

Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES EXPLORATION ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

December 13, 2019 – 8:00 am

**Location: Exploration School Library
1001 Lake Ave., Rochester, New York, 14613**

Exploration's mission is to engage learners, their families, and the community in the processes of scientific inquiry and the use of innovative technology to develop the social, emotional, and academic tools necessary to thrive in school and today's global world.

1. Welcome & Call to Order – 8:11 am

“The Chair reminds everyone that if a potential conflict of interest exists concerning a subject under discussion by the Board that you have an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse yourself and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject.”

Trustees Present: Kimi LoMaglio, Maya Crane, Kevin Williams, Carlos Cong

Trustees Excused: Lonette Merriman, Kelley DeMonte

Non-Trustees Present: Rachelle Simmons – Principal; Casandra Vargas – Operations Manager; Courtney Hawkins – Dean of Restorative Practices; Lea Spikes – Executive Administrative Assistant; Steve Polowitz- Legal Counsel; Teresa Ramoutar (Director of Academic Programs); Rachel LeMaster (Manager of Partnerships and Community Engagement)

2. Proof of Public Notice of Meeting: The following information was included on the notarized affidavit of public notice:

That, on November 9th 2019, a Public Notice was posted at the school location to indicate a board meeting and on the School's website (<https://www.explorationrochester.org/>).

“The Chair notes that under the NY open meetings law, this is a publicly noticed Regular business meeting of the Board of Trustees. The meeting is not open to questions or comments from anyone other than Board members (including approved members awaiting final authorizer approval) and staff.”

3. Approvals

Approve the November Minutes

Motion to approve by: Maya Crane

2nd by: Kevin Williams

Favor: All

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

4. Faculty Recognition – 12/20 at TRATA – Kevin Williams to attend

5. Committee Updates:

Committee	Update
Executive	Last meeting, we discussed having a greater focus within the minutes to reflect accurately our focus on academics.
Facilities	Cassandra and Rachelle met with Steve and Ken yesterday. Reviewed the 20-22 items that they have issue with on the current lease. The majority are landlord items. The next step is to repair the relationship with ESF before moving forward for negotiations on YR4 and YR5. Meeting with ESN on Wednesday at 10am. Important that a Board member is able to attend.
Partnership/ BOT Recruitment	Recruitment is coming along Herb finishing up submitting the final documents. Sam Pitts all paperwork is back and submitted. Samantha Long Coleson is also up for review. Amanda Proctor is interested in the parent representative.

The Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology Board of Trustees, having conducted a thorough background check via a fingerprint scan as required and having discovered no State or Federal criminal history, or having provided such history to SED if found, has voted to select Samuel Pitts and Samantha Long Coleson as final candidates to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on December 31, 2022, pending approval by SED. The resolution approving Sam and Samantha is formally adopted upon SED's approval.

Motion to approve by: Maya Crane
2nd by: Kimi LoMaglio
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

6. Financial Report:

Reviewed for October and it looked good. Surplus for the month due to salary. Identified that we are running favorable due to two open teacher positions. These have been filled with additional instructional support staff. We wouldn't expect to see continued underrunning with those positions filled. Preliminary November looks to be at a deficit but holistically for the year we look good. Legal is underrunning but have not received the most recent invoice for legal services. Substitute line is maxed out. Administration is going to address this by having a floating instructional support staff. Additional investment opportunities: partitions for the wellness center. Have a donation opportunity and are offering the individual options: creating a more secure "man trap" in the entryway; wellness center partitions; additional laptops for 3rd grade.

Approval of Financial report for October

Motion to approve by: Maya Crane
2nd by: Kevin Williams
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Financial Audit:

Last year we had one item called out for how the leasing was booked. This year's audit confirms that has been resolved and there are no additional or outstanding items. Finance Committee reviewed and are in alignment with the clean audit.

Motion to accept the audit report on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Motion to approve by: Kevin Williams
2nd by: Maya Crane
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

7. School Leader Report

- Behavior data went in on Monday.
- Empathy is the focus for the month. Special areas team started holidays around the world. The kids are loving learning about celebrations around the world.

- Partnered with Nesin to have a Critical Friends visit. Leadership met to work through the protocol and filled out a Strengths and Challenges review. Have a full schedule of classes to assess on the following areas:
 - School leadership
 - Student arrival
 - Staff arrival and prep
 - Advisory
 - Day beginnings
 - School culture
 - Transitions
 - Lunch
 - Recess
 - Facilities

Leadership will then review and meet with them to be presented with school wide highlights and school wide pushes that we should focus on.

Academic Data:

Kindergarten - In reading we are a bit ahead when we compare this year to last.

In writing not seeing growth. – One area that is impacting the student's growth is new staff new to the curriculum. It was a heavy lift for them to shift to learning the material and then teaching material. A quick pivot to address this is to allow more time for the teachers to learn the material. Recommendations on continued use of the curriculum will be addressed at the Curriculum Discussion Meeting. Concern that our sight word mastery by the kids is low.

1st Grade – 80% is at a Kindergarten level, 20% is at 1st grade level. Sight words, vocabulary, fluency checks are items that we need to focus on and that will be discussed in the Curriculum Meeting. AIS teams are setting Goals to ensure continued growth of our lowest achievers. How often are Teresa and Rachelle are sitting in the classroom and observe to give real time feedback? They are making changes to this as what they are doing today is not enough. Various initial reactions/acceptance from the teachers on having these assessments. Worked on changing this perception and the teachers are more onboard.

2nd Grade – 54% are in the early first grade reading block. 73% showed no growth in writing. Identified what the items the students will need to do to meet the standards. Administration is prioritizing the 3rd graders with the intervention assistance then 2nd grade, to ensure those grades are making strides in growth. Team met and outlined what the instructors need to do to help the kids meet those standards/goals. Teachers identified that they didn't feel that they knew the curriculum. Need to focus on teaching the teachers and assessing them. What had been predicted as the amount of time needed for the teachers to learn the curriculum is not in fact enough time. They feel they need more at an individualized level. Historically we see slow growth in the kids in the first part of the year, then more growth in the second half. Administration expects March to show larger growth levels.

3rd Grade - 12 students that meet the charter criteria of test score submissions. Half would get a 3 or a 4 on the NYS test. You need a 3. The other half are A level or B level readers. Working

with these kids to provide strategies to increase their scoring. We have started a tutoring club weekly. Each month they have their focus skills that are outlined and then they talk through the next month skills that are coming. They then review how the student is doing against those. We have 42 3rd graders. Of that total, 35-45% of the total would do a 3 or a 4 on the test. With the remaining students, the teachers are working with the kids to provide strategies to enable them to work through it as it is not believed that large amount of progress is realistic.

Math Overall iReady - 27% in the red (2 or more levels behind); 69% are in the middle (approaching) and 4% in the green. While it looks bad, it is similar to where we were at this time last year. And we saw significant growth by the end of the year. Teachers have come up with individual plans to address this low performance. In 1st and 3rd they will start guided reading with coach's side/by/side to give real time feedback and implementation. Concern that changing the curriculum at this stage in the year will set us farther back given the insight that teachers are struggling to learn the current curriculum. Administration feels it is severely necessary given the current state. Administration is also focusing on stamina for the kids. Working to match the stamina needed for the test by identifying texts that are similar but that will get them to that level.

Board expressing concern over where the academics are. It has been identified that behavior is not an impactor, which is good. Board is looking for a very detailed plan on the new curriculum recommendation that will provide progress and successfully onboard the teaching staff to hit the ground running. It is felt positively that we have this information and are able to pivot to get the academics in a better position.

Resolution to modify the organizational chart modification. – not voted on. Board requested a write up surrounding a sound organizational need.

Accept the School Leader report.

Motion to approve by: Maya Crane
2nd by: Kimi LoMaglio
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Motion to move into Executive Session to discuss a sensitive personnel matter – 9:22am

Motion to approve by: Kevin Williams
2nd by: Maya Crane
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Motion to move out of Executive Session – 9:37am

Motion to approve by: Maya Crane
2nd by: Kevin Williams
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

8. Motion to Adjourn – 9:37am

Motion to adjourn by: Maya Crane
2nd by: Kevin Williams
Favor: All
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

**Next Meeting – January 10, 2020 at 8:00 am at the Exploration School Library
1001 Lake Ave., Rochester, New York 14613**