



The Renaissance

45-20 83rd Street, Elmhurst, NY 11373
www.renaissancecharter.org • 917-242-3505 • info@rencharter2.org

Charter School 2

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monte Joffee

Chairperson

Liz Perez

Secretary

Chester Hicks

Rachel Mandel

Victor Motta

Leopolda Silvera

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

December 18, 2023

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Chairperson's Message – 3 minutes

Monte Joffee welcomed the Board and attendees.

2. Roll Call – 2 minutes

- a. In attendance: Monte Joffee, Chester Hicks, Victor Motta, Leopolda Silvera.
- b. Absent: Liz Perez and Rachel Mandel
- c. Additional attendees: Stacey Gauthier, Everett Boyd, and additional community members.

3. Approval of Last Month's Minutes – 5 minutes

- a. Minutes approved by acclamation.

4. School Management Team Report – 10 minutes

- a. From Everett:
- b. Enrollment. Currently at 98%.
 - i. It was 99.9 for the last report. We had a little dip in in our lower school but we had an increase in in the high school. We have a 586 officially on the on our enrollment roster today.
 - ii. A few students transferred to some other schools in either their districts or in other places where they live.
 - iii. Recruitment is always ongoing.
- c. Open Houses.
 - i. There have been two in-person open houses since the last board meeting. The first one was for high school. It was very well attended. Another open house was held for the entire school. That was really well attended as well, more for the incoming kindergarten and sixth grade.
 - ii. The next open house is virtual, and that is tomorrow from nine to 10 am.
- d. Elmhurst Tree Lighting Ceremony
 - i. There was an incredible turnout for the Elmhurst tree lighting ceremony on December 6. It has gotten bigger since it started, with more schools involved. Next year more outreach will occur to ensure we are part of the caroling component, as other schools

- had singers. However, it was successful in just showing up and drinking hot chocolate and face painting and all the festivities I think everyone had a really good time at the tree lighting. It was cold night.
- ii. Everett met Assemblyman Steven Raga and got a photo. He was invited to visit the school.
- e. Community Events
- i. Last Saturday the school held a community toy and coat drive, which Assemblyman Raga attended. Everett attended for a few hours as well. Assemblyman Raga also went on a tour of the school and was impressed. He was scheduled by a different aide to return to the school for a second visit. Raga told Everett he wants to see our school in action. He wants to see the students and the teachers and all the hubbub that goes on here.
- f. Security Guard Returned
- i. Our security guard, who has been with us for the last two years, has returned to active duty. He's very happy to be back and everyone is happy to have him back. The school community seems to have moved past the prior incident, which is a positive outcome.
- g. CSG
- i. The Collaborative School Governance committee had its first, very small meeting a couple of weeks ago, with a few representatives from each constituency: a student, a few teachers, administrators, Everett and our parent coordinator. Invitations were sent to quite a few people. A great conversation about our school mission was had. We talked about the original mission of The Renaissance Charter School. A lot of great input about who we are and what our core values are and how we really want to focus on everything for our renewal occurred. That's really the context of the CSG and the focus for this year.
 - ii. The next meeting will take place in January.
- h. Principal Review
- i. Everett reported received notes and feedback from the principal review. He will be reviewing deeply and with reflection. This work aligns with the Cahn Leadership Lab work. I'm really looking forward to actually working on the feedback and working on the initiatives as we actually move into this phase of the new phase of our school for our renewal. Everything is renewable right now, as Monte said a few meetings ago. It's all about renewal.
- i. From Stacey:
- j. World Languages Forum
- i. Teachers from both schools are putting together plans for Lunar New Year and so something will be coming out shortly about what will be happening with the kids and hopefully we'll be doing a few things together between the schools.
 - ii. Our wonderful consultant Laurie Langer Ramirez is going to be leading a world language forum for the Mandarin teachers and the Spanish teachers on high leverage teaching practices in March.
- k. Audubon Society / Federal Grant
- i. A federal grant that was received by the Audubon Society for Ren 1 and Ren 2 to participate in a study looking at birds and Long Island Sound The preliminary grant call included federal officials in Connecticut and New York talking about the sound but our high school students primarily will be involved. More details will come as this gets fleshed out.
- l. Takeaways from Ren 1's Authorizer Renewal Visit
- i. There is an expectation that the Ren 2 renewal process will have an emphasis on teaching and learning, like it was at the visit at Ren 1. Examples include flexible groupings for students, making sure student engagement is high, making sure teachers consistently check for understanding by using a variety of methodologies having a program where students feel comfortable taking risks, giving teachers academic freedom and autonomy, making sure that we use all sorts of feedback, including interim assessments, but also direct feedback from students. Plus, making sure that all of our intervention programs--whether they're SETTS or ICT or reading interventions--are

- high quality to support all of our learners.
 - ii. We should also make sure that we are very proactive and giving our authorizers the information they need. We have a lot of great templates from Ren 1 to use.
 - iii. Reporting on the renewal process will be happening every month until everything is in until they go before the board.
 - iv. One of the biggest lessons learned well is that student are asked very deep questions. They used the term, “excavate,” to dig deeper on the questions. We all know with Bloom's [Taxonomy], to ask questions that are deeper, and to get the kids you know doing the heavy lifting and making sure that you know we have a high level of cognitive demand of our kids in all subjects.
 - v. Test scores are still critical for reauthorization, and we focus on them. But, at the same time e want to make sure that we offer our children a holistic program with the arts, foreign language, physical education, social-emotional wellness, you name it.
 - m. Hiring Updates
 - i. The search is still ongoing for a new Mandarin teacher.
 - ii. Currently, 265 candidates have applied to the middle school assistant principal position.
5. Board Members’ New Business – 10 minutes
- a. Monte described what the Principal’s Review process will look like over the course of the next several months. He described the process as rich and detailed. It will probably conclude at the end of the school year.
 - b. Stacey added an update about the possibility of a significant cut in Special Education funding. More info will be communicated as it becomes available. Some proposed cuts could have serious effects on our current budgeting allocation. If things turn out as bad as they could, we will need to mobilize to advocate and lobby for money, which has not seen an increase since 2002.
 - c. Monte asked if funding is still borough-driven. Stacey confirmed this.
6. Public Speaking – TBD
- a. Kindergarten parent Ben Chan introduced himself and expressed satisfaction with his son Christopher’s experience at Renaissance 2.
7. Adjournment of Public Meeting
- a. The public meeting was adjourned at 11:27 am.
8. Executive Session
- a. An executive session followed the public meeting.