



**Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 4pm
339 North 63rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19139**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Rebecca Davis, Steve Kempf, Noah Tennant, Bill Thorkelson, Elaine Wells

Board Members Excused: Andrew Addis, Joe Conwell, Eric Dobson, Albert Oehrle, Matt Schuh, Steve Smith

Board Members Joined by Phone: Jim Diehl, Isaac Ewell, Patrick South, Steven Ujifusa, Wes Wyatt, Wally Zimolong

Staff in Attendance: Trudy Allen, Ruth Gonzalez, Colleen Smith, Joel Witter, Kerry Woodward

Guests: Jenna Smalley (Kleinbard LLC)

I. Call to Order: *Bill Thorkelson*

Mr. Thorkelson calls the meeting to order.

Mr. Thorkelson announces that today's meeting will focus on student progress and achievement in relation to standardized testing, and applauds the hard work of both teacher and students in keeping Boys' Latin in line with its mission to prepare students for college and beyond.

There is a motion to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2019 board meeting, which is moved by Mr. Kempf and seconded by Ms. Davis. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Thorkelson turns to governance, as Boys' Latin needs to tighten up language in its bylaws with regard to board terms to be in compliance with the Charter School Office ("CSO"). Thanks to Mr. Oehrle, drafts of new language has been circulated to the board—trustees will be asked to serve two consecutive three-year terms with the second term depending upon nomination from the board. Mr. Thorkelson states that a third amendment has been added regarding the selection of officers to the board.

There is a motion to approve the amendments as listed on the proposed revision to the bylaws of Boys' Latin, which is moved by Mr. Thorkelson and seconded by Mr. Kempf. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Thorkelson announces that effective as of this meeting Messrs. Addis and Diehl will be resigning from the board, and thanks them for their years of service. Mr. Thorkelson proposes a trustee nominee to the board, Francie Middleton. Ms. Middleton has visited Boys' Latin on multiple occasions, and is very familiar with charter schools, single-sex education, and the School District of Philadelphia.

There nomination to appoint Ms. Middleton to the Boys' Latin Board of Trustees effective as of the February 5, 2020 board meeting, which is moved by Mr. Thorkelson and seconded by Ms. Davis. The nomination passes unanimously.

Mr. Thorkelson encourages all board members to keep an eye out for bright, potential new trustees.

II. CEO Report: Noah Tennant

Dr. Tennant begins by updating the board on Gov. Wolf's proposed legislation regarding charters, which is currently pending. This past November 19, Philadelphia Charters for Excellence ("PCE") organized a rally in Harrisburg to educate lawmakers on the impacts of the proposed legislation. Dr. Tennant describes how the new policies would cut funding for Boys' Latin's special education program and stifle the innovation of charters by placing limitations on curricula. Ms. Woodward, Dr. Tennant, and Ms. Allen participated in the event at the Capitol Building, where a group of 300 people addressed the Republican caucus to help unlearn misinformation spread about charters. Dr. Tennant describes how several teams went door-to-door of state senators and representatives to educate on the good work Boys' Latin does and how detrimental Gov. Wolf's new policies would be to the school's mission. PCE will hold a board meeting next week to review feedback from the event, and has a call scheduled with Rep. Mike Reese to see how the event was received in Harrisburg.

Dr. Tennant then briefs the board on recent development surrounding a building on Boys' Latin Middle School's campus being nominated for designation as a historical landmark. Dr. Tennant describes the significant problems that come with this nomination, as any historical designation would limit what Boys' Latin can do with that space. Boys' Latin intended to turn this building into a gymnasium-wellness center-auditorium-performing arts center, however if it is designated it could preclude that renovation or cost millions more to implement. Last month, Boys' Latin presented arguments against the designation to the architecture sub-committee, who voted to recommend nomination to the Historical Commission. Boys' Latin will present concerns to the Historical Commission on December 13. Dr. Tennant describes how the school has gotten over 700 signatures from families, parents, and neighbors who are on board with Boys' Latin maintaining flexibility over what to do with the space. This has also been a great opportunity for middle school civics

students to participate in the December 13 meeting. Boys' Latin contacted the press, asking them to examine this nomination beyond architecture as the Historical Commission is being myopic to issues of social justice by further disparaging an already marginalized group of students.

