



**Meeting of the Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 4:00pm
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19**

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

Board Members in Attendance: Joe Conwell, Amy Guidi, Steve Kempf, Albert Oehrle, Steve Smith, Patrick South, Elaine Wells, Kerry Woodward, Wes Wyatt, Paul Yakulis

Board Members Excused: Isaac Ewell, Wally Zimolong

Staff in Attendance: Dave Hardy, Diane Hathaway, Natalie Knez, Zachary Paris, Robert Parker, Ruth Gonzalez, Colleen Smith

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

I. Call to Order: *Wes Wyatt*

Mr. Wyatt calls the meeting to order, and thanks everyone for their hard work this week.

There is a motion to adopt the February 10, 2021 Boys' Latin Board of Directors meeting minutes, which is moved by Mr. Yakulis and seconded by Mr. Oehrle. The motion passes unanimously.

II. Interim CEO Report: *Dave Hardy*

Mr. Hardy begins by stating that he feels stronger about this school year as the year progresses. Boys' Latin students finished strongly in the 2nd trimester with many students making progress. Mr. Hardy reports that Boys' Latin is holding steady attendance-wise with 95 percent of students attending and grades across the board rising. Teachers have done a great job engaging students throughout the pandemic, which has been a struggle. Mr. Hardy notes that the middle school took 45 students who struggled with attendance the most and put together a program for them to try and get them back and engaged which has been successful. Mr. Hardy explains how participating staff and students must be tested twice per week. There has been one positive case to date. Mr. Hardy states that overall in spite of some pretty strong obstacles, Boys' Latin is hanging in there and moving along for next year.

Mr. Hardy continues to the 2021-22 proposed school calendar, which exceeds the minimum requirements for public school serving the secondary grade levels of 180

instructional days or 990 instructional hours. The calendar is based on an 8:00-3:30pm daily schedule for the middle school, and 8:00-4:00pm Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday with 8:00-3:00pm for the remaining days for the high school. Mr. Hardy notes these hours are subject to change. Mr. Hardy adds that 9th Grade will include a 21-day Freshman Summer Academy, and that all days and hours calculations include 15 professional development days.

Mr. Hardy then introduces today's guests to the board who will speak on the middle school's curricular and programmatic upgrades: Ms. Hathaway, the Interim Middle School Principal; Robert Parker, the Middle School Assistant Principal; Natalie Knez, the Middle School Math Department Coordinator and Teacher; and Zachary Paris, the Middle School STEM Instructor. Mr. Hardy states that he is confident in this team and the challenges of this year have allowed them to shine.

Mr. Hardy comments on how Boys' Latin has not yet created a middle school that meets its mission in terms of true college preparation. Recently the middle school team has been working to align courses, programs, and expectations to a college preparatory model. Enrichment plans have been created for all subject areas, including Latin, ELA, and Math. Mr. Hardy describes how Algebra is the "gatekeeper" of advanced mathematics, as students who enter high school proficient in Algebra I can access advanced courses such as Statistics or Calculus to improve their college readiness and persistence. Mr. Hardy notes how there are real jobs and opportunities for people with strong math backgrounds, and it's time to take this thinking down to the middle school.

Mr. Parker begins by describing how the team wants Boys' Latin to be a data-driven school in preparing students for college and beyond. In 2019, 96 percent of Boys' Latin students scored Basic or Below Basic in math on the PSSAs. The team will aim to get as many students in the Proficient and Advanced levels, and have conducted an investigation as to why scores were low. Some factors include non-existent teacher observation or feedback process, lack of standard align curriculum, and lack of investment in STEM. In order to combat these obstacles, Mr. Parker describes how the team created lesson plan templates that push instructors to draft rigorous lessons using research-based strategies, created a data observation tool, and purchased programs to test and measure student achievement and growth. Mr. Parker explains how Ms. Knez is creating a math curriculum for middle schoolers that will include Algebra for 7th and 8th graders.

Ms. Knez introduces herself to the board, and describes how current PSSA scores leave quite a bit of room for improvement. Ms. Knez states that step one is adopting a research-backed curriculum which aligns to Pennsylvania state standards. The team chose OpenUp which is a rigorous, standard-based curriculum. Ms. Knez describes the importance of providing Algebra in the 8th grade and setting students up for success. The middle school will offer two algebra tracks that end with 8th graders taking either Algebra I or Pre-Algebra. The proposed plan will be rolled out in phases over the next two years.

Mr. Paris then speaks to the importance of STEM, as there is a major disparity between the numbers of black students studying engineering in college versus white students. Currently, the middle school only offers four STEM courses and does not offer any

after-school programming or involvement in STEM competitions. Mr. Paris describes how the middle school has limited equipment and space to work on engineering projects such as robotics or construction. Mr. Parker adds that the Fine Arts Building has space that is not being utilized which could serve as a STEM lab, including a TV studio. This space would help get students excited and engaged about information and technology.

There is a discussion on staffing and resources. Mr. Conwell thanks the speakers for their presentation and states that their goals are right on target. Mr. Parker adds that the staff is on board, volunteers are being hired, and Boys' Latin is partnering with other organizations to make sure students are excited about taking Algebra I in middle school. Mr. Hardy adds that young teachers are driving this change, and it's the kind of excitement one wants to see in schools. Mr. Hardy notes that being Algebra-ready out of middle school will be distinguishable for Boys' Latin students.

