

# ELSIE WHITLOW STOKES COMMUNITY FREEDOM PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

March 12, 2022

**Trustees Attending:** Adina Ellis, Hoyt King, Tracey Friedlander, Robyn Lingo, Erica McGrady, Ami Richardson, Jenice View

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

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 am by Vice-Chair, Ami Richardson.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** The agenda and minutes were approved unanimously with a motion by Tracey Friedlander and seconded by Jenice View.

**Finance Committee Report:** Bill Moczydlowski presented the Financial Report for the period ending December 2021.

- Total income = \$8,481,336.89.
- Total expenses = \$7,227,392.13
- Income trailed budget by \$300K primarily due to yet-to-be reimbursed government grant funds. Private grants and donations lag behind budget. It is anticipated that by year-end, income will be aligned with budget.
- Expenses exceeded budget by \$338K due primarily to additional staff and direct student costs, e.g., student COVID tests. A \$350k deficit is anticipated by year-end.

### **Executive Director's Report:**

- Erika Bryant reported on the current status of Stokes School's COVID mitigation response. Stokes School has updated its COVID protocol in response to recent CDC and DC Health Department recommendations. Beginning next week, students and staff will be able to remove masks outdoors. Shields will be removed in all classrooms except pre-k classrooms. Although DC Health Department allows schools to determine indoor mask requirements based on the status of their school community, for now Stokes will continue to require indoor masking but may modify this requirement after consultation with the school's medical advisor, Privia. Sixty percent of students at Brookland are unvaccinated and 75% of East End students are unvaccinated, primarily because of the large Pre-K populations and students at that age are not eligible to receive vaccinations.

Adina Ellis and Ami Richardson commended Erika Bryant and the school's leadership team and staff for continuing to seek and find resources to keep students and employees safe. Adina Ellis asked when the school will communicate the decision about the school's masking requirement to the school community. A meeting to discuss this topic is scheduled with Privia for Monday morning, March 14. It is likely that the school will take a wait- and-see approach to evaluate the experiences of schools that do drop indoor mask requirements. In addition, many of the

school routines have been built around the COVID mitigation protocols and additional time will be required to implement any changes. The school will communicate to parents and other members of the school community during the week of March 14, 2022.

Ms. Bryant addressed two questions that were forwarded to the Board meeting by East End parents. One question addressed anticipated changes to COVID mitigation protocols, e.g., field trips, mixing cohorts, etc. Field trips have begun. Leadership does not anticipate mixing cohorts soon. At a very minimum, the school will continue to test 20 percent of its students weekly, as that requirement is required by law in DC.

- Stokes School was re-accredited by Label France Education. This accreditation provides the school with numerous teaching resources.
- PCB's Mid-Year Compliance Report, of complaints from the community, compliance with any school requirements and progress toward meeting school goals found the school to be compliant without findings and there were no complaints found during the first half of the school year.
- Middle States Association's preliminary report of its 20 year review of Stokes School found no deficiencies and offered few recommendations. Receipt of the final report within a few months.
- Preliminary plans have begun for Stokes School's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The plans include celebration of the school's traditions, a communications and media campaign, coupled with a major fundraising effort to support strategic planning goals, that will culminate in a special event. Adina Ellis, Linda Moore and other staff have agreed to assume leadership for this effort.
- Ms. Bryant led a discussion of the status of the proposed middle-high school expansion plans:
  - The Need
    - Due to growth in the number of language immersion charter elementary schools in Washington, DC there is increasing demand for seats in a middle and high school that offers language immersion programming.
    - There are no middle or high schools in wards 7 and 8 that offer language immersion schools.
    - Stokes School will graduate its first 5<sup>th</sup> grade class at the East End campus in 2024
    - DCI, the only language immersion middle-high school in DC, located in ward 4, projects that it will not be able to accommodate all of the graduates from the five elementary feeder school in school year 2024-25.
    - Although we would like to open a middle high language immersion school in Ward 7 or 8 –close to our East End campus -we are open to locating in other wards, where facilities are available.
    - School leaders want to be sure that the community where the school locates is receptive to the idea of a language immersion middle/high school.

➤ School Design

The middle-high school will be an extension of the current Stokes School charter. Graduates from the East End and Brookland campuses will be offered automatic admission as long as space is available.

The school will open with 50-75 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, adding a grade annually until it achieves full growth with a 12<sup>th</sup> grade class.

➤ Timeline

- Board decision ratifying support for proceeding with expansion plans and communication to stakeholders, March 2022
- Community surveys to gather feedback about expansion, and summary, spring-fall, 2022
- Continuing conversations with Wards 7 and 8 language immersion elementary schools,
- Submit charter school amendment to PCSB, early 2023
- Fundraising, summer 2022 and ongoing
- PCSB charter amendment/denial, 2023
- Proposed middle school opening date, 8-2024
- Grades to be served, 6<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup>

➤ Middle-High School start-up finances

- Bill Mocydlowski presented overview of projected finance requirements for starting up a charter school.

**Discussion:**

- Adina Ellis asked whether the focus on locating a middle-high school in Wards 7 and 8 is driven primarily by real estate costs, need in the wards and or both. Ms. Bryant replied that both of the factors are being considered.
- Ami Richardson and Tracey Friedlander asked whether the projected number of graduating Stokes students will be able to be accommodated at the proposed middle-high school as well as DCI? Ms. Bryant replied in the affirmative.
- Robyn Lingo asked how students who have not had a language immersion background in elementary school will be able to enroll in the proposed school. Ms. Bryant responded that the school's design will be developed to be able to accommodate these students.

**Action:** Tracey Friedlander proposed a motion for the school to move forward with an application to the DCPCSB to the charter to add a middle-high school in fall 2024 The motion was seconded by Hoyt King and carried unanimously.

- Following a motion by Tracey Friedlander and a second by Jenice View, Ami Richardson adjourned the open meeting for a closed session for the purpose of reporting and discussing ongoing or planned investigations of alleged criminal or civil misconduct or violations of law, or regulations that, upon disclosure to the public would harm the investigation and to vote on

proposed new trustees. Upon the completion of the closed session business, Ms. Richardson re-convened the meeting and the governance committee announced its report.

**Governance Committee Report:**

Erica McGrady presented a motion, which was seconded by Jenice View, to appoint Kira Orr and Antoine Smith as new trustees. The new trustees were appointed unanimously.

Hoyt King presented a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Tracey Friedlander and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 am.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Saturday, May 14, 2022.