



Namaste Charter School Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, 2023, 6:00 PM

3737 S. Paulina
Chicago, IL 60609

Present Board Members: Maricela Herrera, Michel Mahaffey, Jim O'Toole, Jim Scott, Allison Slade

Absent Board Members: Martins Adeoye, Luis Narvaez

Present Via Phone: No one.

Guests: Sara Urben, Tracy Smith-Jackson, Drew Staples, Can Sulu, Rocio Tovar

Agenda

***I)* Opening Items**

Jim O'Toole

A) Call Meeting to Order

B) Approve Minutes

i) May 1, 2023 – Approval of meeting minutes

Mr. O'Toole called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

Dr. Slade moved to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2023 meeting. Mr.

Scott seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0

***II)* Public Comment/Welcome Guests (20 minutes)**

Michel Mahaffey

Ms. Mahaffey welcomed guests. There were no public comments.

***III)* Northwestern University Golub Capital Board Fellows**

Mr. Sulu reviewed his work and recommendations on the enrollment process. Major findings included the need for clear ownership and responsibility for enrollment and more frequent active enrollment monitoring by grade. Mr. Sulu also made a number of recommendations on changes to the current recruiting work for next year. Mr. Scott asked to include more detail on parent communications. Dr. Slade requested that alumni be added to list of influencers. Mr. Scott also asked for more information on declining school enrollment in the city of Chicago. The board thanked Mr. Sulu for his work with Namaste and wished him well in his new role post graduation.



Mr. Staple, Namaste's new Northwestern University's Golub Capital Board Fellow, introduced himself to the board and guests. Mr. Staple's focus for his work with Namaste is still under discussion.

IV) State of School (45 minutes)

Rocio Tovar

A) School Update

Ms. Tovar began the state of the school reporting discussing health and wellness. There may be a new food vendor for the next school year. There are various grant applications in the application process. A number of events for families students, and teacher appreciation have been held and more are planned for the remainder of the school year.

Ms. Tovar then reviewed student enrollment. Enrollment has increased to 409 students from an enrollment of 399 from at our last meeting (March). Again, the majority of students leaving Namaste are going to Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Non-Public Schools, and the majority of the remainder are transferring out of the district. Ms. Tovar then discussed the continuing work to increase enrollment aligned with Mr. Sulu's previous comments and recommendations.

Ms. Tovar then reviewed staffing. Challenges continue with middle school staffing. The issue also continues with non-certified staff and/or staff with temporary approval that is expiring.

The next topic Ms. Tovar discussed was progress made in Namaste's academic achievements. The 5th and 8th grade students had 85% and 100% of students respectively meeting their goals for the Seal of Biliteracy Pathway. Teachers also provided input on an ELA curriculum review and they began lessons using a new version of Ready Math. Planning for the Summer Learning Academy in partnership with Roosevelt University again this year was also completed. Finally NWEA spring testing has been started.

Ms. Tovar also reported that end of year staff survey and principal evaluation will be completed in May and an annual strategic planning retreat is being planned for June.

Ms. Smith-Jackson then reviewed work in the operation, finance and human resource areas. Facilities have been reviewed for possible summer projects and quotes are being reviewed to update plumbing. The necessary elevator part has been ordered and the school's phone system has been updated. The payroll



processing vendor has been converted to Paylocity. The school's required 990 reports were also approved and submitted.

Ms. Urban and Ms. Tovar then reviewed the timeline for charter renewal. The initial kick-off meeting was held with CPS in late April. Facilities documents are due to CPS in late May and CPS will also make various templates available this month. Special Educational audits will be held during late May and early June with the remainder to be scheduled in the fall. CPS will schedule Culture and Climate visits starting in August to be complete by the end of November. CPS will then make renewal recommendations to the CPS board in December.

V) Finance (15 minutes)

Jim Scott

A) Financial Reports

Mr. Scott provided an update on Namaste's current year end projections with no issues to report.

VI) Development (15 minutes)

Allison

Slade

A) Development Update

Dr. Slade had no specific updates for development. She did remind all present of the upcoming Namaste Lucky Flames Casino Night benefit on June 1, 2023 at Lacuna Lofts.

Closed Meeting Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)

A) Vote to go in to closed session

Jim O'Toole

B) Vote to exit closed session

Mr. Scott moved to go in to closed session at 8:12p pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2). Dr. Slade seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0

Mr. O'Toole made a motion to exit closed session at 9:21pm. Ms. Mahaffey seconded the motion.

All in favor: 5; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0



VIII) Vote on Matters Discussed in Closed Session (if necessary)
O'Toole

Jim

There were no matters discussed in closed session requiring a vote.

IX) Closing Items
O'Toole

Jim

- A) Board Recruitment
- B) Adjourn Meeting

Mr. O'Toole reviewed recommendations for recruiting board member candidates. Ms. Herrera and Ms. Mahaffey volunteered to help with recruiting.

Mr. O'Toole moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55p. Dr. Slade seconded the motion.
All in favor: 5; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0