

Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors Meeting

November 18, 2015

403 James Street, New Haven

I. Call to Order & Attendance

The following directors and staff were in attendance:

Richard Ferguson, ECCP Board - Yes

William Heins, ECCP Board - Yes

Laura Saverin, ECCP Board - Yes

Lystra Richardson, ECCP Board - Yes

Carlos Torre, ECCP Board - No

Genevive Walker, ECCP Board - Yes

Kaitlyn Stasik, ECCP Board - Yes

Magaly Cajigas, ECCP Board - No

Marnie Halsey, ECCP Board - Yes

Patric Gregory, ECCP Board - Yes

Patricia Pierce, ECCP Board - No

Sean Williams, ECCP Board - No

Sharon Oster, ECCP Board - Yes

Stephanie Ma, ECCP Board - Yes

Sarah Blanton, AF Network Support - Yes

Andrew Poole, School Leadership - Yes

Chris Friedline, School Leadership - Yes

Robert Hawke, School Leadership - Yes

Karin Gould, School Leadership - Yes

Shirley Harrell, School Leadership - Yes

Sarah Hogarty, School Leadership - Yes

Public: Marilyn M. Carson, Sunasha Nixon, Aliyya Swaby

II. Open Session For Public Comment

Ms. Sunasha Nixon expressed her interest in making sure all parents know about the board meetings and are encouraged to attend. She has a daughter at Elm City Middle (Greenfield) and was interested in hearing the discussion at the board meeting and had no other prepared remarks.

III. Reports and Discussion

A. Principal Reports

Elm City College Prep ES (Andrew Poole)

Mr. Andrew Poole spoke about last year's test results which include some strong performance where the ECCP Elementary school students outperformed schools in DRG - A (the wealthiest district in CT).

The school had very strong staff retention - retaining 85 - 90 percent of the staff which allowed the school to hit the ground running at the beginning of the year. Mr. Poole feels that the school is in a stronger position than they were last year. They made some shifts in the reading and math program because while they did well, they didn't feel the results were great, and they've made a commitment to parents to be great. The school is working on being sure they are helping teachers through this change so that they continue to have strong retention.

Mr. Poole discussed the Greenfield implementation. The kindergarten was the strongest in the entire network last year. Ms. Kate Baker is the director of the program. The kindergarten scholars have done an expedition which is aligned to what they're working on in school. Their first expedition was to go to a farm. All work in the Greenfield model is in small groups. It allows the teachers to meet the scholars where they are academically and help them accelerate their learning. Dream Team meetings just occurred. The parents (and coaches and grandparents) were excited and left with huge smiles on their faces.

Mr. Ferguson wants to schedule some small groups of visitors to come see the school, especially the kindergarten.

Elm City College Prep MS (Chris Friedline)

Mr. Chris Friedline is running the 7th and 8th graders at the Dixwell Ave school. ECCP MS exceeded the state average for both math and ELA and retained 100 percent of teachers from last year. Talented, experienced teachers have had an impact on the budget which, while great for classroom instruction, has had a negative impact on things like the end of year trip (which won't happen). They've tried to make the two campuses still feel like one school. Some of the camaraderie between teachers who were accustomed to working together is missing and when there is significant change, it is critical to keep bonds between teachers and spirits high.

Elm City Greenfield MS (Robert Hawke)

Mr. Robert Hawke talked about the tremendous opportunity at the school. With all the new aspects of the Greenfield program, there can be challenges.

Mr. Hawke shared some stories from students who feel a much greater sense of joy being at school. One girl said that she feels she can be her "full self" at school. Students feel that they can bring their interests to school, talking about what matters to them and be themselves.

One of the challenges they are facing is that there's no benchmark with other schools, so it's unclear how to measure success. They did not take Interim Assessments. They have a nationally normed test that they gave to scholars (the rigor isn't as great as the rigor of IAs). The scholars took it at the beginning of the year and again and found that, depending on grade level, 80 percent made percentile growth. There is clearly learning happening in the building.

Considering the long term success of the model, Mr. Hawke believes it is challenging to have so many new teachers. Ms. Lystra Richardson inquired about the supports available to teachers. Mr. Hawke said that teachers are going to Relay Grad School doing training with Rebecca Good, some are getting outside coaching and Marc Michaelson, the Regional Superintendent, and Mr Hawke are doing lots of coaching.

The school day is long (goes to 5:00pm) which is a real challenge for many teachers. Mr. Hawke

expressed an interest in increasing the support for teachers in terms of an adjusted leadership structure with more support on the academic side. Mr. Hawke would like for teachers to really engage with one another in this discussion.

The enrichment activities are some of the strongest aspects of the school.

There is an expedition scheduled for January for one week rather than the originally scheduled two.

Mr. Hawke asked Ms. Nixon about her daughter's experience. She shared that the school leaders are very open and receptive. Her daughter is new to AF, having come from a Montessori school. Sometimes she feels like the pace is fast but Ms. Nixon is very pleased with the holistic approach that the Greenfield school takes. "You're doing great stuff" she said to Mr. Hawke.

B. Joint High School Committee Report (Dick Ferguson)

Mr Ferguson gave a report from the Joint High School Committee on the successes and challenges of Amistad High School.

C. Teacher Certification (Laurie Bussmann)

Ms. Bussmann did not provide an update on teacher certification.

D. Governance Committee (Marnie Halsey)

The Bylaws subcommittee has been meeting regularly since last spring and the hope is to have the amended Bylaws ready for the January meeting.

The Roles and Responsibilities document has been presented to the board and will incorporate the suggested amendment from Laura Saverin about the engagement with the auditors. Ms Halsey walked the board through the document highlighting important components.

She also spoke about the Governance Committee's work around seeking and vetting new board members, the importance of attending State trainings, and committee involvement.

E. Background Check Update (Sarah Blanton)

All board members need to complete the DCF release form and get fingerprinted in order to be compliant. Several board members have already completed both and Sarah Blanton will follow up with everyone who has not done so.

F. Finance Committee Report (Laura Saverin)

Ms. Laura Saverin presented the finance report. The audit was clean and timely but there was a finding about teacher certification. Ms. Saverin expressed satisfaction with our auditor.

IV. Executive Session

The board entered executive session at 7:35pm

Moved by Genevive Walker

Seconded by Laura Saverin

The board exited executive session at 7:46pm

V. Board Business

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby approves the meeting minutes from September 16, 2015.

Elm City College Prep meeting

Moved by Pat Gregory

Seconded Laura Saverin

All in favor

Joint meeting minutes

Moved by Sharon Oster

Seconded by Genevive Walker

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby approves the financial report as presented,

Moved by Sharon Oster

Seconded by Stephanie Ma

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby accepts the report of the independent auditors CohnReznik prepared in relation to the fiscal year ended 6/30/2015.

Moved by Genevive Walker

Seconded by Marnie Halsey

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby accepts the Roles and Responsibilities document as presented.

Laura Saverin wants to amend the language “we engage the auditor.”

Moved by Sharon Oster

Seconded by Genevive Walker

All in favor

RESOLVED, the Elm City College Preparatory Board of Directors hereby accepts the Conflict of Interest Policy as presented.

The board was not presented with an updated Conflict of Interest policy because AF has not gotten feedback from the State on the draft presented. Once feedback is received, the board will review the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm by Dick Ferguson.