

ELSIE WHITLOW STOKES COMMUNITY FREEDOM PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
Board of Trustees Meeting

**AGENDA**

**November 13, 2021**

**Trustees Attending:** Carlos Bonner, Tracey Friedlander, Crystal Goliday, Heather Harding, Hoyt King, Ami, Rodney Rice, Richardson, Jenice View

**Staff Attending:** Erika Bryant, Bill Moczydlowski, Linda Moore

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the September 2021 board meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously following a motion by Jenice View and a second by Ami Richardson.

**SB & Company Presentation of Financial Audit:**

Tiana Wynn of SB & Company presented an overview of the financial audit of June 30, 2021, including highlights of:

- The Uniform Grant Audit (for federal funds)
- Preparation of the 2020 Federal Form 990 and 990T
- Schedule of Vendors in excess of \$25,000 (unaudited)
- Limited scope audit of the December 31, 2020 Employee Benefits
- Preparation of the Form 5500s

As a result of the audit, SB & Company:

- Is planning to issue an unmodified opinion on the financial statements;
- Received full cooperation from management;
- Discovered no material weakness in internal controls, recommendations and observations related to the employee benefit plan.

The report recommended:

- That the school review its formal credit card policies (in process);
- That the school review the 403(b) plan to ensure that the plan has been implemented in accordance to the terms set forth in the plan document;
- That management explore the possibility of integrating the payroll system and the benefit plan, to eliminate or minimize human error that could occur as a result of manual handling of census demographic data, as well as compensation and contributions.

Discussion: Adina Ellis asked whether the general conclusion of the audit indicates that the financial status of the school is sound. Ms. Wynn responded that there were no audit adjustments and that there was an unmodified report on the financial statement, no material weaknesses in internal controls.

## **Executive Director's State of the School Report:**

Erika Bryant presented the annual state of the school report.

- State of COVID Response
  1. The Mayor imposed a vaccination mandate for all schools (staff) in November. Stokes School currently has a 90% compliance rate.
  2. The *Our Children Emergency Amendment Act of 2021* has been enacted for the purpose of expanding virtual learning options for some students. However, now that 5-11 year-olds are eligible for vaccination, Stokes School students, except for 3 and 4-year-olds, will not be eligible for this provision.
  3. Privia Health has taken over the school's COVID response protocols and procedures. The school has been awarded an OSSE grant intended to fund clinical support for COVID-related processes.
  4. Jenice View recommended that the board consider how the board will celebrate the extraordinary efforts of staff and leadership to educate and keep the students safe.

- Middle States Association Reaccreditation Visit and Review for Early Childhood Education Program of Distinction

A Middle States Association team will visit the campuses next week in preparation for reaccreditation and will assess the school's eligibility to receive designation as an Early Childhood Education Program of Distinction.

- 25 Year Review and Celebration

This year the school will begin the 25-year review process by the Public Charter School Board. In addition, this year Stokes will begin to prepare for its 25<sup>th</sup> year celebration that will take place in SY23-24.

## **Middle School Expansion Planning**

Erika Bryant reported that, pending approval by the board, in 2022, the school will submit an application to PCSB to request a charter amendment that will allow the school to expand the grades served and to increase the enrollment ceiling.

Jenice View, Chair of the Academic Excellence Committee, led trustees in a discussion of the rationale for a middle school expansion, citing these considerations:

- Stokes School's East End campus will graduate its first class of fifth graders in SY23-24 and it is anticipated that DCI will not be able to accommodate all of the incoming middle school students from its feeder schools by that date.
- Neighboring Houston Elementary school's language immersion program will also have 5<sup>th</sup> grade graduates in SY23-24.
- Many Stokes School parents who live close to the East End campus have expressed a preference for a language immersion middle school that will be closer to home.

Next steps for moving forward with an application for middle school expansion will include:

- At the January board meeting, formal approval by the board to proceed;
- Meeting with PCSB leadership;
- Preparing a detailed summary document for board and potential funders

**Discussion:**

1. Friedlander: What are the financial implications of the proposed expansion? Erika Bryant responded that the school's leadership will address financial implications when it prepares and presents at the January board meeting a document that includes need, projections for enrollment, financial needs for the project, similar to the work that was done to prepare for the East End campus.
2. Goliday: Many East End parents are interested in contributing to the support of developing and opening the proposed school.
3. Bryant: Well-established partners may be interested in supporting the start-up of the proposed campus. In addition, there are currently federal resources to support school start-ups.
4. King and Ellis: Asked about the current availability of documents to support the need for expansion. MS. Bryant indicated that the goal is to have summary documents ready to present by the January board meeting.
5. Harding: Indicated that she is supportive of the expansion plan but advised that the school should be cautious about local politics regarding charter school expansion.
6. Golliday and Bryant: It may be possible to partner with other language immersion schools to plan a middle school.

**Real-time questions and comments from parents presented by Crystal Golliday:**

1. What are the plans for relaxing [COVID mitigation] standards after the holidays?  
Response from Ms. Bryant: It depends on the status of the COVID spread.
2. Some parents would like to continue current mitigation standards.
3. One parent commended Dr. Harding's admonition to consider political implications of planning for a middle school.

**Closed Session:**

The open meeting adjourned at 11:14 for a closed session for training board development and leadership training.

**Adjournment:**

The open meeting re-convened and was adjourned at noon following a motion to adjourn by Ami Richardson and a second by Jenice View.

**Follow up Needed:**

- Review progress toward the current strategic plan in the January 2022 board meeting
- Prepare a summary case document for middle school expansion to be presented at the January 2022 board meeting
- Secure formal approval of the board to proceed with the middle school expansion proposal
- Approve the FY21 1099

- Consider and decide on strategies to celebrate teachers' and staff members' successes to date during the current school year