

Marion P. Thomas Charter School Board of Trustees

Minutes of Meeting, December 19, 2016
125 Sussex Avenue
Newark, NJ 07103

The meeting was advertised in the Star Ledger of August 5, 2016
Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00PM

I. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

II. Roll call

Femi Amarin, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, conducted a roll call of members in attendance. Members were counted and the Board Secretary confirmed quorum for the meeting.

Members Present

G. Collins - Chair
D. Blount
R. Petty
V. Rouse
L. Leslie
M. Jones
K. Sherrer El
K. Roberts
k. Thomas
V. Rouse (Joined by Phone)
D Best (Joined by Phone)
F. Amarin

(ii) Excused
Rev. Slaughter
J. Taylor - Dean

(iii) Other:
T. Jalloh – Board Counsel
D. Land – Chief Academic Officer
D. White – Director of Operations
Rev. G. Ince – Executive Director – Friends of MPTCS

III ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

The motion to approve the agenda for the meeting was moved by R. Petty and seconded by D. Blount.

IV. MINUTES

The minutes for the November 28 2016, meeting of the board was approved. The motion to approve the minutes was moved by David Blount and seconded by Reginald Petty

V. PRESENTATION

The newly elected Student Council Presidents of the Marion P Thomas Charter School (MPTCS) High School made presentations per class.

The 9th Grade Freshman Class represented by Raiyah Lee implored the School through the board to institute incentives that would encourage students with behavioral problems to strive for positive changes. She also wants the School to allow the class to organize fund raising activities to fund student extra-curricular activities.

The 10th Grade – Sophomore Class represented by India Davis. The Class President indicated the issues the class has with students with behavioral problems that affect the learning environment. However, she implored that punishment meted out to erring students should be appropriate and not counterproductive. She requested for the creation of a mentoring group to support students. The President also requested for the institution of homecoming by (previous?) ex-students which she believes would encourage students to behave better and be more serious with their academics.

The 11th Grade – Junior Class represented by the Class President Janet Shaba. The President thanked the Board for the invitation to the meeting. She presented a number of requests to members of the Board. She wants more college trips and the leadership of the school to allow more peer- to peer help. She wants more village-wide activities and events that would enable students at the High School to meet students at the other campuses in lower grades in accordance with the school mantra. The class also requested for more pep rallies and recognition events for academic excellence and not just for sports.

The 12th Grade – Senior Class represented by Nia Grandison. She complained that the teachers do not take advice from the students and are not always receptive to their suggestions. The President wants more hands-on experience in Performing Arts such as more Dance Sessions; she called for unity amongst students. On a final note, she complained that there are too many meals with meatballs. Students are forced to eat them or go hungry even if they do not like them. She pointed out that it is not fair because students are not allowed to bring in their own food nor allowed to go out during lunch break to get the food.

VI ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1 Chief Executive Officer Report

(i) Enrollment

The CEO reported that the MPTCS enrollment is scheduled to decrease next year by 25 students from 1,403 to 1,405 (review). This scenario, coupled with 100 Out of Districts students resulting from reverification could have negative impacts on the financial health of the school to stabilize MPTCS enrollment, we would need to submit a request for waiver to the NJ Department of Education (DOE) The DOE is requiring us to submit a waiver and request. We have asked Newark Public Schools (NPS) for a letter that they will not comment to expedite the approval process. The request for a waiver and a resolution are being presented at this meeting.

She noted that the MOU 4 of the Universal Enrollment still has not resolved all of the outstanding issues. But most Charter Schools have taken a position to have the board approve participation so that we can move forward with the application process.

The Marketing and enrollment teams have developed a comprehensive marketing plan for the upcoming recruiting season.

The Special Education Team had a meeting with Special Education from NPS to attempt to reconcile some critical issues around accepting students from Newark Enrolls that cannot be adequately serviced by MPTCS.

(ii) Sustainability Planning

The CEO reported that the Chair will present a report. She noted that an individual plan has been developed and edited by the consultant. It is ready for a review by the Board.

The CEO informed members that she has officially requested the Boards of Friends of MPTCS to engage in a sustainability planning to diversify their income that largely depends on rental income from the School. The current sustainability plan presented to the Committee calls for Friends to generate \$1.5 million annually and support MPTCS Foundation while stabilizing its operations. There is also the need for a comprehensive plan to address leadership bench strength in the event of an unplanned vacancy. She noted that the current financial, organizational and leadership model has much vulnerability that must be addressed as part of the overall planning process.

(iii) **Facilities update**

Rev. Ince – Executive Director of Friends presented an update on the facilities and the current efforts to meet the critical needs of the School. Friends have decided to extend the lease for south 9th Street for another year. The CEO reported that she has requested Friends to present a revised comprehensive facilities plan over the next two months to include a Current facilities assessment, possible acquisition planning, renovations plans, short term needs and associated financial projections

(iv) Update Information

The CEO reported that MPTCS signed the Newark Charter School Fund Compact and one of our elementary school students was featured on the cover of the program and report.

2. Chief Academic Officer Report

The CAO report provided information and updates on the five (5) areas of focus: Academic Achievement, Assessment, Village Culture, Family Engagement and Programs

On Family engagement, she reported that the Middle School held a breakfast to celebrate honor rolls students, attendance and other academic areas. She noted that the event was well attended by over 100 families.

A parent meeting was held at the Elementary School Campus and the new Acting Principal , Lisa Finn-Bruce met families and talked about her plan to get the campus back on track.

The CAO reported that the Department continues to gather relevant academic data to be able to make informed decisions about instructions. She provided the Student Growth Summary information from NWEA which shows growth between the assessments of fall 2015 and fall 2016.

