow the services to stop and notify parents
- hire appropriate service providers and send the bill to BPS
- engage an attorney with expertise in this area

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Jake was not available to report on specifics regarding Days Park Activities. Anna noted that she and Jake were working together on some similar projects for both campuses. Hertel is planning to hold a meat raffle in March - preferably on a Saturday evening. She noted that any alcohol would have to be donated. They are planning another "Trunk or Treat" event at Hertel prior to Halloween. That event will be for students from both campuses. Upcoming fundraisers for Hertel include a fall "Can Drive", a Becker farms pie sale, another Poinsettia and wreath sale and another Chiavetta's Chicken sale.

A joint meeting of both the Hertel and Days Park CAs is planned. They are actively looking for ways to increase membership.

ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL & BOARD MANAGEMENT

Lacole moved and Nicca seconded that the Board enter executive session to discuss additional legal matters. Approved unanimously.

Relevant discussion ensued.

Lacole moved and Kathy seconded that the Board exit executive session. Approved unanimously.

Lacole moved and Josh seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM

Respectfully submitted.

Pamela Pollock
EVCS Board Secretary

Future Meeting Dates: October 18, 2023; November 22, 2023; December 20, 2023; January 17, 2024; February 21, 2024?; March 19, 2024; April 24, 2024; May 15, 2024; June 19, 2024

All meetings begin at 6:00 PM