

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

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

The Meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Dick Williams, David Hardy (*ex officio*), Marianne N. Dean, Bill Thorkelson, Charles T. Brooks, Joe Conwell, Isaac Ewell, Albert Oehrle, Sally Randolph

Board Members Excused: Steve Smith, Janice Murdoch, Matthew Schuh, Wes Wyatt

Board Nominees in Attendance: Will Kontes

Board Nominees Excused: Dr. Torch Lytle

Staff in Attendance: Ruth Gonzalez, Kerry Woodward, Dr. Noah Tennant, Amy Guidi

Parent Representative in Attendance: Elaine Wells

Guests: Jenna Smalley of Kleinbard LLC and Patty Jo Thompson, parent.

## **I. Call to Order: *Dick Williams***

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order.

There was a motion to accept the minutes of the April 1, 2015 meeting and June 30, 2015 meeting. After review, it was found that the April 1, 2015 meeting minutes had been approved during the June 30, 2015 meeting. A final motion to approve the June 30, 2015 meeting was then seconded and passed unanimously.

## **II. Nomination of New Board Members: *Dick Williams***

Mr. Williams then asked Mr. Will Kontes to step out of the room, and directed the Board to the resumes of Mr. Kontes and Dr. Torch Lytle, two individuals nominated to be appointed as new Board members. Mr. Kontes is a Certified Financial Planner and Chartered Financial Consultant who currently serves on the Board of Trustees of WheatonArts. There was a motion to approve Mr. Kontes as new member of the Board of Directors for Boys' Latin Charter School, which was seconded and approved.

Mr. Williams then moved on to Dr. Lytle, a Practice Professor in the Graduate School of Education at University and Pennsylvania. There was a motion to approve Dr. Lytle as new member of the Board of Directors for Boys' Latin Charter School, which was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **III. CEO Report: *David Hardy***

Mr. Hardy began with a presentation on the college matriculation rates of Boys' Latin. Mr. Hardy explained that Special Admissions schools get to choose their students while Neighborhood Schools, described as "catchment schools," must accept all neighborhood students. Like Neighborhood Schools, Boys' Latin has no admissions requirements. Despite not being able to choose their students, Boys' Latin students matriculate to college at rates in line with special admissions students: Boys' Latin ranks third highest in Philadelphia.

Mr. Hardy then discussed college retention rates by race and gender in the Philadelphia School District, which showed African American and Latino males as having the lowest retention rates. According to the aforementioned statistics, males generally underperform female students. Mr. Hardy believes the reason for this discrepancy is non-cognitive skills, which distinguishes who makes it through college. Non-cognitive skills, such as self-confidence and positive belief in attending college, are a major hurdle in encouraging students to return for a sophomore year of college, which are skills that Boys' Latin encourages and develops within its student body.

Mr. Hardy then presented two graphs that compared 2009 and 2013's Top Ten Special Admissions Schools of Philadelphia's matriculation percentages, and what percentage of those who graduated returned to college for a second year. Boys' Latin's numbers are competitive with the leaders, as graduates enroll at a rate of 81 percent with 86 percent of those return for a second year (four year college rate).

Mr. Hardy was proud to present the National Clearinghouse Report, which detailed the four graduating classes Boys' Latin has produced since their inception. In 2011, Boys' Latin had 76 students enroll in college (74 percent of the senior class), which was the most African American males sent to college of any school in Philadelphia that year. In 2014, Boys' Latin had 100 students enroll in college, or 81 percent of the senior class. Mr. Hardy added that two-year college enrollment is steady, but most Boys' Latin graduates attend four-year colleges.

There was a discussion on how to get the message out to the parents of Boys' Latin' students, and the general public, concerning Boys' Latin's strong matriculation and retention rates, and how the numbers in the National Clearinghouse Report have exceeded all expectations.

Mr. Hardy concluded his presentation.

#### **IV. School and Operations Report: *Dr. Noah Tennant***

Dr. Tennant began by stating that Boys' Latin is excited to begin the 2015-2016 school year. Boys' Latin now educates 850 students, ranging from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Dr. Tennant then discussed the reading rates of 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders entering middle and high school, respectively: the average 6<sup>th</sup> grader enters with a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, whereas the average 9<sup>th</sup> grader enters with a 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Boys' Latin gives these students the skills and tools to improve.

Mr. Hardy discussed the assessment that students take to evaluate grade levels upon entering school, and how some students struggled to answer the introductory sample questions, which are at a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading level. Mr. Hardy reiterated that it is important to continually challenge the students, demonstrate they are cared for, and continue to push the ball uphill.

Dr. Tennant, on behalf of the middle school faculty, thanked the Board for the acquisition of the new property, as the students are excited, the faculty is uplifted and the new location is a beautiful space with potential to challenge the students in the right direction. Dr. Tennant thanked the Board for their efforts in seeking, purchasing and renovated the new middle school.