There is a motion to adopt the Boys' Latin 2022 Academic Calendar as presented to the board, which is moved by Ms. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Kempf. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Hardy concludes his presentation.

III. Parent Liaison Report: Elaine Wells

Ms. Wells begins by announcing that Tree Philly has free small yard trees for families of Boys' Latin and the school's campuses themselves. Trees will be delivered for free and people are available to assist in the planting. Ms. Wells describes Tree Philly's goal to increase the green canopy in local neighborhoods.

Ms. Wells then poses a question to the board concerning the availability of mental wellness resources that can be incorporated for students in the new school year. Ms. Wells notes how many students have been suffering with depression and anxiety from recent gun violence. Ms. Wells states that counselors are brought in for the day or week, but in terms of ongoing support, she suggests a plan to support students moving forward while this is an ongoing issue.

Mr. Hardy responds that Boys' Latin has social workers working closely with students, with teachers as conduits. The plan for next year must include a significant presence of emotional support at least in beginning of school year to bring students back to school post-covid. Mr. Hardy thanks Ms. Wells for all of her hard work.

Ms. Wells concludes her presentation.

IV. Board Committee Reports

a. Finance: Kerry Woodward

Ms. Woodward begins with the February 2021 Financial Statements which shows that Boys' Latin is having a strong year. Ms. Woodward notes that the April financial report will have finer knowledge of what will take place in June. Normally the committee would

be considering a draft 2021-2022 budget at this time, and have reviewed a first draft with the school leadership team. However that draft is not yet in a position to be shared with the board. The committee is dealing with unprecedented academic challenges and Ms. Woodward applauds the team for thinking in creative ways to try and maximize student learning for next year. The finance committee will meet in the next 30 days to draft the next iteration and are on track to present a strong working 2022 budget for approval at the June board meeting.

Ms. Woodward concludes her presentation.

b. Facilities: *Joe Conwell*

Mr. Conwell begins by giving an overview of three middle school capital projects: removal of the church and re-purposing of the land (which the committee is most ready to execute); renovation of fine arts building; and additional site improvements.

Mr. Conwell describes how land is at a premium on the middle school campus, and goes through the history of acquiring the property. The Fine Arts Building accommodates music and art, and Boys' Latin has struggled with what to do with the church in terms of conversion or demolition. Boys' Latin has made the decision to demolish the church as it will provide a badly-needed outdoor recreational space and remove uncertainty and vacancy on the campus which is a drag on the energy of the environment. Mr. Conwell adds that removing the church will increase the value of the property. The committee has drawn a concept plan for the church site, which includes a grass-fenced area with a possibility for synthetic turf. Mr. Conwell describes the plan as safe and modernized. A basketball court and hardscaped plaza area will be added to center of the campus, which offers a good amount of space that will no longer be used for parking, but for a pedestrian area for everyone on the campus. Parking would be expanded towards the Felton Street-side of the campus.

Today Mr. Conwell wants to focus on the removal of the church and repurposing of the land, which the committee estimates will cost \$1.2 million and will be completed by January 1, 2022. Mr. Conwell explains how the demolition will be done in a way where the dangerous aspects will be completed over the summer prior to beginning of the next school year. The committee does not have bids in yet, but has \$50,000 already committed to engineering and testing to vet the project, such as soil studies and storm water management.

Mr. Conwell states that renovation of the Fine Arts Buildings and additional site improvements will be evaluated over the next few months in terms of scope, cost, and funding.

There is a discussion on the priorities of capital projects.

There is a motion to approve an expenditure, not to exceed \$1.2 million, to pursue removal of the church and repurposing the land, which is moved by Mr. Conwell and seconded by Mr. Oehrle. The motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Conwell concludes his presentation.

c. Development: *Colleen Smith*

Ms. Smith begins by stating that development is in good shape, just shy of \$1.6 million which far-exceeds the budgeted and projected goals for this fiscal year. The biggest thing the development function is grappling with now is the ESSER funds coming from the federal government, and seeing how those funds can be used for Boys' Latin. Ms. Smith describes how the committee is also brainstorming fundraising strategies for the next school year with ambitious goals, and will have more targeted development needs moving forward.

Ms. Smith concludes her presentation.

d. CEO Search Committee: *Wes Wyatt*

Mr. Wyatt begins with an update on how the committee has narrowed down the CEO applicants to two finalists, which are two outstanding candidates. Mr. Wyatt thanks everyone for their time and participation which has been a major commitment. The committee is scheduled to meet later this week to review feedback from surveys, stakeholders, and references, and aim to hold a telephonic board meeting to approve the hiring of one of those two candidates in the next week or two.

Mr. Yakulis also thanks the team for their cooperation and time, and gives kudos to Ms. Smith and Ms. Gonzalez for their work in arranging the logistics of setting up these meetings. Mr. Yakulis states that the committee is still on their projected timeline, and may even wrap up the search early. The committee is happy with this progress.

Mr. Wyatt concludes his presentation.

Mr. Wyatt thanks everyone for attending and appreciates everyone's time and commitment to the school.

With there being no need for Executive Session, the meeting adjourns at 5:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick South, Secretary