

Board of Trustees Meeting September 27, 2023 (Virtual) Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary and Performing Arts 125 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

September 27, 2023 | 5:00 PM ET Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87205682710?pwd=dWh4bE5qWCtkWk9PcThPSWdLbVZZUT09

1. CALL TO ORDER - Open Public Meetings Act - 5:05 PM

• The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act ("Act") was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Marion P Thomas Charter School Board of Trustees has caused notice of this meeting to be advertised by having the date, time, and place there of posted on the district's website (www.mptcs.org), in the office of the Clerk of the City of Newark, and was published in the Star-Ledger in August 2023.

2. ROLL CALL

NOLL C/ LL					
Board Member	Present	Absent	Board Member	Present	Absent
Vincent Rouse	\checkmark		Julio Valdivieso	\checkmark	
Dashay Carter	\checkmark		Allan Boomer	\checkmark	
Briana Gilchrist	\checkmark		Toni Ince	\checkmark	
Dr. Princess Towe	\checkmark				

 Vice Chair Carter & Boomer arrival was delayed. Vice Chair Carter & Boomer arrived after Mincy's presentation.

Non-Voting Board Mer	mbers Present
Elijah Griffiths (Board Secretary/Administrator)	Tina Jalloh (Board Attorney)
Angela Mincy, Chief School Administrator/Superintendent	Kristina Haugen (School Business Administrator)



3. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

• Chairman Rouse gave an update. Rouse announced that the board is a certified board now.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

- Mincy gave a presentation update.
- QUESTIONS
 - How long is the appeal process in terms of graduation data? (Rouse)
 - Shankar said we will know in November. The good news is that it can only go higher so that is the bright side to that appeal. (Abbaleo)
 - About the graduation rate, what are the averages for the graduation rate for the state, Newark, and national level? (Valdivieso)
 - I don't know the national data. I believe the state had about a 95% graduation rate. I don't think we will ever know Newark's graduation rate. (Mincy)
 - They haven't released the 2023 data. I was able to come across the class of 2022 data. It looks like Newark's 4-year graduation rate was 85.1%. We outperformed them. If I am not mistaken the state of New Jersey had a low 90% graduation rate. I think we out performed them as well, but don't quote me on that. I will circle back with those numbers. (Abbaleo)

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee

The personnel committee met on September 14, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 PM. We spoke about the vacancies. We're doing a pretty good job. But we're not fully staffed, so therefore we're gonna bring in Elevate K12. The vacancies we have currently are 6 at the high school, 4 at PAC, and 5 at STEAM. The numbers are expected to go down and some people may be in the queue. At the end of June we had 32 classroom vacancies, we currently have 25. However those vacancies were filled, but some people have since decided to leave and/or put in their resignation. We have a whole new admin team that's figuring this out, so we think that we will be fine and we will continue to report these numbers out to you. Currently, we have 11 new instructional hires. As I said 7 new resignations and 9 leaves of absences. Marion P. has been putting an emphasis on trying to make sure we have alumni working for us in the village. We want to say that we have Ms. Davinah McNeil as a teacher of culinary arts at the high school, so we're excited for that. We also have Kayla Kirkland-Johnson as a climate and culture assistant at STEAM Academy so we're excited for that. These are things we want to see, we want to see our members of the village come back and teach at the village and get back to those who come after them. We also want to recognize staff who have earned their teacher certifications for this year: a Ms. leesha Turnage a teacher of science at STEAM, Epifinia Solhir a teacher of art at STEAM, and Kay-Ann Palmer a teacher of pre-K at PAC. I apologize if I butchered anyone's name. We do want to celebrate these members of our village. We also went over the 12 month calendar, the school admin calendar, and the faculty calendar. We have an upcoming contract with Elevate K12. We plan on having an orientation and using them to have a person in each of the classrooms for which we do not have an instructional person currently. We additionally spoke about reviewing 2 policies a month, so that process will begin next month. The meeting was adjourned at 5:31PM. (Carter)



