

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

Wednesday, October 4, 2017
339 N. 63rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139

The meeting is called to order at 4:12 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Andrew Addis, Joe Conwell, Jim Diehl, Will Kontes, Torch Lytle, Albert Oehrle, Sally Randolph, Patrick South, Noah Tennant, Bill Thorkelson, Steven Ujifusa

Board Members Excused: Marianne Dean, Steven Kempf, Isaac Ewell, Cliff Thomas, Wes Wyatt

Staff In Attendance: Ruth Gonzalez, Colleen Smith, Kerry Woodward

Parent Representative In Attendance: Elaine Wells

Guests: Jenna Smalley (Kleinbard LLC), Michael Whisman (Charter Choices)

I. Call to Order – *Bill Thorkelson*

Mr. Thorkelson calls the meeting to order. There is a motion to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2017 board meeting, which is moved by Mr. Oehrle and seconded by Mr. Addis. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Thorkelson then asks non-voting individuals to step out of the room while the board discusses the proposed resolution appointing Dr. Tennant as Chief Executive Officer of Boys' Latin, effective July 1, 2017. The resolution passes unanimously, and the non-voting individuals re-enter the room.

Mr. Thorkelson reviews board goals for the year, which include supporting Dr. Tennant and his team, and completing the strategic plan to guide the implementation of the school's mission over the next five to ten years. Mr. Thorkelson will meet with each board member individually in the coming months. Mr. Thorkelson encourages the board to focus on development, considering the effects the departure of Messrs. Hardy and Williams could have on the donor base, along with governance to identify prospective trustees.

II. CEO Report – *Noah Tennant*

Dr. Tennant begins by thanking the board for his appointment as Boys' Latin's new Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Tennant appreciates the Board's trust, and expresses gratitude for his team and the leadership that came before him.

Dr. Tennant states that the Boys' Latin team has been excited about the 2017-2018 school year, and begins a presentation which revisits and unpacks Boys' Latin's mission: to prepare boys for success in college and beyond. Dr. Tennant explains that he sat down with teachers to review major topics to be covered throughout the semester, and how the Boys' Latin team can accomplish these goals.

Dr. Tennant reviews how success at Boys' Latin is measured, with one of those factors being test scores. Dr. Tennant discusses the consideration Boys' Latin should give to test scores, and how preparation for standardized testing begins at the middle school level.

In terms of preparation, Dr. Tennant states that Boys' Latin has set its sights on what effective instruction looks like, with an emphasis on critical and analytical thinking in the classroom. Students take ownership over their learning, and demonstrate effective instruction through the exchange and generation of new ideas. Dr. Tennant discusses the challenges of blending test preparation with this classroom environment, and determining the most effective ways in which boys learn the best.

Dr. Tennant explores another avenue of measuring student success through behavior and social preparation for life in college: students need to navigate dating, dorm-life and communication with professors upon entering college. Boys' Latin teaches its student body to advocate for themselves and persevere through more strenuous academic challenges, such as challenging exams. Dr. Tennant emphasizes the importance of finding teachers who not only support but understand where the students come from, and galvanize as a team.

Continuing, Dr. Tennant reviews Keystone Exam results from Boys' Latin's eleventh graders and PSSA results from the middle schoolers. There is a discussion as to the context of these test scores, their importance, and the consideration given to test scores in determining charter renewal.

Dr. Tennant moves on to changes at Boys' Latin, including new leadership at the schools. The new High School principal is R.J. McDaniel, who has been with Boys' Latin for eight years and served the school as a teacher, Math Department chair, and athletic coach. Dr. Brian Meadows is the new Middle School principal, who is very focused on instructional leadership. Dr. Tennant is confident that the middle schoolers will be able to improve their PSSA scores under this new leadership. Dr. Tennant also introduces Ian Doreian and Badiyah Lewis, the new Assistant Principals of the High School and Middle School, respectively. Dr. Tennant notifies the board that the new leaders will attend the next board meeting to discuss academic goals and strategies to improve test scores.

Dr. Tennant directs the board to a list of all faculty members for the current school year, and is happy to report that the average years teaching experience is currently 4.6 years, when historically it has been 1.6 years. Mr. Thorkelson states that the board is required to approve faculty and staff hiring for the year. There is a motion to approve faculty and staff hiring for the 2017-2018 school year, which is moved by Mr. Thorkelson and seconded by Dr. Lytle. The motion passes unanimously.

