

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
BOYS' LATIN OF PHILADELPHIA CHARTER SCHOOL**

Wednesday, February 8, 2017
5501 Cedar Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Marianne Dean, Will Kontes, Torch Lytle, Albert Oehrle, Sally Randolph, Patrick South, Wes Wyatt, Steve Smith

Board Members Joined by Phone: Dick Williams, Jim Diehl, Isaac Ewell, Dave Hardy, Cliff Thomas

Board Members Excused: Janice Murdoch, Joe Conwell, Steve Kempf, Matthew Schuh, Bill Thorkelson

Staff in Attendance: Noah Tennant, Ruth Gonzalez, Colleen Smith, Kerry Woodward, Mike Whisman, Joel Witter

Parent Representative in Attendance: Elaine Wells

Guests: Jenna Smalley, Kleinbard LLC

I. Call to Order: *Marianne Dean*

Ms. Dean calls the meeting to order. There is a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2016 board meeting pending a correction to Mr. Pascale's name, which is moved by Ms. Randolph and seconded by Mr. Kontes. The motion passes unanimously.

II. Deputy CEO Report: *Noah Tennant*

Dr. Tennant begins by reporting that Boys' Latin is moving along with its high school principal search. Applications have been reviewed of candidates from Penn, Temple, Lehigh, and PhillyPLUS. Dr. Tennant states that there are currently 32 viable applicants, and the first round of interviews will be set up for next week.

Continuing, Dr. Tennant shares a piece pertaining to the national climate stemming from the recent presidential election and its impact on Boys' Latin's students. Boys' Latin believes that the job of teachers is to educate, not indoctrinate. Boys' Latin's teachers take that mission seriously, and Dr. Tennant is impressed with the initiative that the student council has undertaken this year under guidance from faculty. Dr. Tennant reports that Boys' Latin students will host a program this spring to benefit the ACLU as a means of educating the student body on topics important to the students, such as immigration. One of the goals Boys' Latin cited is giving students a greater voice, and empowering them to think critically.

Dr. Tennant asks the board to mark their calendars for the inaugural Boys' Latin lacrosse game, which is scheduled for March 24, 2017 at 4:00 pm at the field located at Belmont Mansion and Chamounix Drive. Boys' Latin's opponent will be Universal Audenreid.

Dr. Tennant then transitions to Mr. Witter's presentation on Boys' Latin's academic data. Dr. Tennant explains the various tests: the State evaluates Boys' Latin using the School Performance Profile (SPP), the Charter School Office uses their Annual Charter Evaluation (ACE), and the School District uses the School Progress Report (SPR).

Dr. Tennant gives a brief overview of the academic data for both the Middle School and High School. At the Middle School level, Boys' Latin scored a 59.0 percent based on achievement, progress, and climate. Dr. Tennant explains that the Middle School was deemed as a model in climate and a city leader in progress, though deficits were identified for students' absolute-value achievement. Dr. Tennant reports that the High School improved and is ranked 33rd out of 83 schools in the City with a 34.0 percent score. Dr. Tennant gives the comparison that neighborhood schools around Boys' Latin range from 8.0 to 14.0 percent. Dr. Tennant explains that Boys' Latin views achievement differently from how Boys' Latin is evaluated, as college success, rather than standardized test score performance, is its highest goal. Boys' Latin views achievement as focus on growth, and how students perform over time as opposed to a snapshot of how they perform when they arrive at Boys' Latin. Dr. Tennant explains that students come here underserved, and standardized testing does not always fully demonstrate how students grow once they enter Boys' Latin's program.

a. Academic Data Update: *Joel Witter*

Mr. Witter begins his presentation by stating that Boys' Latin values students' growth on standardized tests more than students' absolute performance. Mr. Witter explains that Boys' Latin suffers when the District and the State evaluate schools by their absolute performance, since its students arrive to its doors underserved. Mr. Witter states that Boys' Latin wants each of its students to be a top notch performer and, more importantly, college-ready by the end of their time here.