QUESTIONS

- Do you see where I am pointing out number 16 under title 1, is that person the principal now at STEAM? I thought it was Silvestre
 - You are correct as to who the principal is, but anything further would need to be discussed in closed session. Can I get back to you on that question? (Carter)
 - MOTION to table votes until after answer can be given to Valdivieso.
 Motion Carter Valdivieso** Vote Approved.
 - [Return to answer question after vote] In regards to the personnel question at STEAM, the principal is the person you said at STEAM and the other person is retiring. (Carter)
 - That answers my question. Thank you. (Valdivieso)
- [ELEVATE K-12 CONTRACT] This sounds wonderful. I read through the contract of all the elements, how do we intend to use the resources of Elevate K-12? (Valdivieso)
 - o In the absence of staffing, Elevate has a series of certified teachers across different content areas. We are using them to teach our kids content remotely while putting someone in the room with them to help manage behavior to try and avoid just having a substitute teacher. Those classes where we don't have certified teaching staff, we are leveraging this outside agency since all their staff members are certified and we are pairing them with someone from Marion P. to help control the behavior and make sure that the management is under control. So if kids have questions just from the operational standpoint that second body is in the building to maintain order while they're getting instruction from that certified person. Just trying to think of all the things that we could do in the absence of not having staff. (Mincy)
 - Something to keep in the back of your head, maybe this is a way to solve attendance issues. (Valdivieso)
- [DISTRICT CALENDARS] For the district calendar, November 7 is New Jersey state elections. I was just wondering if it was considered to have the day off on that day? I'll bring this up every year but voting is a lot more important than our black and brown communities often give it credit for with good reason. Other cities like Union City as an example do give a day off on election day, so that would be from a culture standpoint encouraging parents in our schools, anyone connected with our schools to exercise the right to vote and put that on the calendar to me is it a worthwhile thing. I want to know if it was considered for this year? (Valdivieso)
 - Are you suggesting that November 6th should be a day off? (Carter)
 - Yes. (Valdivieso)
 - Superintendent can speak to their mindset. I think I said this in the past to the voting polls open before school opens and they close after school closes, so we can still message around making sure our parents and students do go and vote, and that they take their young people to vote with them. Again there are hours after the school day and before the school day so I don't think we are doing a disservice to our students by holding school that day, if anything we can remind people to go and vote after school. (Carter)
 - You captured it, that aligns with what we think. When it's a presidential election, and we know traffic patterns or it may be more difficult, or there may be barriers then that is something we can consider. The calendar for us is a tough issue. because we're already in school 190 days and every time we give a day off like



Juneteenth for instance, that's a day off of our calendar but it extends the school year further so most everybody else around us that are in charters are already out. It makes a year that much longer, but definitely something that we could possibly entertain for like a presidential standpoint, but just didn't necessarily feel the need for and I know that they should vote in every election we know that every election. That is a tough one. (Mincy)

Operations & Finance Committee

We met on September 13th. We spent a good amount of time discussing enrollment. The reason why ops and finance discuss enrollment is because enrollment really drives the budget. Enrollment is also one of those items that the state looks at to determine if we are being well managed or not. We did come in a little under budget with regards to enrollment but still within the acceptable range of where the state wants us to come in, in terms of enrollment. We landed at 96% of the goal. The threshold where we would be out of compliance would be at 95% or lower so we did better by about 1% point. We spent a lot of time talking about what happened. There's always gonna be transfers in, transfers out, and people who said yes but didn't return. We walked through those factors and talked about next year how we will think about doing a better job accounting for the turnover into the budget process. Next we talked about the operational aspects of how we managed the moment and I think overall we put in a very good effort. Again if there was anything we wish we could be differently, it would really be doing a better job on estimating where we land. But the efforts were all very solid. We made offers to almost 1200 students and families and despite such a big pipeline we still came up a little short from where we wanted to be. Moving on from enrollment, we talked about IT. One project that has been going on for a while is the delayed egress project. At the time that project was still about a week away from completion. That was on September 13th. I will ask Avery if you have an update about that project, let us know. We talked about the successful distribution of chrome books to the students, about the tech lab that was installed in the high school, and about the visual art room that is being put in place. And some different IT items that you're looking forward to implementing in the future. Next we talked about facilities, the things that are happening on that front are the following. Number one, we are winterizing the school. Number two, we're doing some boiler repairs. Number three, we put up a new fence at PAC. Number four, at PAC we did some work on the playground and finally we finished cleaning the entire school over the summer. Finally, we moved on to finance which is where we talk about the money aspects of the school. First our cash balances are about 1 million higher compared to August of last year. We have about a \$15 million fund balance and what that means is we are in a really solid financial standing. We have about \$5.3 million in ESSER grant funding on the book as well. We went through our typical report which would be the reconciliation report, the bill's list, and we were able to approve all the reports in committee that we're gonna push through today. The final thing is auditors. At the time the SBA proposed a new auditor we put out an RFQ and we only received one response. The committee asked the SBA to put out an RFQ again to see if we can get more responses for something so important as audit work. We felt like it was important to have multiple bids. We did get some additional bids. This gave us the leverage to go back to the original bidder who we liked all along, and just really make sure that we looked at what else was out there. And we were able to wind up with an auditor that we feel really good about. I personally read through all the proposals, read all the qualifications, read through the references, and we were able to push for an even better price. I think at the end of day we got a good job of identifying the new auditor. I think it's good to change auditors every few



