New Heights Board of Trustees

March 26th, 2019

Starting Time: 5:30pm

Dinner Served: 5:00pm

Location: 1690 Main Street, Brockton, MA

1. Call to Order: 5:38pm
2. Roll Call
   1. Present: Maria Fernandes, Stephen Bernard, Rick Schwartz, Taisha Crayton, Ollie Spears, Pat Gray
   2. On the Phone: Mike Sullivan
   3. Absent: Nick L Christ, Pastor Manny Daphnis, Vinnie Marturano
   4. NHCSB Staff: Omai Walker, Janice Manning, Meredith Morrison, Shana Silva
3. Reading and Approval of Minutes from February 28th, 2019
   1. Maria motions to accept the February 28th minutes, Stephen seconds, passes unanimously.
4. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
   1. Chairperson’s Report (N/A)
   2. Executive Director’s Report
      1. College Working Group
         1. “Phenomenal” work has been done in recruiting staff to teach and schedule class times within the requested slots
         2. Per-course price has increased from $5,000 per course to $6,000 per course
         3. 78 students will be going to the college next year for courses
            1. Rick asks if this figure is in line with the prediction from two years go; Omari states that we have found several of our students are accelerated beyond what we had imagined (4 freshmen are already taking college-level calculus) and so our original estimate of 50% college-going juniors has been met and slightly exceeded
            2. Rick asks what the plan is for students who are not attending college courses; Omari states that they will take as many course as they have passed the prerequisite courses and/or tests with the college, and all others will be taught instead by New Heights at New Heights
            3. Rick asks if we expecting any kind of pushback from parents of students who are not going to college, given our mission statement of all students going to college; Omari and Meredith state that 100% will not be on track to earn an associates, however 100% of our students *will* have the opportunity to earn between 15 and 30 credits, beginning with electives that do not require prerequisites, how many credits they earn depends on when each student completes the mcc-required prerequisite requirements; Maria adds that there are always students who do not make it through the developmental sequence, and that this plan serves them in meeting our mission; Rick cautions that we all use appropriate language to reflect the multiple tracks to college credits that are a part of the school’s model
      2. Summer Bridge
         1. A committee has met to determine the application questions and process, as well as criteria for acceptance that include attendance, academics, and behavior.
         2. Maria suggest the application be edited to include a statement on whether or not the student will be able to transport themselves or find their own transportation to the program; Omari states that funding for this is still in the works, so we may not need to ask students and families to do this.
         3. Ollie asks if free meals are being provided; Omari states that MCC has been vocal in seeing the value of feeding the students (rather than students bringing their own), however this financial decision is that of the college, not of New Heights.
         4. Omari expresses ardent support and appreciation for the Massasoit’s commitment to our school’s students and serving their needs which extend beyond the purely academic.
         5. Rick asks if MCC cannot fund a particular item, what happens? Omari states that that would mean calling the Board to meet again to discuss how the school can fund these pieces
         6. Ollie asks for clarification on the reduced schedule from three weeks to one; the two New Heights weeks have been cancelled due to funding and lack of appropriate staff for planning, the week at MCC remains as it is the heart of the program; Omari adds that he hopes to fully open the program as originally intended in future years
      3. School Design
         1. Return to one-principal model with a Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI), rather than a two-principal model without a DCI to promote a more unified school and provide more support for the multiple new/inexperienced teaching staff hired most years
      4. State Site Visit Report
         1. Omari reports that six new educators had been hired in the weeks prior to the visit, and that all of these teachers were observed while many of our veteran staff were overlooked.
         2. Omari gives the Board a general review of the teaching techniques employed in all teachers’ lessons (opening, work time, closing); variations in what the state observers saw depending on which 15-minute segment of the class was observed
            1. Maria asks for clarification on how often internal observations are done; Omari states that all Principals, Deans, and Lead Teachers conduct regular observations, with most holding between 10 and 12 each week
         3. Students in the student panel had, individually, never been suspended; these students supplied the state false claims that students are often sent home mid-day but are told that this practice is not a suspension; Omari states that this practice would be a suspension, but also clarifies that this situation has never occured in our school and that all students who have been suspended have been told in no uncertain terms that they are being suspended.
            1. Maria requests more work be done to look into addressing last year’s rates of suspensions between gen ed students and students with disabilities; Shana speaks about this year’s discipline approach of Restorative Justice; Meredith speaks about AMPed Initiative at the high school
         4. Rick asks multiple times for Shana and Meredith to speak to their perception of the abilities and quality of the reviewers; consensus that they were diligent on many fronts but also misconstrued potential misunderstandings to be factually true
         5. Rick points to page 9’s claims of low enrollment of certain populations compared to state average; NH staff point to family discomfort with reporting needs or accessing state services out of fear of deportation amid other concerns associated with being “flagged by the state”; Omari discusses general statewide issues concerning this direct-certification process
         6. Page 11’s attrition rate of 14.5%is above the median of 10%; Omari urges a further breakdown of this 10% to better reflect urban vs. non-urban districts
         7. Page 12’s suspension rate under statewide average for ISS, above average for OSS; Shana again points out that these are last year’s rates and that this year’s Restorative Justice Approach addresses this; Omari reminds that Board that last year a Board held a vote to pass a Chronic Offender Policy that did lead to multiple suspensions and “saved the culture of the school”, the state later recommended we remove this policy and it had been removed prior to the start of this school year; State report sought to liken the previous year’s Chronic Offenders policy to this year’s Behavior Contracts which served a very different purpose and were highly effective in promoting communication between staff, teachers, students, and family and were highly effective in preventing suspensions
         8. Stephen asks about repercussions and seeks more information on process by which state determines a loss of Charter
         9. Taisha asks if it is possible for information pertaining to what we expect a State Visit Report might include prior to the visits so that they can be informed; Marai suggests this document be shared quarterly or by term
         10. Page 14 jargon (student growth index, percentiles, etc) explained
             1. Maria asks if more information such as this which compares us to other urban districts can be included in the proposed quarterly update; Omari states that the school does not have enough staff to possibly support creating such a report; Rick states that the Academic Excellence Committee has begun work to this effect
         11. Discussion of student survey, staff point to potentially faulty survey design and/or question phrasing, disadvantages of aggregated data
      5. Building Expansion
         1. Rick move to enter Executive Session, seconded by Ollie
         2. Roll Call: Pat, Stephen, Rick, Taisha, Ollie, Maria, Mike
            1. ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:54pm
            2. EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION 7:44pm
            3. Pat makes a motion to grant Omari authority to negotiate with the landlord an amendment to the lease that changes the following:

$140,000 back to $100,000

Language pertaining to decreased square footage from originally proposed drafted building expansion blueprint

* + - * 1. Seconded by Rick, Ollie opposes, all other are in favor, motion passes
    1. Student Lottery, Not Addressed due to time constraints
    2. Open House, Not Addressed due to time constraints

1. Reports of Special Committees
   1. Academic Excellence Committee (Pastor Manny)
      1. Report, Not Addressed due to time constraints
   2. Ad Hoc Building Committee (N/A)
   3. Finance Committee
      1. February Financial Report
      2. FY19 YTD Report
      3. Finance Committee reports we are on the same trajectory as last month and are very comfortable with the numbers
      4. Rick moves we accept the finances are presented, seconded by Taisha, passes unanimously.
   4. Fundraising Committee (N/A)
   5. Governance Committee (N/A)
2. Special Orders
3. Good of the Order
   1. Announcements
      1. Important Dates to Note
         1. Freedom Trail Freshmen Field Trip

Wednesday, March 27th

* + - 1. Parent Conferences

Thursday, March 28th 1:30-4:30, 5-7pm

* + - 1. Middle School Art Show

Thursday, April 4th 4:30-5:30pm

* + - 1. Grade 8 Dance

Thursday, April 11th 6-8pm

* + - 1. Grades 6&7 Dance

Thursday, April 25th 6-8pm

1. Adjourn
   1. Maria makes a motion to adjourn, seconded by Rick, passes unanimously
   2. Meeting adjourns at 7:56pm