A discussion follows on the success rate of historical designation nominations, financial hardships, the nominator, and the condition of the building being designated. Ms. Woodward adds that a building can still be designated if the features that warrant historic preservation no longer remain on the structure.

Turning to charter compliance, Dr. Tennant directs the board to an exhibit relating to the authorization of select board officers to submit charter agreement documentation. Dr. Tennant describes how this resolution means that the board empowers officers (Messrs. Thorkelson, Wyatt, and Ujifusa) to authorize documents for the charter renewal agreement to be finalized.

There is a motion to authorize board officers to submit charter agreement documentation pertaining to charter renewal as described in Exhibit A of the Charter Renewal Agreement, which is moved by Mr. Kempf and seconded by Ms. Wells. The motion passes unanimously.

Dr. Tennant concludes his presentation.

III. Student Progress and Achievement: Noah Tennant

Dr. Tennant begins by briefing the board on Boys' Latin's academic performance and standardized testing results. Dr. Tennant describes how academic performance is a broad lens with multiple metrics to measure student success, with standardized testing being one of those metrics to measure growth. Dr. Tennant introduces Joel Witter, Boys' Latin's Director of Curriculum and Instruction, along with Trudy Allen, the Middle School Principal, who will give a presentation on Boys' Latin's test scores and student growth.

Mr. Witter begins by describing student growth measurements (which tracks how students are supposed to grow across the country) and achievement measures (the standardized tests themselves). Middle school students take the PSSA exams while high school students take the Keystone exams. Mr. Witter states that both Boys' Latin's Middle School and High School received an "Intervene" ranking in terms of its test scores, or achievement. At the middle school, students tested at 4 percent proficiency in math, 25 percent proficiency in English, and 35 percent proficiency in science. Ms. Allen adds that "Intervene" is the lowest tier in this ranking system. Mr. Witter notes that at the high school, students tested at 10 percent proficiency in Algebra, 18 percent proficiency in literature, and 16 percent proficiency in biology.

Mr. Witter explains how one factor in Boys' Latin scoring lower in Algebra is because the state requires that a student take the Algebra Keystone in the year that

student takes the Algebra class. Boys' Latin requires all 9th graders to take Algebra, a course which is often delayed for students at other schools. Boys' Latin wants to familiarize students with more advanced mathematical concepts as soon as possible, even if that means taking a hit in achievement. Ms. Allen adds that Boys' Latin 6th graders are required to take math concepts courses with 8th graders taking pre-Algebra classes to help support the high school.

A discussion follows on Philadelphia School District averages, how Boys' Latin compares, the various ranking tiers, how students can be so far behind entering middle school or high school, and Boys' Latin's historical standardized testing performance.

Mr. Witter describes the challenges surrounding incoming students who are behind and need to make up years' worth of growth to catch up—this is where Boys' Latin excels. The middle school received a “model” progress ranking, which is the highest level of achievement in terms of how students grow academically. Mr. Witter notes that Boys' Latin has students grow more than almost every other school on PSSAs. Ms. Allen adds that achievement is a snapshot of one point in time, where progress is the timeline of achievement. Mr. Witter states that there is a similar success story at the high school, where students' progress was scored as “Reinforce” meaning Boys' Latin gets more growth out of students than expected at the high school level.

A discussion follows on the middle school versus high school results, and how teachers view these numbers. Dr. Tennant adds that in terms of the bigger picture, the CSO would look at achievement data over progress data should Boys' Latin attempt to expand its charter.

Ms. Allen describes how the middle school is looking to capitalize on growth by being strategic about how they're teaching students (by applying critical thinking across subjects) and intentional about how they're teaching critical thinking. Boys' Latin challenges its middle schoolers to read like historians and think like scientists. Ms. Allen adds that every 6th grader takes two math courses, and each middle schooler is asked to read for at least one hour per day.

