

Board of Trustees Meeting January 24, 2024 (Virtual) Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary and Performing Arts 125 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

January 24, 2024 | 5:00 PM ET Zoom:

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

1. CALL TO ORDER - Open Public Meetings Act - 5:06 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				

• Boomer joined after the vote for Resolution A was completed.

Non-Voting Board Members Present											
Elijah Griffiths (Board Secretary/Administrator)	Tina Jalloh (Board Attorney)										
Angela Mincy, Chief School Administrator/Superintendent	Joshua Solow (School Business Administrator)										



3. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

• Chairman Rouse gave an update.

4. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

• John Gamble & Carla Wynter-Darius gave a presentation update.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Personnel Committee

We are in a good place in terms of vacancies. There are only two at PAC, and we're just waiting for one assistant teacher to gain certification so only really one vacancy. This position is an eighth grade social studies teacher. At STEAM, there are three vacancies. We have a new position for someone certified in dance. We have an ELA teacher and special ed teacher vacancy as well. The high school has seven vacancies: two teachers of English, a teacher of mathematics, teacher of chemistry, and 3 teachers of special education. We are really searching and trying to get these positions filled as soon as possible. I do believe the chair indicated that interviews are in the process of taking place so hopefully soon we will have some of these vacancies filled. We discussed the idea of longevity and that the longevity bonuses are being paid out this month. We have 13 people who have reached the milestone bonuses, so they are being paid. The way it was explained is that we get one stipend amount at 10 years and one stipend amount at 15 years so as the teacher remains in place they continue to get this every year for a bracketed amount. I will add that part of the negotiations that were in, we're going to take a look at this and how this longevity works at Marion P because we feel it needs some tweaking and to be looked at. That will be coming forward in the coming months. We also talked about voting items. We have five assignments, two reassignments, one leave of absence of FMLA, and five resignations or retirement. We have 11 people doing co-curricular activities and 14 people doing personnel development at this junction. We have two additional MOU. One for University of Phoenix, and the other for Rutgers University. (Towe)

Operations & Finance Committee

Good afternoon everyone, I'll start by just talking a little bit about operations. I also want to wish everybody a happy new year I guess for the end of January, but I'm still in my happy new year mode so happy 2024 to everybody. I'll start on operations. We did a review of enrollment. That is how we started our meeting with Ms. Easter. We are just really pleased how this current school year we're trending on enrollment. Literally every month figures get better and better. We are super close to budget within a fraction of a percent from our goal on enrollment which is really good news. Next, we spent a good amount of time talking about marketing, the budget around marketing, the marketing plan, and a different component of how much was spent on this versus that. We are excited about some of the marketing campaigns that we've already gone into like buses and light rail signs. We were also looking forward to doing more in the digital and social media space with marketing. Moving on to IT we've been spending a lot of time speaking about or hearing about some of the improvements happening over at the Shipman building just to make sure that we are all set up and ready to roll when the time comes to reclaim that educational space for the school. On the IT side we installed cameras over at Shipman. We've also upgraded and improved the cameras at the high school. We got better clarity and less blind spots. In fact, we believe we've eliminated the major blind spots at the high school. We've installed the internet over and a key fob system at Shipman as well. We're feeling really good about the IT development, facilities development, and



general over at Shipman facilities. Moving on to facilities, we talked about lighting, fans, and things that have been improved and worked on. We are excited about how things are going there. We spent a good amount of time talking about the boiler upgrade and replacement. You will see there is a line item to vote on today related to the boiler. Now onto finance, we went over the treasure report and are proud when you look at where we are today versus a year ago, we were strong a year ago and we are even stronger today. As you see the report shows over \$11 million in cash on hand. You will see that it shows an increase from the year prior by just around \$2 million. We then went through our fund balances, which again are stronger than where they were a year ago. We also spent a good amount of time we presented to the SBA and idea that we approve the way we do our financial reporting to be more inclusive of all the operation of the school so we did make some changes to our financial reporting or income statement to be able to better see things like rent payments and things like that from some of folks that are tenants to the school. Moving on we went through our vendor's bill list and went through our payroll report, really all the items are going to be voted on today. The bottom line is that we feel very good about the financial picture of the school. This bill list is probably a little bigger than normal, sometimes there are vendors that we need to catch up on. One of the things that we spent a lot of time going through making sure that we're fully utilizing grant funding. You'll see were voting on grant funding today as well that will expire so we spent a lot of time making sure that we will not have anything expire without us having the opportunity to take full advantage of it and so that pretty much concludes our report. I would like to ask if there's any questions or comments before we move on to the voting. (Boomer)