The CAO provided members with copy of the Winter Break Family Letter.

VI COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. The Executive Committee

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee met and has put in place an arrangement that will ensure a smooth transition and operation of the School while the CEO is on Sabbatical Leave.

2 Personnel Committee

The Personal Committee Chair presented the report. The report listed the new hires along with their effective dates. He also presented a listing of separations and the effective dates of their separations. The Personnel Chair also provided a report of current openings and request for medical leave by two staff members. The Committee Chair presented a total of 15 openings across the four campuses. The Committee Chair reported that a 30/60 day plan has been developed for the New HR Director – Mr. Fletcher. He also reported a number of disciplinary measures taken to address reported infractions. He reported that a staff was suspended because of an allegation of criminal activity by another staff. However, the allegation was not sustained and the staff returned to work.

The Committee Chair reported that the CEO held Village Town Hall meetings at each location to inform staff of her sabbatical leave. Updates would be provided to members at a later stage. The Committee reported there was a re-organization on the Elementary School Campus. Ms. Finn-Bruce will be the Acting Principal for the Entire Elementary School and Ms Porcaro will be the principal for the Primary – K-1 and report directly to Ms. Finn-Bruce.

3 Finance Committee

The School Business Administrator presented the financial status of the school as of November 30, 2016. He affirmed that the school is solvent and has enough cash to pay the bill list presented if approved. All required reports are also up to date.

4 Operations

The Director of Operations reported that as of December 19, 2016 the School had a current enrollment of 1, 355 scholars, reverification is 99% across all the four campuses. He reported that student without an up to date physicals will not be allowed to participate in sports. The Chair requested for a report of the status of Annual Physicals across all the four campuses of the School at its next meeting.

The Director reported that all issues surrounding technology are being handled appropriately by the IT Director. He reported that he signed on behalf of the School Memorandum of Understanding on Law Enforcement with the Essex County Prosecutor Office (ECPO). He reported that two safety related issues noticed were reported to the local law enforcement agencies for appropriate follow up.

On Facilities, the Director identified issues that need to be attended to on all buildings and the plans by the Director of Facilities to address them over the winter break.

On Food Services, the Operations Director reported that the department needs two additional staff. He also reported that the Director of Food Services and principal of the Middle School will meet to discuss the nutritional value of meals for Middle School aged scholars to determine if change is needed.

VII LEGAL UPDATES

No Updates from the Board Attorney

VIII OPEN PUBLIC FORUM

No comment from the public.

X RESOLUTIONS

FINANCE

12-16-1

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves the bill list for the month of December 2016 in the amount of \$2,170,733.10.

12-16-2

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves the Board Secretary Report for the month of November 2016.

12-16-3

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves the Treasurer of School Monies report for the month of November 2016.

12-16-4

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves adjustments to the 2016- 2017 budget through 3 transfers proposed by the School Business Administrator resulting in a fully balanced and positive budget.

HUMAN RESOURCES

12-16-5

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves the following new hires for the 2016-2017 School Year:

Name	Position	Effective Dates
Patience Allocey	Nurse - MS	1/30/2017
Michael Walker Jr.	Classroom Aid - Academy	12/5/2016
Kevin Taylor	Custodian – sub cleaner	12/19/2016

12-16-6

The Board of Trustees of Marion P Thomas Charter School approves the following promotion and change of title.

Promotions/Changes:		
Lisa Finn-Bruce	From Director of Accountability and Instruction to ES Principal	1/1/2017
Keith Jefferson	From on-call sub to Interventionist HS	11/29/2016

12-16-7

The Board of Trustees of Marion P Thomas Charter School approves the following separations

Separations:

Name	Position	
Marc Hapward	HS Math Teacher	11/28/2016 resigned
Michael Jeter	HS Math Teacher	12/2/2016 resigned
Nanley Losier	HS English Teacher	12/13/2016 resigned

OTHER

12-16-8

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School resolves to approve travel for Fellow- Briana Gilchrist, to Washington DC to participate in the 2nd Annual School Leaders of Color Advocacy and Action Day on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, February 14 and Wednesday, February 15, 2017 with Dr. Thomas.

Moved by: David Blount
Seconded by: Sherrer El

12-16-9

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School resolves to approve a waiver to the State Board to stabilize our current enrollment number at 1430 and not decrease to 1405 to avoid any negative financial impact.

Moved by: Reginald Petty
Seconded by: Lesley Leslie

12-16-10

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School resolves to approve the one year contract for Institute of Music for Children to work with the SELECT Academy in an amount not to exceed \$65,000 for school year 2016-2017.

Moved by: David Blount
Seconded by: Kema Roberts

12-16-11

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves participation of MPTCS in the Newark Universal Enrollment for 2017-2018 School Years as per the revised memorandum of Understanding, but reserves the right to make revisions to any issues around reverification policy going forward.

Moved by: Lesley Leslie
Seconded by: Khaatim Sherrer El

12-16-12

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School approves the busing of Marion P Thomas Charter School Scholars to the South Orange Performing Arts Center for the Father for Our Children event on February 17, 2017.

Moved by: Khaatim Sherrer El
Seconded by: Reginald Petty

12-16-13.

The Board of Trustees of Marion P. Thomas Charter School resolves to approve the leasing contract for two School Buses at an annual lease of \$43,363 with Municipal Leasing Consultants of 7 Old Town Lane Grand Isle, VT 05458. The Director of Facilities to work with the MPTCS Board Attorney to finalize the lease contract

Moved by Khaatim Sherrer El
Seconded by: Reginald Petty

XI ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Sherrer El and seconded by Lesley Leslie.


Prepared by Femi Amorn – Board Secretary

Approved by MPTCS Board of Trustees