Continuing, Dr. Tennant discussed some highlights within the student body. As of September 30, 2015, the Varsity and Junior Varsity football teams will be partnering with NOBL on a neighborhood cleanup to affirm to the surrounding community that Boys' Latin is a valuable part of the fabric of the community.

Dr. Tennant added that on October 23, 2015, Boys' Latin will host a book release party for its teacher, Randy Ribay, who recently published a book named *An Infinite Number of Parallel Universes*. In the acknowledgements, Mr. Ribay referenced Boys' Latin.

Dr. Tennant concluded his presentation.

## V. Board Committee Reports

### a. Finance: *Bill Thorkelson, Kerry Woodward, Wes Wyatt, Mike Whisman*

Mr. Thorkelson began by directing the Board to the fiscal year 2016 proposed budget. Mr. Thorkelson spoke to some challenges in drafting a budget, namely that Boys' Latin's charter was capped at 800 students but this year 850 are enrolled. Mr. Thorkelson mentioned that Boys' Latin does not get reimbursed for those extra 50 students, which is why expenses have gone up significantly. With proper cuts, Mr. Thorkelson was able to keep expenses in line.

In due time, Mr. Thorkelson believes the charter cap will be raised to 900, though it is unlikely Boys' Latin will be retroactively reimbursed for the current overage of students. Mr. Hardy mentioned that we have less attrition than expected, and that if Boys' Latin has not made progress by next year in obtaining an additional 100 seats, enrollment will need to be reduced. A discussion followed on the reason for less attrition compared to School District averages, negotiations with the School Reform Commission to raise the cap on middle school students and the potential for future budget issues, depending on cash flow from the School District.

There was a motion to approve the 2015-2016 budget, which was seconded and approved.

Mr. Thorkelson concluded his presentation.

**b. Facilities: *Joe Conwell***

Mr. Conwell began giving an overview of the properties on the new middle school campus, which include: the school building, the church, a former convent and a former rectory. Mr. Conwell announced that the renovations are essentially finished, were completed within the past few months and Boys' Latin' was able to stay within their budget to open the middle school on time.

Mr. Conwell listed the renovations, which include: a new HVAC system, plumbing and electrical upgrades, painting the walls, redoing the floors, adding a faculty bathroom and upgrading the kitchen.

Though the purchase of the buildings was supposed to close in April, due to a delay with to the Philadelphia Archdiocese, the deal closed in July and the school proceeded to open on time for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. Conwell then discussed the future phases of renovation. Phase I targets the rectory, which will be converted into the Administration Building. \$200,000 will be spent on renovations, which is within the budget, and renovations are expected to be completed by the end of October. Phase II will consist of converting the church into an auditorium/gymnasium. Mr. Conwell advised that this phase will be challenging, in terms of removing the bell tower and reconstructing the roof. Mr. Conwell believes Phase II will be completed by next summer.

Continuing, Mr. Conwell discussed the two-year lease Boys' Latin entered into with the Padre Pios Friary, which currently occupies the former convent. Mr. Conwell stated that Boys' Latin was respectful of the friars, who have occupied the former convent for some time. Mr. Hardy added the friars will be good night-watchmen for the grounds.

Mr. Conwell stated the goal was to keep the school's cash outlay at \$400,000, which is currently in reach due to generous donations.

Mr. Williams then thanked Mr. Conwell for the tremendous time and dedication he put in towards locating, purchasing, planning and renovating the new Boys' Latin Middle School.

Mr. Conwell concluded his presentation.

**c. Governance: *Albert Oehrle***

Mr. Williams began by stating that although Mr. Oehrle has submitted revised Bylaws to the Board, he would like to defer a vote due to the recent turnover of

Board members. Mr. Williams reassured the Board that the new bylaws will be addressed this year, as Boys' Latin continues to locate valuable Board members.

Mr. Oehrle concluded his presentation.

**d. Development:** *Marianne Dean, Amy Guidi, Kerry Woodward*

Ms. Dean began by thanking Ms. Guidi for her time and dedication to Boys' Latin, as she will be moving to Boston. Ms. Dean and Ms. Randolph mentioned how Ms. Guidi built and maintained relationships with the students, and was a valuable asset to the culture of Boys' Latin. Ms. Guidi will be sorely missed by everyone.

Ms. Dean then directed the Board to the Development Report. Boys' Latin is gearing up for their next fundraising event, and will send out a save-the-date soon. Ms. Dean added that Neiman Marcus has generously donated their space for the next Night Out event. The Palm Beach fundraiser in the Everglades is scheduled to take place again this year, and Ms. Guidi added that the event and has the potential for major donations, as 75 people attended the previous year.

Ms. Dean asked the Board for future potential donors, and advised to bring them to the schools so they can see first-hand the Boys' Latin culture. Mr. Williams added that Board participation must be at 100 percent. Last year Boys' Latin came close with 80 percent Board participation.

Ms. Guidi then thanked the Board for a wonderful career with Boys' Latin, and is pleased to have Ms. Woodward take her place, as she has vast expertise in education.

Ms. Dean then concluded her presentation.

*There being no new business, the meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 5:46 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary