



# THE ROSALYN YALOW CHARTER SCHOOL

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## **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, July 17, 2018, 6:00 p.m.**  
**116 East 169<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Bronx, New York 10463**

### **Trustees Present**

Miguel Balbuena—Chair, Gregoria Feliciano, Ivan Lee, Benjamin Yalow

Via Skype: Sandra Hayes – Vice Chair, Michael Rosen – Treasurer

By Phone - Shirley Saunders – Secretary, Donna Friedman – Guest

Staff: Letta Belle – Principal, Alec Diacou – Executive Director, Yvonne Booker-Byers – Director of Assessment

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Miguel Balbuena, Chairman. A quorum was present.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

### **Acceptance of the Minutes of June 19, 2018**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes for the meeting held on June 19, 2018 were unanimously approved.

### **Executive Session**

Discussion ensued on several personnel and board governance matters, including accountability, CSBM's FY18-19 contract, prospective new board members, bonuses, and formation of a new sub-committee to address social-emotional issues among students and best practices for utilizing teacher-social workers at Yalow.

### **Board Approval Items:**

#### **Authorization to Re-enter into Agreement With Charter School Business Management**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of directors approved the following resolution.

**Resolved:** the Board of Trustees approves and authorizes the executive director re-entering into the proposed agreement with Charter School Business Management for FY 2018-2019.

### **Bonus Proposal from June Board Meeting**

The Personnel Committee is working on a structure for awarding bonuses based on performance. Future bonuses will not be awarded unless an award structure is finalized.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of directors approved the following resolution.

**Resolved:** the Board of Trustees approves the FY2017-18 bonus schedule as submitted by the executive director to the finance committee on June 13 and the full board on June 19, pursuant to Yalow's Financial Policies and Procedures Manual.

### **Election of Donna Demetri Friedman to the Board of Trustees**

Following a discussion about Ms. Friedman's initial election to the board at the September 19, 2017 board meeting, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of directors unanimously approved the following resolution.

**Resolved:** That the Rosalyn Yalow Charter School 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 Donna Demetri Friedman as a final candidate to its Board of Trustees, with a term expiring on August 31, 2018, pending approval by SED, and authorizes the executive director to submit an amended New Board of Trustee Member Review application to NYSED for its approval. The resolution approving Donna Demetri Friedman is formally adopted upon SED's approval.

### **Formation of Social-Emotional Board Committee**

Following a discussion about the role of teacher-social workers and best practices for student behavior, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of directors unanimously approved the following resolution.

**Resolved:** The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School Board of Trustees forms a social-emotional committee and appoints Donna Friedman as committee chairman.

### **NYSED Mid-Term Site Visit Report and NYC DOE School Quality Guide (parent and teacher survey) for 2016-2017) tabled**

Following discussion, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the school's board of directors approved the following resolution.

**Resolved:** the Board of Trustees tables the agenda item discussion of NYSED Mid-Term Site Visit Report and the NYC DOE School Quality Guide (parent and teacher survey) for 2016-2017) until the August 21, 2018 board meeting.

### **Academics**

#### **STEP Literacy**

Ms. Letta Belle reminded the Board that STEP Literacy/NWEA are tools used to monitor student growth in literacy and math, respectively, by grade level. STEP Literacy assessment is done in four testing cycles. The first is the baseline where students are assessed at the beginning of the school year. One testing assessment was not conducted because the testing period for the first cycle exceeded the allotted time. (Attachment A: STEP/NWEA Growth Data, 2017-2018, End of Year Report)

Ms. Belle stated there was a decline in the performance for the 1<sup>st</sup> graders. From the baseline assessment to cycle one they were making considerable progress but fell short of achieving the minimum three step levels of growth. Ms. Belle stated she has not had the opportunity to investigate

why they performed poorly. Ms. Hayes asked for the overall percentage by grade of what students are below grade level. Ms. Belle stated according to the STEP data overall 69% of students are performing below grade level. Ms. Hayes asked that Ms. Belle look into comparative data from other schools. See Appendix 2 provided by Ms. Belle for a full report on the STEP/NWEA growth data provided for 2017-2018. Mr. Diacou stated data comparison can be obtained, however it may be on a broader cohort of schools than Yalow's board needs. In addition, data comparisons may not reflect results for student's mirroring Yalow's demographics and may only be made with schools also using STEP Literacy assessments. The Urban Education Institute's STEP data support team may be able to provide this data as they know which charter schools with similar demographics are using their assessments. Ms. Hayes asked that Ms. Belle look into providing some kind of comparative data so the Board can have some means of judging Yalow's performance compared to others. Ms. Booker-Byers stated it's important to note that although some children may not have hit the STEP target growth of three STEP's they may still be on grade level. Children who are at risk at not making their target are enrolled in RTI and Tier 2 intervention.

Mr. Yalow stated theoretically, the sum of growth for students should equal the achievement and asked if longitudinal data was available for students who have been enrolled at the school for their entire school career. Currently there is no such data. This data would be useful in providing information on whether the academic program is working or not. Ms. Belle stated when a student who is disregulated or is displaying disruptive behavior and/or having difficulty academically they go through what is called a Child Find process. It starts in the classroom where a teacher will refer a student to the intervention team. After the referral a six-week plan is implemented and evaluated. At the conclusion of the six-week plan, many times it is discovered that problems are outside of the purview of the school. In these instances students are referred to Mossaic Mental Health clinic or may receive a referral to family support group. Parents are part of the invention team. Currently it is unknown how many students went through this process during the school year. Mr. Balbuena stated he is working on obtaining data on the cohort of students with special needs and how they perform academically. He is also working along with Ms. Belle to define the three intervention tiers to see if the support services are working.

