

# September Board Meeting

## Meeting Information

- **Date:** 2024-09-25
- **Location:** Virtual
- **Attendees:** Luke Copley, Nick Pozek, Martha Zornow, Ibrahim Yusuf, Joe Spar, Kristan Norgrove

## Meeting Notes

### 1. Board Voting Items

- **Meeting Initiation & Approved Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

- *The August board meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.*

- **District Safety Plan**

Discussion on the district safety plan required by NYSED. The plan needs to be approved by October 1st. The plan has been the same for the past five years with only name changes. Current safety measures include building response teams, evacuation and fire drills, cybersecurity training, and bullying prevention. There is a need for a comprehensive safety plan and potential independent assessments. The robust plan will be reviewed and updated in coming months.

- *Motion was passed to approve the District Safety Plan*

- **Approval of Charles Klayman as Board Member**

Discussion on the process of approving Charles Klayman as a board member. *The board voted and approved a resolution to confirm his approval, including fingerprint checks and assessment of his qualifications.*

- **Financial Policies**

Discussion on updating financial policies to tighten controls. This includes cash management, petty cash policies, and comp time for non-exempt employees.

### Conclusion

1. The August board meeting minutes were approved.
2. The board approved the current safety plan with the understanding that it will be revised and improved over the next four to six months.
3. The board agreed to prioritize safety and consider independent assessments or consultants.

4. The board passed the resolution to approve Charles Klayman as a board member.

## **2. Policy and Performance Review**

- **Policy Changes**

Discussion on changes to the financial policies and procedures manual, including addressing the issue of breaking up payments to avoid board approval.

- **Complaint Policy**

Discussion on updating the complaint policy to extend the response time from 30 to 45 days and requiring complaints to be submitted in writing using a form.

- **Test Scores**

Presentation on the school's test scores, comparing them to the district and discussing the impact of computer-based testing and remote learning.

### **Conclusion**

1. New policies were set to ensure proper approvals for after-hours work and a new procurement system was introduced.
2. A motion was passed to approve the suggested modifications to the financial policies and procedures manual.
3. The complaint procedure was updated to include the changes discussed, and a motion was passed to approve it.
4. ELA scores declined from 51% to 44%, and math scores showed improvement. ELA will be a focus area for the upcoming school year.

## **3. Data Analysis and Real Estate Lease Negotiation**

- **Test Performance and Challenges**

Discussion on how other challenges, such as difficult behavior in testing grades, impact test performance. The need for comparison of data and how to improve against goals was emphasized.

- **Real Estate Lease Negotiation**

Update on the lease renewal renegotiation with JLL, including proposed ideas and the potential benefits of a new contract structure. The discussion included tenant improvement costs and the need for board approval.

### **Conclusion**

1. The new lease structure seems beneficial, but it requires further negotiation and board approval.

## **4. Budget and Enrollment Challenges**

- **Budget Reassessment**

Kristan suggested revisiting the budget due to changes in enrollment and financial updates. The team agreed to reassess the budget for a more accurate view.

- **Enrollment and Class Size**

Concerns about not meeting enrollment projections, particularly in the 6th grade, and the impact on budget and class sizes. Discussion on strategies to improve enrollment and manage class sizes.

- **Teacher and Student Impact**

Concerns about the impact of larger class sizes on teachers and students, and the measures being taken to support them, including redesigning spaces and providing additional coaching.

- **Enrollment Performance**

Discussion on the need for better enrollment strategy and support.

## **5. School Management and Governance**

- **Class Sizes and Enrollment**

Discussion on the large class sizes in New York City middle schools and the challenges of managing behavior students. Mention of the need to update the budget and the ongoing enrollment process.

- **School Opening and Marketing**

Concerns about the lack of marketing for the school opening and the need for better communication with families.

- **Cooling Unit and Finance Committee**

Discussion on the status of the cooling unit and its financial implications. Need for clarification at the Finance Committee.

- **Fundraising Event**

Planning for a January fundraising event and the need to form a committee.

- **Local Board Member Recruitment**

Efforts to connect with local organizations in Harlem for board member recruitment.

- **Fire Safety and Elevator Inspection**

Update on fire safety compliance and an issue with an elevator inspection that may result in a fine.

- **Board Composition and Bylaws**

Discussion on board composition, including the potential addition of non voting parents and alumni.

- **Strategic Priorities and Data Transparency**

Review of strategic priorities and the need for data transparency. Discussion on the types of data to be monitored and reported. •

### **Support for Executive Director**

Ensuring the executive director and leadership team receive adequate support from the board.

#### **• Onboarding New Board Members**

Need for effective onboarding processes for new board members, including identifying leads and revisiting onboarding materials. •

#### **Public Meeting Schedule**

Posting the annual schedule of board meetings and activities.

#### **• Review of Bylaws**

Comprehensive review of bylaws, including the need for legal and compliance expertise on the board.

### **Conclusion**

1. Updated budget expected by the beginning of November. Enrollment continues with a focus on filling spots in sixth and first grades.
2. Marketing efforts are being organized by a new hire.
3. Committee formation postponed until Chuck returns next month.
4. Fire safety compliance completed; elevator inspection issue may result in a fine for the school.
5. Agreement to keep strategic priorities lean and focus on key data points like enrollment and teacher satisfaction.
6. Periodic check-ins and one-on-ones with the executive director to determine support needs.
7. Full board discussion required to identify onboarding leads and develop a timeline.
8. Schedule to be posted on the website with Zoom links for public comment.
9. Ongoing need to recruit a trustee with legal expertise.

## **6. Team Coordination and Document Management**

#### **• Document Updates**

Nick is thanked for putting together a document and is asked to update it with feedback from the discussion. The document should be a living document that can be updated regularly.

#### **• Ownership and Outcomes**

The team discusses assigning ownership of priorities and tracking outcomes throughout the year. Martha declines to take on the onboarding lead role due to her upcoming comprehensive exams.

#### **• Composition and Bylaws**

The team decides to skip the discussion on composition and bylaws for the night and incorporate it into strategic priorities. They need to track term limits and board data.

#### **• Annual Report Submission**

Kristen is working on tracking term limits and board data for submission to NYSED. She plans to send a spreadsheet on Friday for everyone to fill in. •

### **Leadership Team Involvement**

The team is encouraged to invite Jasmine, Garis, and other leadership team members to future meetings for their development.

## **Next Arrangements**

- Revise and improve the district safety plan over the next four to six months with consideration of including an independent assessments or consultants for school safety.
- Submit the approved resolution for Charles Klayman to NYSED.
- Gareth will produce a biannual report of vendors with cumulative spending over \$50,000.
- A test complaint will be submitted to ensure the complaint form works correctly. Kristan will add board members as collaborators for the complaint form.
- Analyze KPI data for the next meeting.
  - Present test raw data and discuss subgroups in the next month's meeting.
- Keep the line of communication open with the finance committee for lease negotiation. Potentially convene the finance committee multiple times over the next month for lease negotiation.
- Updated budget expected by the beginning of November.
- Committee formation for January fundraising event postponed until next month.
- Public meeting schedule to be posted on the website with Zoom links.
- Nick to update the board strategy document with feedback from the discussion.
- Kristen to send a spreadsheet on September 27, 2024, for tracking term limits and board data.
- Board Bylaws to be reviewed at the next meeting
- Luke to cancel Trustees invite in board meetings planners