Mr. Witter then overviews the test scores for both the Middle School and High School. Mr. Witter is happy to report that the Middle School experienced great growth last year, and Boys' Latin was excited to see such significant gains reinforced by students' PSSA scores. Mr. Witter adds that the State reported that the Middle School had some of the best growth in Philadelphia. Mr. Witter explains that students are continuing to do better than year before. Mr. Witter reports that in Science, Boys' Latin's 8th Graders are outperforming the School District average. In terms of growth, Boys' Latin has made improvements on all levels of both 6th and 7th grade English and Math. Mr. Witter is also happy to report that the Middle School students are growing faster than expected, and the Middle School is ranked second in Philadelphia in terms of growth. Mr. Witter reiterates that Boys' Latin's goals is for students to grow in their achievement.

Moving onto the High School, Mr. Witter reports that Boys' Latin is in a mixed position. Students are doing quite well in both Algebra and Literature, and have been steadily

improving over the past three years in Biology. On the Keystones, Boys' Latin students perform above the School District average in both Algebra and Literature.

Mr. Witter explains that moving forward, Boys' Latin does not just want to encourage growth, rather turn an eye towards achievement. Mr. Witter reports that Boys' Latin will give students more access to distinguishing honors programs and host a public arts and writing event for students to showcase themselves, as performance is valuable for boys. Mr. Witter adds that the High School will revise its Biology curriculum and increase the rigor of Algebra to assist in preparing students for the Keystones.

There is a discussion on whether Boys' Latin will teach more towards the test, and Mr. Witter explains that teachers will focus on different ways to deliver knowledge in more meaningful ways so students will absorb the material.

Mr. Witter then explains to the board that Boys' Latin is in a unique position in that 100 percent of its students are classified as "historically underperforming" by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Mr. Witter states that there are "buckets" of students based on how those students performed in past, and Boys' Latin is the only school in Philadelphia in which 100 percent of students fall in that category. Mr. Witter describes potential reasons for this anomaly are that this is an all-boys school, and race is a factor as well. Students are not high performing when they enter Boys' Latin, and it takes them more time to catch up.

Mr. Witter concludes his presentation.

Dr. Lytle mentions a contradiction in the testing data as Boys' Latin college acceptance rate is very high. Dr. Tennant adds that out of the 120 colleges Boys' Latin has applied to, not one of those colleges has asked for a test score – not even state colleges. Dr. Tennant states that the School District uses testing as a determination of college readiness, but the better determination is demonstrating readiness while at college. Boys' Latin students have succeeded while at college.

Dr. Tennant reports that Boys' Latin will be hosting a forum at the High School cafeteria on February 15, 2017 at 8:30 am under the banner of "Black Degrees Matter." Dr. Tennant explains the goal of this forum is to start getting others to recalibrate their expectations of what should be valued in a Philadelphia education. Dr. Tennant states that the press will be invited, and thanks Ms. Woodward who has acted as chief strategist in planning this forum.

Ms. Woodward explains that Boys' Latin wants to proactively share the school's success with regard to college in light of the charter renewal process. Over the summer, the school embarked on a mission to get its data together to give to the Charter School Office. Ms. Woodward states that Boys' Latin wants to let the Charter School Office know that Boys' Latin has excelled at its mission: which is to drive phenomenal outcomes of students in college, rather than solely focusing on standardized test scores. Ms. Woodward adds that the School District has not released college matriculation data, persistence data, or completion data disaggregated by race and gender since 2011. Ms. Woodward reports that Boys' Latin

has an 84 percent college matriculation rate and 70 percent two-year college persistence rate, which outperforms the School District by three to four times.

Ms. Woodward states that matriculation data is in line with the mission of its charter, which has been in place since 2006. Ms. Woodward will circulate the minutes of the May 28, 2006 School Reform Commission (SRC) meeting to the board in which Boys' Latin was seeking its charter: the School District opined that it was having a difficult time serving African American male students, while several members of the SRC spoke to how Southwest Philadelphia had too few strong education options. Ms. Woodward relays Boys' Latin's position that it has fulfilled its charter with exemplary success, and will use the upcoming forum to relay this message to the community and city at large.

Ms. Woodward adds that the SRC meeting can be a difficult forum, as meetings typically run very late thus limiting public comment time. Last year four engaged parents of Boys' Latin students attended the meeting, but 3 of the 4 did not make it to the microphone to speak. The "Black Degrees Matter" forum the day before will be a call to action for all African American boys in the community who are not being properly served by the public school system. Boys' Latin has invited parents to speak, as well as members of the SRC, current students, current college students, and alumni who have completed college. Councilwoman Blackwell will attend, as well as board members, local clergy, the *Inquirer*, WHYY/Newsworks. Dr. Tennant adds that the forum will be Boys' Latin's attempt to grab hold of the narrative that outcomes are reflective of the education students receive here, and to compel the School District to release city-wide data with regard to college success.

