



The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School
Board of Trustees meeting
June 25, 2022. 10:00 a.m. By video conference.

Board members on call:

*Wendy Pugh
John Kenchelian
Laura Masimini
Donice Leak
Christa Kovacs
Rachel Kimboko
Aryan Bocquet*

Board members absent:

*Jonathan O'Connell
Kiva Zytnick
Richard Pohlman
Caroline Hill
Atalie Jacobs*

Staff on call:
Justin Lessek

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The meeting started at 10 a.m. with an icebreaker (recording begins at 10:20).

New Business

1. Approval of minutes from April 23, 2022 meeting

Wendy moved to approve the minutes from the April meeting. Aryan seconded the motion. The board approved the minutes unanimously (Ayes; Aryan, Luau, John, Rachel, Christa, Donice, Wendy).

2. Vote: Approval of FY22-23 Budget (John)

John reviewed the current financials and summarized the work of the finance committee for the past two months. We can expect the end of year fiscal numbers to be finalized in July and a final presentation after the audit is complete.

John reminded the board that we are submitting a two-year budget, but FY 23-24 is meant to be a forecast. He reviewed the key points from the budget report and emphasized that an overarching objective is ensure that the school is in a strong position for a building purchase in the future.

John pointed out that the bulk of the work of refining the budget is done in the finance committee but extended members to ask questions about the school's finances at any time. Justin added that there has been input by the broader community as well.

Wendy moved to approve the budget, Laura seconded. The Board approved the motion unanimously

(Ayes; Aryan, Luau, John, Rachel, Christa, Donice, Wendy)

3. Facilities Update (Justin)

Between Truth and LAMB use of the facility is being reorganized to better create a unique space for the 9th grade and prepare for modular classrooms. In SY23-24, after LAMB leaves, Truth will expand into the first floor and keep the modulares. It is possible that there will be more space in the building in the following year, but Perry Street Prep is not planning to release any.

Facilities search is centering on the areas where there are the most students, right now this is Wards 5 and 7.

Justin shared several examples of properties that are currently being explored. We're looking for 45,000-50,000 sq ft. While several have reasonable purchase prices, the costs for renovation are rising rapidly, ranging in the \$500/sq ft (almost double last year's estimates).

Currently working on an LOI (letter of intent) to lease a new build as part of a development project.

The Board broached concerns about security in one location and about the need for community outreach from immediate neighbors to the single-member and area ANC.

4. Executive Update: Justin provided an update on the following:

a. **School Year in Review:** Shared a picture of the whole school and then some images from the first yearbook, like individual and action photos from two squads. Reviewing the timeline of the year, Justin shared photos from each key moment, up to the last day of the school year.

b. **Student Demographics:** Justin shared an update on the school's new demographics, including special populations (EL, SpEd, At-Risk) already flagged through Early Access. He acknowledged that our SpEd percentage is higher than typical for MS in the system and this is reflected in our staffing for SY 22-23. As well, our At-Risk percentage is lower than we'd hoped but he does believe that the "Equitable Access" preference did work to keep it from dipping even lower. Justin also shared the places students are coming from, which is a very diverse group.

c. **Staff Demographics:** The staff demographic breakdown (by race/ethnicity) strongly mirrors that of the student body, which has been a guiding intention.

d. **Family Survey Data:** an overall strong response is consistent and the team is exploring questions where lack of satisfaction is being expressed. Parents expressed in their comments that confirm that the design principles are working (growth, connection, love of learning) and that the work of supporting adolescents in their social development and balancing that with academics.

d. **Student Achievement:** Justin shared math and language scores from the end of year assessment. Math growth was solid, but ELA was really strong. At each grade level, the average growth on MAP Reading exceeded the typical average. For sub-groups this strong growth carries through, where they had larger gains than their peers. For math, this didn't carry through consistently for all grades or for all sub-groups. After report cards and PARCC scores are analyzed, there will be more to share.

One new area for data collection will be to look at non-academic aspects of the program like participation in clubs or restorative justice conferences.

e. **High School Planning:** Justin shared that the HS team is fully hired and has been able to have a first day of team planning together. 11 of 9th graders will take classes at Trinity through the ATC program (about 20%), giving them access to college-level coursework.

f. **Goal-Setting:** Justin shared some of the big goals that emerged from staff reflection: continue to outpace national growth norms, close gaps between subgroups, continuing to develop a staff guidebook (that shares the "ways of being" for adults in the building, collecting consistent observation data for coaching (DERS) at the adolescent level, increased levels of overall student satisfaction (social-emotional), more grace & courtesy across the entire community, and norming around regular and positive communication with parents.

g. **Summer Projects:** Justin shared summer projects for students, faculty, and staff.

Board asked whether there is an opportunity to invite parents to more meaningful engagement around the family survey results, especially considering how to support students' social experience. Justin agreed to consider how to do that.

4. Committee updates

a. Governance : no report.

b. Finance & Audit : Covered in section 1.

c. Development ; have exceeded the \$15,000 goal for the year and have included \$32,000 for SY22-23 (and considering increasing that internally to \$40,000). Have begun exploring getting a capital campaign started to prepare for our future purchase.

There is a goal to create clear fundraising goals that will allow parents to engage in their areas of interest and expertise (for example, a sports program campaign). Want to have something in place before school starts in August.

We are seeking more individual donors, so Christa encouraged us all to start identifying people in our networks who might be good prospects. At Board request, she'll put together a session for members to support our personal development work.

d. Facilities : Covered in section 2.

e. Academic Achievement : Covered in the Executive review.

5. Closed session (11:59 am)

Wendy moved to move us to a closed session to discuss Executive Director compensation. Aryan seconded. The Board approved the motion unanimously

(Ayes; Aryan, Laura, John, Rachel, Christa, Donice, Wendy)

6. Closing and next steps

Closing

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.