years. You don't want to be sticking with an auditor for 20 years, I think it's great we are moving on with a new auditor. That is one of the things we are pushing through today, the new auditor. That is it in the operation and finance committee. (Boomer)

- Was the delayed egress completed? (Boomer)
 - We have our final walkthrough scheduled for tomorrow at 10am. They have everything done to their standards, but we have our team doing a walkthrough tomorrow before we remit the final payment. (Abbaleo)
- Was the test we ran internally successful? (Boomer)
 - We are going to test it alongside them tomorrow to make sure the totality of the project is complete. (Abbaleo)

VOTED ON GOING BACK TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE | APPROVED Motion Valdivieso - Carter**

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

The C&I team met on September 12th. The meeting began at 4 PM from the board side we had Dr. Towe, Ms. Ince, and Ms. Griffiths. Then from the district side, we have Ms. Wynter-Darius, Dr. Moore, Director Gamble, and Director Wilson. Quick few items that just go through. We did talk a lot about the academic side of the district today which is one of the more important things. As far as the meeting Ms. Wynter-Darius gave an overview of the creative curriculum, This is year one of our implementation of the creative curriculum for preschool, so just some of the work that she's doing there around just training the staff and ensuring that they have everything they need, as well as the avenues that we are leveraging to involve the parents so as early as preschool all the way through grade 12 when they fill out their financially, making sure that we just involve the parents along the entire journey. Nothing to vote there that was more of an update and an information sharing on her end. as far as items to update the children's literacy initiative and we spend a lot of time talking about this last year, so this is not a new initiative however, this is just your two of their contract which Ms Jalloh reviewed and it just lays out some parameter around the partnership and where we're going with CLI. They work with our K3 teachers at both PAC and STEAM. Next item up is an out of district contract for one of our students with an IEP this is a contract renewal. This is something that we voted on a few years in a row again Ms. Jalloh reviewed this contract as well and worked with the attorney on the other side. Last two items approval of field field trips so you'll see our early elementary team did a good job just trying to get our kids out. Our pre-K through second grade will all be at the farm next week doing a little pumpkin picking. I'm right up in Fairfield so not not too far of a drive. You'll see the Meadowlands Expo and Brightview Paramus. Those two trips are for our culinary arts competition team, so just getting prepared for their upcoming events and season. Big shout out to Miss Snipes and the high school team and then in particular our college counselor Miss Fredericks did a phenomenal job just putting together the college tour for our juniors and seniors. You'll see she has trips lined up all the way through the end of November exposing our students to Ramapo, Rowan, Lincoln, Delaware, Kean, and Stockton, so just exposing our different grade levels to those different college campuses and giving them the chance to see them live in action. Next is our high level tutoring grant, this was released by the state over the summer. Several people from my team attended the technical training offered by the state of New Jersey. The deadline to submit was last Wednesday. We successfully submitted that contact. The premise for the high impact tutoring is



to support the students who may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. That grant was in total of up to \$97,000 and we will support both ELA and mathematics in grades 3 and 4. We adjourned at 5:02PM. (Abbaleo)

- What is parent involvement like in terms of chaperons on these field trips? Is there a lot of demand or opportunity? (Valdivieso)
 - Great question, so our pre-K Ms. Wynter-Darius did a good job, we met her today around that. We have the typical staff chaperones obviously and then we opened it up to parents, especially parents whose children may need more supervision or maybe they have an IEP or they have behavioral issues, things like that. She did get a good turn out for pre-K. I can't speak to K2 quite yet but I believe our pre-K has about 14 parents who are attending the field trip with their children. (Abbaleo)

