



The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School  
Board of Trustees meeting  
August 15, 2020. 10:00 a.m. By video conference.

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Board members on call:

*Sarah Navarro*  
*Atalie Jacobs*  
*Jonathan O'Connell*  
*Craig Robinson*  
*Richard Pohlman*  
*Kiva Zytnick*  
*Wendy Pugh*

*Board members absent:*  
*Marlena McWilliams*  
*Laure Fleming*  
*Caroline Hill*

Staff on call:  
Justin Lessek

### **Orders of Business**

1. General school updates, from Justin.

a. Opening plans

We have 90 students enrolled, and have only lost 2-3 students as lottery progresses. The number has been fairly static.

School will begin remotely for most students. Truth is also reserving 20 on-campus seats for students who have greatest need, with only 12 people at most in a room and maximizing use of outdoor space. About 20 families have said they would like to have their students attend in-person.

b. Staff

Three staff members have said they would prefer to start the year remotely. Sarah suggested we look into protections provided by the Coronavirus Families Relief Act.

c. Operations

Having some students attend in-person and others remotely required adding an extra daily period of instruction to avoid overlap. Furniture has arrived, wifi is running, chromebooks have arrived. We have full supplies of masks, hand soap and sanitizer

d. Enrollment and family engagement

We have hit many of our enrollment targets in terms of making sure we attract students of color, students with disability and other students of need. We have more students coming from Wards 7 and 8 than we expected and will have to consider transportation challenges. Staff held a community meeting with enrolled families Aug. 3.

2. Reopening “problem of practice”

Justin presented Truth’s plan for opening safely during COVID, which the board reviewed. Jonathan and Craig suggested a lawyer review it. There was some discussion about whether to require a waiver of families or staff and about the best way for students and staff to be tested. Sarah will follow up.

3. Strategic planning in our current context

Atalie and Justin shared an updated strategic plan draft that considers the challenges of remote learning and COVID safety. Since the last update it has become much more clear that in-person learning will likely be minimal this year. Goals are presently grouped in three categories: attendance, engagement and retention.

Board members reviewed the document. Rich and Wendy said they would like to see some type of academic goals included. Justin shared some possible academic goals. Craig raises some financial/compliance goals. Academic committee will consider board’s input and make changes.

4. Committee updates

a. Finance and Audit Committee.

Craig said we remain in a good financial position. Truth hired an audit firm and will meet with them shortly. Finance committee also made some changes to Truth health plan offerings to reflect COVID changes.

b. Ad-hoc Facilities Committee

Justin said the committee has been working to select a broker to help with short-term and long-term searches. LISC has been providing guidance.

c. Governance Committee

Atalie explained that we need to add two parents as board members. Justin has asked for interested parents and some have volunteered. Atalie shared a chart of board

members so we can assess our board's current strengths and weaknesses. Board members filled in their areas of expertise. Atalie provided a brief update on Open Meetings Act rules.

### **Next steps**

Justin will share information on student enrollment by ward.

Rich will follow up on legal review of operations plan.

Justin and Atalie will update goals of strategic plan.

Atalie will send matrix of board expertise around and begin board interviews.

Sarah will follow-up with Academic Committee

### **Closing**

*Meeting adjourned at 12:53.*

### **Materials**