Dr. Tennant concludes his presentation.

III. Board Committee Reports

a. Finance: *Kerry Woodward*

Ms. Woodward begins by stating that the budgeting process for 2016 was strong and conservative in ways that has served the school well. Ms. Woodward explains that Boys' Latin used "ground up" budgeting practices, which gave autonomy to department chairs to build their own budgets. This autonomy has created a strong sense of accountability and the department chairs have adhered to those budgets. Ms. Woodward then takes the board through the financial breakdown, noting a strong net income position for the end of the year. Ms. Woodward states that enrollment is lower than originally projected, which will not have a substantial revenue impact because the blend of Special Education to regular education is higher than budgeted, which offsets the result.

Continuing, Ms. Woodward notes that Boys' Latin is in a safe and comfortable spot when it comes to its loan covenants. Ms. Woodward states that she, Dr. Tennant and Ms. Gonzalez will get together in the coming week to take a deep dive into the staffing plan, and will begin to budget salaries and benefits much earlier than in previous years.

Ms. Woodward concludes her presentation.

b. Facilities: *Kerry Woodward for Joe Conwell*

Ms. Woodward begins by thanking Mr. Conwell in his absence for the great work he did in restoring the lot next to the High School. Boys' Latin looks like a different school, and the students, community and neighbors appreciate the new field. Ms. Woodward reports that Boys' Latin will plant a garden, and currently have five active bee hives outdoors. Ms. Woodward states that the Facilities Committee is currently evaluating the aspects of finishing touches, such as lighting and additional fencing to protect the field from the bee ecology area. Ms. Woodward reports that the project will be completed on budget, thanks to a generous donation by an anonymous donor.

Ms. Woodward concludes her presentation.

c. Governance: *Albert Oehrle*

There are no Governance updates.

d. Strategic Planning: *Kerry Woodward for Bill Thorkelson*

Ms. Woodward reports that the Strategic Planning Committee is currently in the process of getting a handle on optimizing human capital by improving evaluation and maximizing teacher compensation.

Ms. Woodward concludes her presentation.

e. Development: *Marianne Dean, Kerry Woodward*

Ms. Dean begins by reporting that Boys' Latin is in good shape, much better shape than at the last board meeting. Boys' Latin has already reached 67 percent of its goal for the year with EITC and individual giving being the biggest components. Ms. Deans is happy to report that annual appeal giving has been doubling annually for the past few years, and has been tripled this year. The Development Committee attributes this rise to the growth of the donor population, and efforts which include the annual giving letter, positive press, and well-attended events.

Ms. Smith reports that the Development Committee is working on applications for the Hamilton and Lenfest grants. Ms. Smith adds that Boys' Latin has received generous grants in the past, both of which look like they will come through this year. They are also starting to do outreach to a variety of family and charitable organizations, which range from smaller to larger levels.

Ms. Dean thanks Ms. Smith and Ms. Woodward for their hard work, staying ahead of the game and paving the way for more money coming in. Ms. Dean then urges the board to get their commitments in as board participation must be at 100 percent.

Continuing, Ms. Dean states that the April Event is fast approaching: the Development Committee has sent out sponsorship letters and are currently collecting checks. Ms. Dean announces that the new name for the event will be "Magnum Opus." Ms. Dean thanks the board for their participation in planning for the event. Ms. Dean explains that Boys' Latin has raised more money each year than anticipated, and hopes to raise \$500,000 at this year's event.

Ms. Dean adds that the Patron's Party will take place on March 16, 2017 at the Burch's Home in Gladwyne.

There is a discussion on how Boy's Latin can put together its impressive college data to present a compelling message to potential donors, and ease negative charter school connotations.

Ms. Woodward adds that Career Day will be March 8, 2017. Ms. Woodward reports that this is a great day for students, and there are 17 presenters already signed up. Ms. Woodward will email the board seeking recommendations for presenters who work in compelling fields. Ms. Woodward states that the most popular profession amongst the students from last year's Career Day was engineering.

Ms. Dean concluded her presentation.

IV. Executive Session to discuss a confidential personnel issue.

The meeting adjourned to executive session 5:19 p.m.