

Board of Trustees Meeting March 24, 2025 (Virtual) Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary and Performing Arts 125 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

March 24, 2025 | 5:00 PM ET Zoom:

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

1. CALL TO ORDER - Open Public Meetings Act - 5:02 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 2024.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Non-Voting Board Members Present										
Elijah Griffiths (Board Secretary/Administrator)	The Office of Jalloh & 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

• Ms. Mincy gave a presentation update.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Operations & Finance Committee

Good afternoon, everyone. We had a really packed agenda. We met on Wednesday, March 19 and first, we went over our financials, which is a little different since normally we start with operations. So just a quick summary of our financials. Our cash balance is currently 14.2 million. A year ago at this time, we were at 17 million, so we're a little low about 3 million lower than where we were one year ago, but 3 million higher than where we were in 2023 and 4 million higher than where we were in 2022. Our fund balance versus a year ago is higher by about 817,000. We went over all of our grant funds and just always we want to make sure that the grants will be fully utilized and we and we always confirm that fact. Next, we looked at our Charter aid and one thing that's interesting just going into this 2026 school year, the Charter aid, which is the amount we expect to receive per student has gone down. Not a ton, but enough when you multiply it across the village, all the pupils it does add up to a six-figure difference in terms of our budget funding. So we then went into our budget and all the different ways that we made budget adjustments and I know we'll be voting on the budget today. Just to put it in perspective, this current school year we walked into expecting a budget of a budget deficit of about 1,000,008. This next school year, using the same exact enrollment count the budget deficit is expected to be 1,000,002. And we've cut some of our expenses and we had a cut in our expected revenue and so there will be some, I'm going to say reallocation of dollars, some different changes to the budget, things that we have no choice but deal with regards to the budget. Because we don't control the amount that the state sets aside per pupil. But what we do control is what we do with it. And so we are in the midst of some reallocation of dollars. One of the big line items I saw that there was a decrease on was substitute instructors and so our hope is that we are not we don't need those substitutes because we've got the right teachers in place, but that was 1 area that there was pretty big cuts. Next, moving on to operations, we just had as always just a quick kind of sketch of the trouble tickets that we've closed out both on the facility side and also with regards to technology. Things to note, we did get a report about our water and so at this point we have completed the water testing on our water paths in every building in terms of lead we did ask about PFAS chemicals and that was something that Mr. Valdivieso wanted to know about. We were informed that the state does not require schools to test for PFAS the only requirement is to test for lead. And we did inquire with Mr. Collins just to see what it would entail for us to do that additional level of testing. And he's going to get back to us on that in terms of cost and process and timing. Finally, we went over our audit report and we voted on the audit report last time, but this committee, the Finance Committee, wanted to actually meet with the auditor and just kind of hear in words their summary of the audit engagement and it was positive. It was a very, very positive meeting. The auditor spoke positively. First of all, there was no audit comments, which is always the equivalent of getting an A+ on a test Number two, the auditor highlighted our very, very strong financial position, which included and this is for the 2023 through 2024 school year \$14 million in cash and an \$18 million fund balance. The auditor also highlighted that at that time, we had a



surplus of budget surplus of \$1,000,000. We went over all the ratios that we used to judge the school and no matter how you slice it, the village continues to just being very, very sound. Our financial picture, our position, our one ratio that I want to highlight is the days of unrestricted cash, so we have 140 days worth of unrestricted cash. The requirement and that means how many days could we uh, you know, stay alive if no money came in and we're significantly over what the requirement is for that our current ratio 33 times significantly above what the requirement is. So really on every ratio that you could look at our financials are very, very strong. We also asked about prior audit comments and what the feedback we got was that we made substantial improvements through our new, not new anymore but our SBA firm that's handling our SBA activities. We made significant improvement in some of the areas where we had been deficient in years past. So that's a sketch of our finance and Operations committee. Will there be any questions or discussion on Mr. Boomer's report? (Boomer)

- Yes, I want to thank Mr. Boomer for following up on the PFAS issue. The PFAS stands for per and polyfluoroalkyl substances. They're also called forever chemicals. In water supplies for elementary and high schools, they could pose significant risks, developmental risks, lowering of cancer resistance, particularly metabolic effects. So these are things that affect not just kids drinking from drinking fountains, but also in the preparation of food. So if the state is not testing for these or requiring testing then if at all reasonably possible, I would hope that maybe we could be pioneers in this area and in looking out for our children on this. This is a real issue that I think the nation is starting to wake up for them. We should be ahead of the curve, especially in an urban center like Newark. (Valdivieso)
 - Right. Yeah, we do intend to get that test done as well. (Boomer)
 - Thank you, Sir. (Valdivieso)