Culture & Climate + Alumni Committee

- We met twice, big shout out to the culture and climate committee for the extra time. We have a ton of subjects that fall under the committee's oversight. We have a very robust agenda, and the goal is to basically go as far as we can in the time allotted. We are still working on these, but just biting off pieces and trying to thoroughly take care of them. This will be a continued process establishing reports. The first meeting was just to deal with this threat assessment team with setting them up and making sure that we're in the right step. There's a New Jersey statute that's relatively new that basically required that at the start of the school year we set up these threat assessment teams. We have freedom to name them whatever we want. We'll get to that at some point but basically it's to identify potential behavioral threats to the safety of the school and manage them appropriately, balancing the privacy of the students that may be affected with obviously the safety concerns and managing all of this responsibility. Mr. Williams is all over this, he rightfully focused on making sure after our threat assessment team was set up. We have set up teams that come from five different disciplines, including school psychologist, school counselor, school social worker, other school employee with expertise in student counseling, a teaching staff member, a school principal or other senior school administrator, a safe school resource officer, or school employee that services as a liaison to the law enforcement, and the school safety specialist designated. Basically it's a diverse team of experts that has to be in place for each school and all those teams are set up. Now we're focusing on getting them trained. As of the last report as of that meeting they should be all trained up by the end of September. After which we can run into our checklist of things that we need to satisfy per the New Jersey department of education recent guidance on the establishment of behavioral threat assessment teams, which is only very recently released. The department of education has been talking with Mr. Williams continuously. They are satisfied with where we are right now at the pace. That was the point of that meeting on September 5th. (Valdivieso)
- Then we met on September 12 again and so we established some ongoing reports. We're gonna have an ongoing threat assessment team report produced over the month by Mr. Williams. Initially, this report will be where are we in making sure that we have done everything to properly set these teams up as far as training, as far as the checklist for the state guidelines. Then eventually transition to are there any active cases. This will just be a monthly report. If there's no active cases will flip past it and it won't be a thing or otherwise if something comes up will deal with it then. We've been given access to the dashboard for attendance. This is not something that will be reporting on as a committee, but we will be looking at it from the purpose of what we can do from the culture and climate standpoint to improve attendance. I know attendance is also looked at by different



committees for different viewpoints. We considered whether we were duplicating efforts with the committee felt that we should look at it from this viewpoint to make sure that it was captured from the culture and climate viewpoint Also discussed with some other committees, whether we were duplicating efforts in the committee, the other committee that we should continue to monitor it from that standpoint. Also will be an ongoing HIB report, it's harassment intimidation bullying report every month. This will be this will be Mr. Williams producing it in advance of the meeting. The committee members will read it over if there are no significant trends or events for that month that need to be covered then it'll be just that. And otherwise we will cover the important ones as we go. Also, the committee is going to be reviewing our current HIB policy, which will be attacking over this next month and hopefully we will recommend some type of action whether it's to reinforce the standing one or to make changes as appropriate that's on the list hopefully by next meeting. These are the three big subjects that we covered in the last meeting and the other ones we did not get to you. But we are going to be keeping track. Also we have actually talked about a couple of the events that we're hosting with the superintendent has already covered, but we will be tracking those from the aspect of how they fit into the board goals, the superintendent goals, our mission statement, and crest. We feel that you know we want to walk the walk with the mission and the crest and directly link them to the programs and show her what we're doing is directly linking to the things that were promising the community. That is all. (Valdivieso)

Executive Committee

• First of all, I want to say thank you to the executive committee. We had an opportunity during our meeting to sit with the superintendent and some others from our friends board to hear and see the vision of Marion P. Thomas again trending upwards to make sure that we have adequate facilities for our scholars. We were able to view a proposal which the rest of the world will see soon, so that we can of course make sure our scholars have the best. And so thank you for that superintendent Mincy and your staff and your team for the vision to move the village forward. Lastly, I would like to propose tonight on the table for acceptance from my colleagues to establish a bylaws committee so that we can review the current corporate bylaws and make the appropriate recommendations for changes or adjustments that's needed. So again the villages can continue to move upward and so of course, as a body, we cannot all be on that. The recommendation for tonight is for myself, Gilchrist, Valdivieso to be a part of that committee and we would report out to the entire board the adjustments that may need to be made and recommendations. That is my report for tonight. (Rouse)