Ms. Belle stated the hiring of RTI staff has not begun because the primary focus was on getting the classroom teachers first. Mr. Balbuena stated the Charter notes that the director of assessment is responsible for overseeing the RTI's, and asked Ms. Booker-Byers to take the lead in hiring the 4 vacant RTI positions. Ms. Booker-Byers agreed and stated she will do all screening and schedule all interviews.

There are a number of teachers who are not certified. Mr. Diacou stated 4 teacher-social workers dropped out of the Relay GSE master's and transitional-B teacher certification program last year. They have been rehired for this year and given the opportunity to enroll in the program once again by August 1, 2018. Three have signed an agreement to do so, and one will not be returning to Yalow. To date, only one teacher-social worker has re-enrolled. Come July 30<sup>th</sup>, teacher-social workers will be expecting to receive the board-approved salary increases. Mr. Diacou asked for the Board's guidance on how to handle the matter of teacher-social worker obtaining their teaching certifications. Ms. Feliciano suggested sending a friendly reminder. In addition, Mr. Balbuena stated that in order to minimize disruption, the opportunity for enrollment in a teacher certification program should be extended to the beginning of the school year.

Ms. Belle stated she has spoken with Mr. Balbuena about the plans for upcoming school year and what the focus for the academic program will be. She presented an outline of the Professional Development (PD) calendar. Some of the focus areas will be the new teacher 4-week training and

two-week training for returning teachers. The topics range from co-teaching 101 to class room management and class room culture. A visit to the American Museum of Natural History will take place in addition to an overview of the Singapore math program that also includes East West Math who did the professional development last summer with the teachers. Each member of the academic leadership team is responsible for delivering 4 professional development sessions. Dates have been confirmed for full day PD sessions. Mr. Balbuena stated we are moving towards becoming a data-driven school and asked Ms. Belle if she could assure the Board that every single teacher will be able to interpret classroom data and report it. Ms. Belle noted that was an area that needed significant attention and that it could be accomplished.

Ms. Feliciano suggested engaging teachers who have been with the school since its inception to be a part of Professional Development. She believes their experience and growth with the curriculum roll out will give new teachers an advantage. In addition, Mr. Balbuena would like for the Board do a welcome greet and meet at the August 30<sup>th</sup> orientation.

Mr. Balbuena stated Professional Development time is geared toward solving real problems in the school and addressing what teachers believe to be important. Due to the importance of this, the academic leadership's presence is vital. It was suggested vacation not be taken during this time.

Ms. Belle stated she and Ms. Friedman held a focus group meeting with Yalow's teacher-social workers. Ms. Friedman wanted to hear from these teachers about their experience to have a better sense of what their needs are.

Ms. Belle stated that in designing the model for the social emotional support, it was not intended to have the social worker serve the dual role of teacher and social worker at the same time. To clarify, Ms. Friedman stated that the original idea was never intended to have the social worker become the therapist. Rather, the idea is that the social worker becomes the teacher and leader of social emotional ideas and responses to the child within the classroom. This is different from being a counselor or clinician. It's essential to understand the different role of a social worker and therapist stated Ms. Friedman. Mr. Balbuena asked that this discussion be tabled until the next Board meeting so that Ms. Friedman can provide additional feedback.

## **Operations**

### **Facility Updates**

Mr. Diacou reported that the contractors have started on the permit process for replacing the roof and rooftop HVAC units. Once building department permits are approved, the roofer said it should take 3 weeks to complete the roof replacement. Currently the building still has major leaks. While the new HVAC system will take six weeks to be shipped, none of the old HVAC equipment will be removed until the new system is received. The Third Avenue campus is still being painted. Set-up at the new building will be minimal. Mr. Balbuena stated roofing plans at 169th Street should move forward as expeditiously as possible to avoid unexpected leaks and heating issues moving into the winter.

Mr. Diacou stated the Board needs to have a discussion about whether we are going to survive as a school in order to properly plan for a permanent school building. He is looking at this from a banker's perspective raising \$25 to \$30 million to open a new building. There are several issues to consider. Public funders will be looking at academic records, teacher turnover and student turnover. How much funding will be needed? Next year Yalow will submit a charter renewal request to NYSED. In that request we have to decide whether we want to be a K-8 school as anticipated by the original charter, or remain a K- 5 school. This will determine how big of a building and how much money is needed. Any lender, whether its Civic Builders, private bankers, or public bond

markets, will be looking at the same Mid-Term Site Visit Report report that NYSED is giving the Board. Ms. Feliciano observed that NYSED's reports effectively serve as Yalow's "credit reports" for lenders and serve as collateral when asking for money. Board recruitment is another issue lenders will consider. Having a full Board shows bankers that we have continuity and people have faith in our viability as an on-going school.

### **Staff Grievances**

There are 3 pending staff grievances. Mr. Diacou said he would be happy to provide written legal responses to the board.

Mr. Lee stated it would be helpful to have a monthly report of terminations and/or resignations.

### **Finance Report**

Currently board meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month, although Yalow's Bylaws state meetings will be held the second Tuesday. Mr. Balbuena stated he spoke to Collin Raymond and CSBM will not be able to prepare a month-end financial statement for board review by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month—which means finance reports would be lagged. As such, we should modify Bylaws will have to submit a charter revision statement to hold the meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. Other charter revisions that have not been submitted are the Co-Chair position and Mr. Diacou and Ms. Belle new reporting structure to the Board.

### **Personnel Committee**

Mr. Balbuena stated the board will be using BoardOnTrack's methodology for evaluation of the Executive Director, and he is exploring a different tool for evaluation of the Principal, which is educationally driven.

Mr. Balbuena is also working with the personnel committee to identify appropriate indicators for Yalow's bonus structure.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Submitted by  
Shirley Saunders, Secretary  
Approved by Board  
of Trustees on August 21, 2018