Dr. Tennant then draws the board's attention to the academic calendar. He notes that schools are required to have 990 hours during the school year, and Boys' Latin has significantly more due to its extended school day: 1,152 hours at the Middle School and over 1,360 at the High School. There is a motion to adopt the 2017-2018 school calendar, which is moved by Ms. Randolph and seconded by Mr. Addis. The motion passes unanimously.

Dr. Tennant then discusses the charter renewal process. Last year, Boys' Latin's charter was approved for renewal with conditions. Dr. Tennant visited the Charter School Office to discuss the decision and the conditions with the Executive Director, Dawn Lynne Kacer. Dr. Tennant explains that they had a good conversation about shared goals and obstacles, and agreed on a way to move forward and partner together for the benefit of Boys' Latin's students. Dr. Tennant and Ms. Woodward then met with Lauren Iannuccilli who leads the charter renewal process, which was also a productive and promising meeting. Dr. Tennant feels hopeful about Boys' Latin's future relationship with the Charter School Office, and adhering to the conditions outlined in the charter renewal decision.

There is a discussion about the conditions outlined in the charter renewal decision.

Dr. Tennant concludes his presentation by going over the school's enrollment numbers, important dates on the school calendar, and an overview of the fall athletics program. Dr. Tennant attributes the expansion of the football team to the beautiful new field adjacent to the High School, and thanks Mr. Conwell for his tireless efforts in getting the field ready for use. Dr. Tennant states that batting cages will eventually be added to the field, along with a garage currently being outfitted into a weight room.

Dr. Tennant explains that the field will be used for more than athletics, as Boys' Latin is fortunate to partner with Greener Partners who has gotten students involved with gardening. Students have been cultivating mint, sage, cabbage, celery, and other vegetables. Dr. Tennant explains the ultimate goal is to set up a Boys' Latin farmer's market, wherein students learn valuable lessons in areas such as nutrition, science, wellness and marketing.

Dr. Tennant congratulates Cameron Craig-Williams and Joshua Williams, the first two students from the Boys' Latin Class of 2018 accepted into college.

Dr. Tennant concludes his presentation.

III. Board Committee Reports

- a. Finance – *Will Kontes and Kerry Woodward*

Mr. Kontes begins by thanking the members of the committee, Messrs. South, Conwell, Thorkelson, Tennant, Diehl, Whisman and Ms. Woodward, who have met three times since the last board meeting to discuss a number of issues.

Mr. Kontes takes the board through the revised 2017-2018 budget, which does not reflect a lot of variance from the draft budget previously presented. Mr. Kontes explains that the committee will watch enrollment very carefully, which has an impact on the operating budget. Mr. Kontes states that Boys' Latin is in good financial shape for the year.

Ms. Woodward explains that back in April, the board made a motion to give authority to the finance committee to finalize the budget once they had gotten better clarity around revenues coming from the School District (which happened in July). Ms. Woodward states that the revised budget was adopted at a committee level, as the net income balance was greater than the amount designated for Boys' Latin to be compliant with its loan covenants.

Continuing, Ms. Woodward discusses Boys' Latin's Shared Services Agreement with the Boys' Latin Foundation. Ms. Woodward explains that "Boys' Latin Foundation" is the new name for the same non-profit, "Choice Academics." Ms. Woodward explains that Boys' Latin gave its 19 administrative employees the choice to opt out of the state retirement system in favor of a 403(b) plan, which is a cost-saver for Boys' Latin. Ms. Woodward states that 11 of 19 administrative employees opted in to the 403(b) plan, which will generate substantial savings for the school.

There is a motion to approve the Shared Services Agreement as written, which is moved by Mr. Kontes and seconded by Mr. Conwell. The motion passes unanimously.

There is a motion to remove Mr. Hardy as signatory on financial accounts, putting Ms. Woodward, Dr. Tennant and Mr. Whisman in his place. The motion is moved by Dr. Lytle and seconded by Mr. Oehrle. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Kontes then discusses refinancing the current bank debt. Mr. Kontes explains that the committee is currently looking at alternatives for Boys' Latin's current bank debt, and the committee plans on hiring an advisor to advocate on the school's behalf.

There is a motion to formally adopt the revised 2017-2018 budget as approved by the Finance Committee, which is moved by Dr. Lytle and seconded by Mr. Oehrle. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Kontes and Ms. Woodward conclude their presentation.

b. Development – *Colleen Smith*

Ms. Smith begins by stating that Boys' Latin is off to a good start this fiscal year as the school is over 30 percent towards its annual fundraising goal. Ms. Smith takes the board through the Development Report. Ms. Smith notes that the PSP grant came in, which will

help Boys' Latin with the leadership transition at the Middle School. Boys' Latin also received a generous contribution for the school's technology program. Ms. Smith notes a number of prospective donors within the report who give to Boys' Latin through the EITC program. Ms. Smith states that EITC giving occurs towards the end of the year.

