



Namaste Charter School Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 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: Can Sulu.

Guests: Fabian Garcia, Tracy Smith-Jackson, Rocio Tovar

Agenda

I) Opening Items

Jim O'Toole

- A) Call Meeting to Order
- B) Approve Minutes
 - Approval of minutes from 9/27/22 Meeting

Mr. O'Toole called the meeting to order at 6:09 pm.

Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the September 27, 2022 meeting minutes, Dr. Slade seconded the motion.

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

II) Public Comment/Welcome Guests

Michel Mahaffey

Ms. Mahaffey welcomed guests.

There were no public comments.

III) State of School (60 minutes)

Rocio Tovar

- A) School Update

Ms. Tovar began the state of the school report by reviewing enrollment. As of 11/9/22 there are 416 students enrolled. That is a net decrease of 4 students from late September. Since August, the majority of students leaving Namaste are going to Chicago Public Schools and Chicago Non-Public Schools (53%). The majority of the remainder are transferring out of the district (41%). Mr. Scott asked if CPS had discussed any direction on the current environment of declining enrollment across the city. Neither Ms. Tovar nor Ms. Smith-Jackson had heard of any discussion on declining enrollment. Ms. Mahaffey asked if Namaste's enrollment declines match those in the district and in schools in Namaste's neighborhood. Dr. Slade also asked specifically about enrollment at Greene Elementary School and Evergreen Elementary School. Ms. Tovar said she will provide that information at the next board meeting. Ms. Tovar then discussed continuing work to increase enrollment. Parents with children in Velma Thomas visited the school. Work continues on various marketing and awareness activities and completion of the enrollment strategic plan.



Ms. Tovar then reviewed staffing. Currently there are 3 open positions; a clerk, a paraprofessional, and a custodian. The administration is still negotiating with their labor partners on the new custodian position. One staffing challenge is a 7th/8th grade math teacher who resigned recently and that position is currently being filled with a long-term substitute. A security guard remains at the school from 10a – 6p. The end date for this position is still to be determined.

Ms. Tovar then reviewed the results of the Fall Upbeat survey. Overall results from this survey were extremely positive. Of the 23 categories in the survey, Namaste increased ratings in 21 of the categories by an average of 12%. Areas of strength included instructional leadership (92% positive/19.5% increase from Spring 2022), Appreciation (83% positive/26% increase) and Principal/Teacher Trust up 21% to 93% positive. Areas for focus for improvement are compensation and career path, work/life balance, and professional development. Ms. Mahaffey asked if the results of this survey could be integrated with the 5 Essentials results to find more insight. Ms. Tovar said this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Fall NWEA testing results were then discussed. There were a number of questions from the board on these results. Based on the discussion and questions, Ms. Tovar will provide a more detailed analysis of the NWEA results at the next board meeting.

Work continues on improving professional development. Earlier this month, a full day of differentiated PD was held. Goals for the session included strengthening the morning meeting and advisory block, building more joyful, engaged learning environments, and identifying logical consequences for misbehavior. Ms. Tovar commented that much of the current PD improvement focus is on the classroom environment and data. Weekly surveys are also being implemented that are aligned to the 5 Essentials results and improvement work.

For the Bilingual Program, Ms. Tovar said there continues to be biweekly meeting with OLCE to identify additional action steps to improve Namaste’s bilingual rating. Ms. Tovar said significant progress has been made on compliance. The administration is also working to connect teachers with opportunities to earn their EL endorsement.

Ms. Smith-Jackson then presented an operations update. There have been a number of ongoing service calls on the heating and air conditioning unit ventilators. Namaste received additional ESSER funding this quarter, and more work with CPS is necessary to determine specific requirements for their use. Ms. Smith-Jackson also reported that the financial audit should be complete in two weeks and an extension has been requested from CPS for submission.

IV) Finance (20 minutes)

Jim Scott

A) Financial Reports

Mr. Scott reviewed current first quarter financial reports and performance against budget. There are significant variances. He also highlighted that the recently received ESSER funds are not included in these reports. Mr. Scott again reiterated the financial impact of Namaste’s reduced enrollment.

V) Development (10 minutes)

Allison Slade

A) Development Update



Dr. Slade reviewed current development work. An annual development plan has been completed and was reviewed with the board. A Casino Night is planned for 2023. This event will be hosted by the Associate Board with help from the Alumni Board.

VI) Closed Meeting Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8)

- A) Vote to go in to closed session Michel Mahaffey
- B) Vote to exit closed session Ad

Ms. Mahaffey moved to go in to closed session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) at 7:23p.

Mr. Scott seconded the motion.

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

Mr. O'Toole made a motion to exit closed session at 8:37pm. Dr. Slade seconded the motion.

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

VII) Vote on Matters Discussed in Closed Session (if necessary) Michel Mahaffey

Ms. Mahaffey made a motion to approve leaving the closed session minutes from 05/2021 to 04/2022 closed as discussed in closed session. Dr. Slade seconded the motion. The meeting dates are in Exhibit A.

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

Ms. Mahaffey made a motion to approve and keep confidential meeting minutes from 05/2022 to 09/2022 as discussed in closed session, Ms. Herrera seconded the motion. The meeting dates are in Exhibit B.

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

Ms. Mahaffey made a motion to approve the destruction of the closed session minutes from 01/2021 to 05/2021 as discussed in closed session, Mr. Scott seconded the motion. The meeting dates are in Exhibit C.

VIII) Closing Items Jim O'Toole

- A) Adjourn Meeting

Mr. O'Toole made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44p. Dr. Slade seconded the motion.

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



Exhibit A – Leaving Closed

- 2022-04-05 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2022-02-22 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2021-10-26 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)
- 2021-08-31 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2021-06-22 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)
- 2021-05-25 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- 2021-05-06 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2021-01-26 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)

Exhibit B – Approve and Close

- 2022-09-27 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8)
- 2022-08-16 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2022-06-21 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2022-05-10 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)

Exhibit C - Destruction

- 2021-05-06 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2021-01-26 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)