QUESTIONS

- Could you explain the ARP line item F6 the ESSER application, is that one of the grants you were talking about? (Valdivieso)
 - So as we submit this grant application the ARP ESSER, which is the American rescue plan ESSER, which is like the largest of the ESSER funds. This is the final one; this one expires September 30 of 2024. So really we're in the final stretch of spending all this money. The application was submitted last year obviously as we go throughout the school year and we progress and we are finding out where we are actually allocating these expenses the grant has to get amended. This is just approving the amendment of that grant to allocate funds more accurately to how the school is actually expensing them. (Solow)
 - Just to add to that, we've budgeted that we still have access to about \$7 million in grant funding across a range of grants. We will be spending about \$6 million of that this year and that ESSER bucket is one of the big ones. (Boomer)
 - Thank you, your committee should be commended for making sure we spend that grant money. On a separate note, just to make sure that I understand for line item F2 those are employees. Are we approving those employees' abilities to apply for those grants or are those employees already approved for those grants? (Valdivieso)
 - These are employees that we are applying to the grant. So essentially we have let's say \$500,000 to spend on instructional salaries, these are the employees that are getting applied to these grants. The grant is listed there for which grant that they're getting applied to, also the position and the salary amount that we're charging to it. (Solow)
 - But they haven't actually been selected. This is just those applying, am I right? (Valdivieso)



- So basically they're selected. It's generally per positions which are non-certified teachers because when you do certified teachers we have to spend a percentage back to the state to reimburse for pension payments. We choose our employee specifically these are the employees that we've been tracking and you know we're tracking per pay numbers and everything. The reason for the long list of approvals is to get things on here before we have a review with the state. Ms. Mincy could probably talk more articularly about that review, but these are just like normal things as we go through the year. We're approving that these staff are board approved to go against our federal grants. (Solow)
- The way I think about the grantsids that there might be some things that we are already planning to spend money on but there might be a grant that says no don't spend your money, this grant would qualify for covering that expense. When you see payroll items, it is not like the employee is getting the money, it's just money that the school would otherwise have to use from our general fund or our own cash. We are able to say the grant will cover this expense and then that gives us a chance to have some funds that might be redirected to another place. I hope that that clarifies a little bit. (Boomer)
 - The question I am asking is, was the federal money guaranteed? It sounds like
 it is just a matter of us picking who is going to receive it. Even though it's an
 application for the federal grants, it's kind of in effect our selection of these
 employees and these grants are gonna cover the money being allocated.
 (Valdivieso)
 - Yes, the money is guaranteed. (Boomer)
 - It's really just the school applying federal funds to cover these employees' salaries. (Solow)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

• Our report is quite short, so we'll get right to it. We have three items to consider. We have the first one that deals with the Learnwell contract. This deals with the home instruction contract for a student who received outpatient services for mental health. The contract was reviewed and approved by Attorney Jalloh. The second item is Silvergate Prep Contract, and this contract is also for home instruction for a student who received outpatient services for mental health. The contract was reviewed and approved by attorney Jalloh. The third item here would be our field trips. Only one field trip up for approval and that's the high school campus taking culinary arts students to Hudson County Community College for career expiration day, and therefore that ends the report in terms of what needs to be approved. (Towe)

Culture & Climate + Alumni Committee

• The culture and climate committee met on January 16th. We discussed a few matters. The first is the ongoing issue about the standing up of our threat assessment teams and training necessary personnel and getting everybody up to speed and establishing the policies. Step one of New Jersey department of education guidance is complete, and we have established the actual teams. Mr. Williams has made sure everybody has gotten trained. Also now we are on step two which is developing the policies surrounding prohibited and concerning behaviors, which ultimately the board will have to approve on. It is trucking along as fast as possible and there's no complaints right now from the state. I think we're doing well in that respect as well as we can to try and quickly implement



this. Another issue I mentioned last time and revisited this time to make sure there's enough paraprofessional coverage in the school. As we had identified before, there have been some measures taken to improve paraprofessional coverage. For instance four paraprofessionals have been added since last month. We are using temp agencies wherever there are gaps. We stagger the lunches to make sure that there's coverage during lunch. Also Mr. Williams has been very proactive if there's any scholars with special concerns and there's any kind of potential lack if their para calls out or whatever he's contacted directly and takes charge of it. This issue is taken seriously, I am happy to report that. One of the things that we are facing is that this particular supply of paraprofessionals is low. As a result, it's a real race to try to get sufficient coverage, so we're facing the issue of making sure that we can offer pay to be competitive. The board members have expressed interest in making sure that we as a board do what we can to support and make sure that we are able to have sufficient paraprofessionals to cover students in need of them, whether we do this through contracting or if this is an item that we need to address in the future. Just making you all aware that this is an area of concern. We've talked about, this applies to both the threat assessment team, the policy HIB, student discipline, these policies that are all under review right now and we've hired as you all know, we all voted to hire this agency to develop these policies for us, so the committee is emphasizing that we start tasking, or getting this company to start producing all these revised policies, and reviewing them. I know they have a lot to tackle. These particular policies are of special importance so we will be tracking and reporting on them. We have been reviewing the climate and culture calendar and we're gonna start tracking how those are hitting the goals for the school for our superintendent specifically. We are keeping a list of every event at the school and then paying attention to the ones that hit specific goals for the school so that at the end of the year we can have a meaningful review of where we came in on addressing those goals. I'm happy to report that the administration support for new principals' staff was being done, and it seems like our superintendent is making sure that those occur even more frequently than the goals that we set. There was a climate survey taken, results are being aggregated, and will be sure to be reviewing those in the future and identifying any issues or celebrating where we did well. We considered the idea of establishing an anonymous hotline or something or some kind of method where somebody could raise climate culture issues outside of the climate survey. We thought it was a generally good idea, but there's so many other things right now that we have to focus our energy on, that we paused that project until the future as hopefully the climate survey is getting everything done that we need to get done. Thank you to everybody on the committee, as we have so much to cover and we cover a lot. Thank you to everybody who hangs in there, I know it's a lot of work. (Valdivieso)