Personnel Committee

• The personnel committee did meet March 13th myself, vice chair, Ms Migosi, and our assistant Superintendent, Mr. Abbaleo was in attendance. During this meeting, we discussed our hiring and recruitment. Our jobs and our postings for school year 25-26 are live at this point. We had some hiring fare updates Keene University, which is actually today. New Jersey School Jobs, which is in May. Our own internal job fair, which our Superintendent reported about, was on Saturday. Thank you to everybody who shared the flyer and had folk to come out for that. Thank you so much for the trustees for our 2024-25 school year vacancies. District total this month is 17, one -1 from last month, which was 18. So Sankofa, no vacancies. Pac have 5 and we have two people there who are pending approval tonight, so that would take that number down. And our Steam Academy 3, that's decreased by 1. And our high school 9, which have not changed and everyone should have seen in your packet the personnel resolution that's coming today with names and information that is our report for today. (Rouse)

Curriculum & Instruction Committee

- Good evening everyone. I'm not doing too well. Mr. Abbaleo's going to handle it for me tonight. (Towe)
 - Good evening, everyone. So the committee met the second Tuesday of the month. Dr. Towe. Ms. Ince, actually, I think she missed it, and Mr. Valdivieso who was in attendance, alongside the curriculum instruction team. So I'll just go down the approvals for tonight. So we covered a few things. We have some home instruction students for medical reasons that need to be approved tonight. There are a number of field trips for both the high school, and PAC and STEAM. Plenty of just rich opportunities where our kids going to some Broadway plays in New York City. Again,



another trip for Liberty Science Center, and then our students are actually doing. We were invited to the New Jersey School of Conservation. So that'll be for PAC and STEAM students. And then we have one learn well home instruction contract that's a home instruction contract for a student who was hospitalized recently. So those are the standing regular logistical ones, excited to announce that we have our Teach for America contract again, so they will be supporting our summer school at PAC again this year. So that will be separate from the Horizon contract that uh, Ms. Mincy and Mr. Boomer just presented on. So the TFA contract is up for renewal this year where they'll have anywhere between 40 to 50 Corps members working with our teachers and providing summer instruction for our students in K2-8. And the two remaining items L&M. For L, we already approved the Newark Ignite Special Education Grant, so that was funded through the Newark, NJ Children's Foundation. So this is the data sharing agreement that goes alongside of that which was attorney reviewed by Ms Jalloh and Mr. Roberts. This is actually an exciting 1 so and a partnership that came our way from audible. So Audible is partnering with Crayola and they have donated a tablet cart to our PAC campus. So the tablet cart will allow for audio books to be played through the tablets and the Crayola side is to allow students the creative aspect to kind of draw out with or pay us a lot of Crayola products to kind of bring to life what they're hearing through the audible books. So that's exciting, we'll have a release and kind of ribbon cutting for that. We're trying to solidify the date and work that around our state testing, so stay tuned for more details, but this is the agreement that will be voted on for tonight. That is it.(Towe)

Culture & Climate + Alumni Committee

• Good evening everyone. I have a super short report out today. Wanted to give an update on our college application and acceptances, as well as our scholarship. So as of now we have 492 applications in, we have 191 acceptances, and we have \$2.2 million dollars in scholarship, so that is super exciting. That's up from last month, I think last month we were at \$1.5 or a little over \$1.5. And now we're at \$2.2 million, so thank you so much for all the hard work that you guys are doing to make sure that our students are applying to these scholarships, applying to college, applying to secondary education. It is not going unnoticed. Thank you for all of that and then also, just make sure you check out the press release from the Sankofa ribbon cutting ceremony. It is a really good read, so please check that out. I know Ms. Missy said she was linking it, but you can also find it on our website and I'm sure it's on our social media as well and that is all the updates I have from this committee. Thank you. (Gilchrist)

Safety Committee

• Hi Everybody's safety Committee met earlier this month and had a good productive discussion. First, we talked about the threat assessment teams, which I got to say the policy has been updated by administration and it's just still pending trustee review and we should have hopefully something to ready to go by the next board meeting an actual resolution on this. In the meantime, we've been taking all the steps as possible to implement. They've also updated us from an oversight view. Just all of the steps that they're taking working hard to make sure all this stuff gets implemented. Everybody is trained. All of the threat assessment teams are trained up. It's the next steps are going to be stakeholders such as, you know, parents, children and that kind of thing. But first we need to finish the policy up. Other things we discussed were trends in student discipline, HIB, student grievances, any of that kind of thing. We see nothing significant to bring up here, but these are the type of things that we normally cover. We talked about security in each school. We kind of do a review on that as



well and make sure that we're on top of any kind of issues. And as always, we've been monitoring the potential for you know what we would do in case of ice raids? That kind of thing. These are the kind of things this committee looks at. So it's not, you know, no big reports coming here, but, you know, just to just so you all know we stay on top of it. (Valdivieso)

Executive Committee

• I would like to withhold the Executive Committee report so that we can entertain a motion to go into executive session. (Rouse)