6. RESOLUTIONS

1.	2023-9-27-A: A	Approval of the A	August 9, 2023	MPTCS BOT	Meeting Agenda
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Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		V				Julio Valdivieso		\			
Dashay Carter					\checkmark	Allan Boomer					\checkmark
Briana Gilchrist	\searrow	N				Toni Ince		\			
Dr. Princess Towe**		V									

Discussion:

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II. 2023-9-27-B: Approval of Regular 8.9.23 BOT Meeting Minutes

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		N				Julio Valdivieso				V	
Dashay Carter					Ŋ	Allan Boomer					\checkmark
Briana Gilchrist**		\				Toni Ince		K			
Dr. Princess Towe		▽									

Discussion:

III. PACKAGED C-F Motion Carter - Rouse** | Approved

2023-8-9-C: Approval of August 23' Personnel Report

2023-9-27-D: Approval of MPTEA Bonus Sidebar Agreement

2023-9-27-E: Approval of Elevate K-12 Contract

2023-9-27-F: Approval of 23-24SY District Calendars

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse **		\				Julio Valdivieso		(
Dashay Carter	V	N				Allan Boomer		V			
Briana Gilchrist		V				Toni Ince		K			
Dr. Princess Towe		>									



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<i>IV.</i> <u>2023-9-27-G</u> :	: Appro	val of S	eptem	<u>ber 20</u>	23 Fina	nce Report					
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		\checkmark				Julio Valdivieso	\checkmark	\checkmark			
Dashay Carter						Allan Boomer**		\checkmark			
Briana Gilchrist						Toni Ince		V			
Dr. Princess Towe		\checkmark								•	
<u>Discussion:</u>	Approv	ral of Im	terim S	SBA on	Bank A	Accounts					
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		Ŋ				Julio Valdivieso**		N.			
Dashay Carter		V				Allan Boomer	\checkmark	K			
Briana Gilchrist		V				Toni Ince		\checkmark			
Dr. Princess Towe		\vee									
<u>Discussion:</u> ● VI. 2023-9-27-I: A	Approva	al of Int	erim Sl	BA as t	he Cus	todian of Records					
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		\checkmark				Julio Valdivieso		\checkmark			
Dashay Carter		\checkmark				Allan Boomer	\checkmark	\checkmark			
Briana Gilchrist		\checkmark				Toni Ince		\checkmark			
Dr. Princess Towe**		V									

^{**:} Motion Seconded



Discussion:

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VII. 2023-9-27-J: Approval of Olugbenga Olabintan as Auditor for FY 23

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		\				Julio Valdivieso**		K			
Dashay Carter		N.				Allan Boomer	\checkmark	<			
Briana Gilchrist		V				Toni Ince		\			
Dr. Princess Towe		V					-				

Discussion:

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VIII. PACKAGED K-N Motion Valdivieso - Towe** | Approved

2023-9-27-K: Approval of CLI Partnership Agreement

2023-9-27-L: Approval of ERESC OOD Contract (renewal)

2023-9-27-M: Approval of Field Trips

2023-9-27-N: Approval of NJ High Impact Tutoring Grant Submission

Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		K				Julio Valdivieso**		K			
Dashay Carter		\				Allan Boomer		V			
Briana Gilchrist		K				Toni Ince		K			
Dr. Princess Towe	\searrow	K									

Discussion:

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IX. 2023-9-27-O: Resolution to Establish Bylaws Committee

Voting Members Mo	lotion Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
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Vincent Rouse	Ŋ	\checkmark		Julio Valdivieso	V		
Dashay Carter		V		Allan Boomer	N		
Briana Gilchrist		V		Toni Ince**	N		
Dr. Princess Towe		✓					

Discussion:

- 7. PUBLIC COMMENT It is now time for public participation. To engage in public comment, all speakers must register via the district's website no later than 5 calendar days prior to the advertised meeting by 5:00 PM ET. Please state your name and address for the record. All speakers will have 3-minutes to address the BOT.
 - No registered speakers
- 8. CLOSED SESSION 6:40 PM
- 9. CLOSING REMARKS FROM BOARD CHAIR:

Thank you to all for your hard work and dedication to the village. Have a great evening! Committees thank you for meeting.

10. MOTION TO ADJOURN: 6:40 PM ET Rouse - Towe**

Respectfully submitted at: 9/27/2023 Submitted by: Elijah D. Griffiths