There is a discussion on the EITC program, and which companies qualify to donate under the EITC program.

Continuing, Ms. Smith explains that the committee budgeted conservatively considering the change in leadership and any potential impacts on fundraising. Ms. Smith states that the committee hopes to gain new support.

Ms. Smith then discusses new Development Activities, which include: the *Quid Novi Newsletter*, which relays what's happening at Boys' Latin; an increased social media presence; direct giving to the Boys Latin Foundation; outreach in the form of an EITC mailing sent to approved businesses in the greater Philadelphia area; the annual appeal; and a *Decem Report*, Boys' Latin's ten-year progress report, which should be shared by mid-October.

Ms. Smith asks the board to save some important dates, including: the Fall School Visit on November 3, where a small group will first tour Overbrook and then tour Boys' Latin to compare the different school environments; Annual College Day on January 10; Annual Career Day on March 7; and the 2018 Fundraising Event scheduled for April 26.

Mr. Thorkelson urges the board to include graduation day on their calendars as well.

Ms. Smith concludes her presentation.

c. Parent Liaison Report – *Elaine Wells*

Ms. Wells begins by updating the board on an event that transpired this past June: Ms. Wells, along with group of 10 other concerned parents, grandparents, guardians and students, took a two-day trip to Harrisburg to find out where state representatives stood on HB97. HB97 revises charter oversight standards, which supports the expansion of good charters and elimination of ineffective charters. Ms. Wells explains that the group was cordial and well-received, and gave testimony in the offices of representatives from both political parties.

Ms. Wells was asked to serve on a panel with other parent leaders to give insight on streamlining a universal charter application, making it easier for parents and students during the application process. Previously, each charter had a different application of varying lengths and depths posing a frustrating challenge to applicants. Consolidating to a one-page form application will allow for parents to make a copy of one application to send to multiple schools.

Dr. Tennant adds that Boys' Latin has adopted the simpler one-page application, which is currently in its first year. Dr. Tennant states that this simpler application does not negatively affect Boys' Latin's application process.

Ms. Wells concludes her presentation.

d. Governance – *Albert Oehrle*

Mr. Oehrle begins by asking the board to approve the Internet Safety Policy, which is a policy that guarantees Boys' Latin's eligibility for the E-Rate Program. Ms. Smith adds that Boys' Latin has already been approved for funding under the E-Rate Program. There is a motion to approve the Internet Safety Policy, which is moved by Mr. Oehrle and seconded by Mr. Addis. The motion passes unanimously.

Continuing, Mr. Oehrle directs the board to the draft Gender Policy. Mr. Oehrle explains that this policy was proposed for Boys' Latin to address transgender and non-binary students who want to apply for admission.

There is a discussion regarding how this policy would affect Boys' Latin.

Mr. Oehrle states that this draft policy does not need to be acted upon today, and recommends that the committee send the draft to legal counsel who is familiar with these situations in the educational realm.

Switching gears, Mr. Thorkelson circulates the resume of potential board member for Boys' Latin, Wally Zimolong. Following a discussion on Mr. Zimolong's background, there is a motion to approve Mr. Zimolong as a board member, which is moved by Mr. Thorkelson and seconded by Ms. Randolph. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Oehrle concludes his presentation.

e. Academics – *Sally Randolph*

Ms. Randolph begins by explaining to the board that the Academics Committee is comprised of herself and Dr. Lytle, with the intent to strategize on improving test scores. Ms. Randolph asks the board for its advice throughout this process, as it can be a great resource for this committee.

Dr. Lytle notes the goal of the committee, which is to figure out how to help students perform better on tests. The committee believes success relates to having a demanding college prep curriculum starting in fifth grade, which includes physics, algebra and chemistry. Dr. Lytle discusses the challenges facing an urban school, and the process for curriculum design.

Ms. Randolph adds that the intentional focus on improving test scores will not detract from creative thinking. Ms. Randolph, Dr. Lytle, Dr. Tennant and Mr. Thorkelson will convene after the board meeting to further discuss academic strategy.

Ms. Randolph concludes her presentation.

f. Facilities – *Joseph Conwell*

Mr. Conwell has no facilities developments to report.

With there being no new business, and no Executive Session needed, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Randolph, Secretary