6. RESOLUTIONS

I. 2025-3-24-A: Approval of the March 24, 2025 BOT Meeting Agenda

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

Discussion:

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II. 2025-3-24-B: Approval of the February 24, 2025 BOT Meeting Minutes

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

Discussion:

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III. 2025-3-24-C: Approval of the March 3, 2025 Special BOT Meeting Minutes

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

Discussion:

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^{**:} Motion Seconded



IV. 2025-3-24-D: Approval of the March 18, 2025 Special BOT Meeting Minutes														
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent			
Vincent Rouse	\checkmark	K				Julio Valdivieso		\checkmark						
Briana Gilchrist		K				Allan Boomer		\checkmark						
Dashay Carter					\checkmark	Toni Ince		\checkmark						
Dr. Princess Towe**		\checkmark						-			-			
Discussion: • V. <u>2025-3-24-E: Approval of March 25' Finance Report</u>														
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent			
Vincent Rouse		K				Julio Valdivieso		\checkmark						
Briana Gilchrist		\checkmark				Allan Boomer**		\checkmark						
Dashay Carter					\checkmark	Toni Ince	\checkmark	\checkmark						
Dr. Princess Towe		\checkmark												
<u>Discussion:</u> ◆ VI. <u>2025-3-24-F:</u>	•													
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent			
Vincent Rouse		\checkmark				Julio Valdivieso								
Briana Gilchrist**		\checkmark				Allan Boomer	\checkmark	\checkmark						
Dashay Carter					\checkmark	Toni Ince		\checkmark						
Dr. Princess Towe		\checkmark												

Discussion:

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**: Motion Seconded



VII. <u>2025-3-24-G: Approval of Horizons Partnership</u> (Pending Attorney Final Edits)

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

Discussion:

- Yeah, I would like to just have a quick discussion if maybe I think it was Mr. Shankar who explained that situation. Right then, if you could just maybe give a quick 30 seconds to the board, that'd be great. (Boomer)
 - So essentially, they're an organization that will be utilizing our facility in the summer and they have their own summer programming activities that our children will be able to participate in. They used to do this at Saint Phillips Academy, but I don't know what happened, spacing issues or whatever. Our principal at Sankofa said, hey, they have reached out to us and we thought that this would just be something good that made all the different activities that they have, just another way to get kids in our buildings and hopefully you know just again get the word out about Marion P. and some of those families may actually want to attend our school. So that is a quick nutshell. (Mincy)
 - And there won't be any compensation to the school directly and in dollars. However, we felt
 that the way it was presented, the opportunity to get new families exposed to the village
 could be a good positive for recruitment and also, it does not seem that they were paying rent
 in their prior arrangement either. So it's not like we're giving them something that they never
 got before. Thank you so much, Ms. Mincy. (Boomer)
 - Can I ask if the version that we have access to was marked up by our lawyers, by the way, very thoroughly, but I just want to know, like do we have access to the final edits? (Valdivieso)
 - Good question. Julio. I'm asking, I just said that it's pending the final edits from the attorney. (Mincy)
 - Can we amend the motion to just say pending giving attorney final editing rights, or whatever final attorney approval? (Valdivieso)
 - Yes, I'll add that to the resolution as well, so it's crystal clear. (Griffiths)



VIII. <u>2025-3-24-H:</u>	/III. <u>2025-3-24-H: Approval of March 25' Personnel Report</u>													
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent			
Vincent Rouse	V	N				Julio Valdivieso		V						
Briana Gilchrist		V				Allan Boomer		K						
Dashay Carter					\checkmark	Toni Ince		\						
Dr. Princess Towe**		∠					-			-	-			

Discussion:

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IX. PACKAGE I - N: Motion: Towe - Valdivieso** | Approved with Attorney Ability to Tighten Up

2025-3-24-I: Approval of Home Instruction Students

2025-3-24-J: Approval of Field Trips

2025-3-24-K: Approval of Teach for America Contract (renewal)

2025-3-24-L: Approval of Newark Ignite Contract

2025-3-24-M: Approval of Audible/Crayola Partnership

2025-3-24-N: Approval of LearnWell Home Instruction Contract

2020 0 2111.											
Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent	Voting Members	Motion	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Vincent Rouse		Ŋ				Julio Valdivieso	\vee	\			
Briana Gilchrist**		N				Allan Boomer		\			
Dashay Carter					$ \vee $	Toni Ince		K			
Dr. Princess Towe		\vee									

Discussion:

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- 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 2-minutes to address the BOT.
 - No speaker's for public comment.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Go into Executive Session Motion: Rouse Towe** | Approved
- Leave Executive Session Motion: Rouse Towe** | Approved
- 8. CLOSED SESSION 7:04 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: 7:04 PM ET Rouse - Boomer** | Approved

Respectfully submitted at: 3/24/2025 Submitted by: Elijah D. Griffiths