

# The Renaissance

35-59 81st Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372

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## Charter School

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### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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September 29, 2016

The Renaissance Charter School

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

### HONORARY MEMBERS

Hazel DuBois, Ph.D. 1937-2013

Hon. Rudolph Greco, Esq.

Meryl Thompson

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
- 2) Chairperson's Welcome – Vice Chairperson Monte Joffe spoke on behalf of Chairperson Sandra Geyer, who could not attend the meeting. Dr. Joffe recalled stories of the beginning history of the school and remarked that, at the time, the founders of the school didn't fully realize the impact TRCS would have on our children. Dr. Joffe further remarked that we are a heroic school and encouraged us to advance with pride, grit, and hope.
- 3) The Pledge of Allegiance was said.
- 4) Roll Call was taken by the Secretary, Everett Boyd.  
Board Members Present: Mr. Boyd, Dr. Joffe, Ms. Gauthier, Mr. Hicks, Ms. Smith, Mr. Johnson, Dr. Mandel.  
Absent: Ms. Geyer, (ill), Conor McCoy (commuter train derailment), Dr. Maritnez-DelUCA (medical leave)
- 5) Approval of June 1, 2016 Minutes of the Public Meeting of The Board of Trustees – Unanimously approved
- 6) School Management Team Report –
  - Program Highlights and New Initiatives for 2016-2017 – See attachment to board packet.
  - School Year, Current School-wide Demographics – See attachment to board packet. This information is also posted on the TRCS website.

*“Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York”*

- ACR Report – Our attorneys sent The Board a letter outlining the issue of the number of meetings we may be required to hold to comply with DOE regulations governing charter school board meetings and our Renewal Report and agreement.

We will need to come to a decision as a board to address the issue. Dr. Joffee suggested that we restructure the letter and address these issues to The NY State Board of Regents. This item is tabled for discussion at the next board meeting in December.

7) Consolidated Application Report –

- a. Title I - \$132,835  
Offset Salaries for Reading Teachers  
John \$38,607  
Daniela \$47,816  
Amanda \$46,412
- b. Title IIA - \$35,274  
Great Books Foundation PD \$11,250  
ANET Coaching & Training \$17,000  
Spanish PD (Lori) \$1,024 (partial amount)  
Bard PD \$6,000

8) Conversion Charter School Advocacy Update – Ms. Gauthier reported that there has been no movement in the money that The Mayor promised would be set-aside for conversion charter schools, as a result of a bargain made between the State Assembly Speaker and New York City.

9) Dissemination Grant update and Ashoka – See press release attached to board packet.

- The NYSED officially notified TRCS that it has been awarded a second \$500,000 Charter School Dissemination grant to share effective instructional practices with Scholars' Academy, a district-based public school in Rockaway Queens.
- TRCS was awarded an Ashoka Changemaker Schools grant. Ashoka Changemaker Schools are a network of schools that have been identified as leading the way to transforming education.

Ms. Gauthier added that Valentina Roma and Steve Zimmerman visited our school. We also have some private funders who are interested in visiting our school.

- 10) Finance and Audit Committee Pre-Audit Call – The Finance Committee met in a conference call to our accountants to discuss preliminary details of our upcoming audit.
- 11) Pre-K funding and renewal – TRCS is in its third year of hosting a universal pre-K program, which is costing more money than we are taking in. With an allocation of \$189,000 from The NYC DOE and an expenditure of \$200, 000 by TRCS, we are losing money to sustain the program. Ms. Gauthier stated that she is continuing to negotiate with the DOE for additional funding to fill the shortfall.

Dr. Joffee asked if eliminating Pre-K, and adding a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class would increase our per-pupil allocation, thus our income. Ms. Gauthier responded that this would positively impact our funding, but that there is no guarantee that it would be approved.

- 12) Board Committee Assignments – Ms. Gauthier reminded The Board that several members serve on the Education Review Committee.
- 13) Board Members New Business –

- LGBTQ Orientation for Students:

Mr. Hicks raised the objections of two parents to LGBTQ training offered to students at the beginning of the school year, including a flyer that was entitled “GenderBread”. Mr. Hicks said that two parents objected to the flyer and the training due to the family’s religious and moral beliefs.

Ms. Gauthier explained that the LGBTQ training was part of the Middle School and High School orientation during the first week of school, and that each cluster had requested the training initially for staff and subsequently for students to address issues and concerns that we experience at TRCS due to our significant LGBTQ population. Ms. Gauthier was made aware of some of the issues that these parents raised when she received and responded to an email which contained a number of objections to the training and the materials that were distributed to their child.

Mr. Hicks also raised the issue that one of our transgender students had been using the bathroom of her chosen gender and that some students had reported feeling uncomfortable with this activity.

Ms. Gauthier reiterated that one of her roles as a school leader is to ensure the safety and security of each child, regardless of sexual or gender preference, and that these issues present ongoing challenges that the school has been addressing and will continue to address.

- 14) Public Speaking – None
- 15) Adjournment of Public Session – 8:24PM
- 16) Executive Session – The Executive Session was called to order at 8:35PM.