Mr. Witter then lists Boys' Latin's schoolwide goals, which include: 1) college and career success; 2) consistent critical thinking; 3) expanded off-campus learning; 4) accelerating growth; and 5) increasing achievement. To implement these goals, Boys' Latin will develop schoolwide restorative practices (such as merits/demerits and student behavior reflection sheets); targeted hiring and recruitment of experienced teachers; targeted 6th and 9th grade interventions in both reading and math; curriculum revision; teacher-owned data systems; professional learning communities (where teachers work with other teachers to discuss best practices); and nurturing a stronger school culture at the high school.

Ms. Allen adds that Boys' Latin is trying to streamline processes between the middle and high schools, with the goal of college-readiness in mind. The middle school has

been challenging students to set a high bar for themselves and align themselves to the Boys' Latin way. Last year there were 21 suspensions at the middle school, with only 7 so far this year. Boys' Latin hopes that modifying behavior before student reach high school will keep students from distracting peers from receiving the education they deserve.

Ms. Allen, Dr. Tennant, and Mr. Witter conclude their presentation.

IV. Board Committee Reports

a. Parent Liaison Report: *Elaine Wells*

Ms. Wells does not have a parent liaison report for this meeting.

b. Development: *Pat South*

Mr. South begins by directing the board to the development report, where fundraising is off to a good start this year. Boys' Latin's development target is \$1 million with a goal of \$1.4 million—to date, in terms of cash on hand or money committed, the school is slightly above the \$1 million budgeted target. Mr. South describes how EITC contributions make up 50 percent of money raised, with foundations/grants and individual giving comprising 25 percent each of money raised. Mr. South announces that the annual appeal was mailed last month to 700 recipients, and so far \$21,000 has been raised from this appeal. Mr. South encourages full board participation, and asks the board to reach out to potential donors. Mr. South thanks Ms. Smith and Ms. Woodward for their hard work as Boys' Latin nears its fundraising goal.

Mr. South announces that Boys' Latin will not host its annual event this year, as last year attendance was challenging and this year it has been difficult to find honorees. The development committee does not believe that skipping the annual event will preclude Boys' Latin from reaching its targeted fundraising goal. In lieu of an annual event, individual meetings will be set up with current and potential donors to encourage financial support.

Mr. South concludes his presentation.

c. Finance: *Kerry Woodward and Wes Wyatt*

Ms. Woodward begins by stating that Boys' Latin currently has a strong balance sheet with 62 days of cash on hand, and over 100 days of cash on hand including the foundation. Enrollment is strong as the school is tracking to have an 800-student-average daily membership, including a positive variance in revenue to the tune of \$450,000 (which is higher than projected). The finance committee expects to end the year with more revenue than budgeted. On the expense side, Ms. Woodward explains how general education salaries are not covered by substitute teaching services—

offsetting a higher-than-budgeted expense. Ms. Woodward states that the finance committee expects everything else to come out close to budget.

Ms. Woodward and Mr. Wyatt conclude their presentation.

d. Facilities: *Steve Kempf and Bill Thorkelson*

Mr. Thorkelson begins by describing how Boys' Latin had a meeting with MIS, the consulting firm assisting Boys' Latin in coming up with the school's master plan. MIS has gone through multiple scenarios for facility configurations, with a bifurcated set of choices: 1) if Boys' Latin consolidates the middle school and high school, it would be a \$24 million undertaking from a capital perspective; or 2) continuing to operate two separate campuses and invest in more facilities on the middle school campus, which could be a \$4-8 million expenditure. Mr. Thorkelson adds that the historical designation nomination creates more unknowns for what Boys' Latin can do its facilities in the future. MIS provided a detailed look at the different plans for financing both options, which includes borrowing, fundraising, grants, and potential sale of the middle school campus. Mr. Thorkelson describes how campus consolidation comes with a 30-month timeline from retaining architects through completion of the project. The facilities committee is considering retaining an architectural firm to come up with plans for either a consolidated campus or two-campus model—which is an \$80,000 expenditure.

Mr. Kempf adds that facilities issues of water damage and pointing will be a spring item.

Messrs. Kempf and Thorkelson conclude their presentation.

With there being no need for executive session, the meeting adjourns at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Ujifusa, Secretary