• Good evening everyone, and happy new year. I am here to give you the alumni updates. We had the pleasure of a new committee member joining this past meeting Ms. Lewis, she is the Department Chair of Guidance. At our last board meeting I was able to tell you guys what we were planning on working on for the year. At this committee meeting, we were able to put dates to the year for a timeline so you can expect answers to the questions you were reporting on. You can look to this committee for the final acceptance rate, graduation rate, the number of scholars attending trade and culinary school, as well as the number of scholars transitioning into the military. That is something you can expect from us. One update that we do have is that we have our FAFSA event on January 31st from 5pm - 7pm, this is very important if you have any seniors or parents of seniors listening please make sure you're attending this. FAFSA is important to make sure our kids get the maximum financial aid to go to school and attending this event will ensure you understand how to complete



FAFSA. We do have a representative who would be there to help support our family so once again, parents, if you are senior, please make sure that you attend this event so you can be best prepared to apply for financial aid so your student can get the max financial aid possible. Another upcoming senior event will be the college fair hosted by Kean University which is on March 12th, as well as our life at the high school fair on March 21st. Tomorrow we will be having our MPTS foundation meeting as well as our scholarship application will open in February. Look out for that. In addition to the FAFSA, another form of scholarship seniors can receive is from our actual school. Please share that with any seniors or the parents of any seniors you may know. Also what is in the works is our alumni directories. That is the end of my report. (Gilchrist)

Executive Committee

• No Report Given.



6. RESOLUTIONS

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

Discussion:

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II. 2024-1-24-B: Approval of Regular 12.13.23 BOT Meeting Minutes

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

Discussion:

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III. PACKAGE C & E | Motion: Towe & Rouse** | Approved 2024-1-24-C: Approval of January 24' Personnel Report 2024-1-24-E: Approval of Rutgers University MOU

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



• Holding off from D being in package due to questions under attorney client privilege that need to be answered in the upcoming executive session.

IV. 2024-1-24-D: Approval of University of Phoenix MOU

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

- Resolution D pulled from this agenda to be added to next month after discussion in executive session.
- V. PACKAGE F F6 | Motion Boomer Valdivieso** | Approved

2024-1-24-F: Approval of January 24' Finance Report

2024-1-24-F1: Approval of Payroll for July 23'-December 23'

2024-1-24-F2: Approval of Employees' Application to Federal Grants for FY 24'

2024-1-24-F3: Approval of MPTCS Purchasing Manual

2024-1-24-F4: Appoint J. Solow as the Schools Qualified Purchasing Agent

2024-1-24-F5: Accept the High Impact Tutoring Grant Awarded - \$97,000.00

2024-1-24-F6: Approval of the ARP ESSER Application Amendment

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

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VI. <u>2024-1-24-F7:</u>	VI. <u>2024-1-24-F7: PAC Academy Boiler Contract (Subject to Attorney Changes)</u>													
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent			
Vincent Rouse**		>				Julio Valdivieso		N						
Dashay Carter					V	Allan Boomer	V	Y						
Briana Gilchrist		N				Toni Ince		Y						
Dr. Princess Towe		N												

Discussion:

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VII. PACKAGE G - I | Motion: Towe - Rouse** | Approved

2024-1-24-G: Approval of Learnwell Contract

2024-1-24-H: Approval of Silvergate Prep Contract

2024-1-24-I: Approval of Field Trips

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

Discussion:

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EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LEGAL MATTERS Motion: Valdivieso - Towe** | Approved



- 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 6:52 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: 6:52 PM ET Towe - Valdivieso**

Respectfully submitted at: 1/24/2024 Submitted by: Elijah D. Griffiths