

# ReNEW Charter Schools

## Minutes

### Board Meeting

---

#### **Date and Time**

Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 6:00 PM

#### **Location**

1607 S. Carrollton Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118

---

#### **Trustees Present**

B. Weimer, J. Marshall, K. Conklin, L. Sherman, M. Clem, N. Hardie, P. Parquet, R. Roig, S. Rosenthal

#### **Trustees Absent**

K. Parke

#### **Guests Present**

Adelaida Melendez, Adreyauna Lewers, Adrienne Ross, Amanda Copeland, Anna Lindenmayer, Emily Waterfield, Garrett Van, Jimika Shuler, K. Gutterrez, Kael Saloy, Laquita Moore, Lisa Giarratano, Mikeisha Jackson, Nyesha Veal, S. Gallagher, S. Satchfield, Shauna Davis, Sheanah Cook, T. Bryant, Teresa June

---

### **I. Opening Items**

#### **A. Record Attendance and Guests**

#### **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

S. Rosenthal called a meeting of the board of trustees of ReNEW Charter Schools to order on Thursday Dec 14, 2017 @ 6:04 PM at 1607 S. Carrollton Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118.

#### **C. Approve Minutes from 10/12/2017 meeting**

Liza Sherman motioned to approve minutes – Brian Weimer seconded. John Marshall stated that Jeff Teague is noted as a trustee but is a finance committee member, Liza agreed to make this change, as Board Secretary, and minutes were unanimously approved with the change as proposed.

## II. CEO Report

### A. Status on RCAA Renewal

General Updates. Kevin stated that the testing system through which students get three tries prior to taking the final test, is getting off the ground. He stated that ReNEW is doubling down on the coaching model for students & principals. It is a high repetition coaching model working with teachers on key classroom techniques.

RCAA Renewal. Kevin stated that 7 years ago when we took on RCAA & SciTech – ReNEW started with the full school turnaround model. He stated that RCAA rapidly made significant gains but has since plateaued. Missing the cutoff point by only five points, RCAA remained at a D level this past year, not meeting the C level threshold, so the charter has been revoked.

### B. The ReNEW Board of Directors will consider a motion regarding ReNEW McDonogh City Park Academy.

Kevin stated that MCPA started with ReNEW as a C level and has moved to an F level – it is one of five F level schools in the city and with other F level schools closing, if it remains open, it will be the only F level K-8 school remaining on the East Bank of Orleans Parish. Kevin stated that the move to relinquish the charter to the state has been driven by the need that ReNEW sees to move kids & families into high-performing seats across the city, rather than keeping them in a failing school. Kevin stated that ReNEW will be engaging with a consulting group, Ed Navigator, that will work with families to help coach them through an informed decision on their new school, and that they will get OneAPP preference.

Similarly, MCPA staff will be giving hiring preference throughout the organization.

Steve, as Board President, stated that typically organizations do not give up a charter; they wait until they are directed to. He stated from a financial position, it is not to our benefit to give up the school, but that our duty is to make sure that students are in the best learning environment possible.

The floor then opened for Public Comments.

Teresa June, MCPA art teacher spoke on students that have benefited tremendously from help by MCPA staff.

Garrett Van, MCPA teacher, stated that the discontinuity in schools would be disruptive for the kids.

Nakeisha Jackson, Assistant Principal at MCPA, overseeing 3rd & 4th grades – is wondering if keeping PK-4 and relinquishing 5-8th grade could be an option.

At this point, so that the board could answer questions from the public, and vice versa, Steve asked if everyone present was in agreement that we could open up the floor to back and forth questions and dialogue. All present agreed to this.

Board member Mykell Clem asked if there is data on success rates for placement of

SPED students in other schools. Kevin stated that Ed Navigator is very hands- on & customized with placement assistance, and that there are schools that have specifically offered SPED programs. Board Member Noah Hardie posed a similar question and Steve answered that per Cowan Center data, students that transfer from a lower-performing to higher-performing schools, have done better academically.

Jimika Shuler, parent of an MCPA 3rd grader, spoke, stating that MCPA is the only school her daughter has ever attended; she credited MCPA staff with making her daughter a smart, interactive child, from her initial shyness. She stated that the school has grown so much, she doesn't see the F, she's seen her daughter get better every year. She is worried about her daughter moving and being set back.

She recommended trying another year with the current staff which she thinks is amazing.

Kaia Jackson, teacher, then spoke, stating that she feels MCPA did not get the same level of resources that other ReNEW schools have received.

Kevin stated that part of MCPA's lack of success as compared to earlier turnarounds, was a lack of excess resources from Walton Foundation and other sources.

Another teacher then spoke, stating that she has been teaching for 6 years and loves working at MCPA and believes strongly in the teachers and staff, everyone works together as a community.

Mykell asked what MCPA's grade was for school year 2015-2016; Kevin responded D-. She asked how long it would take to turn it back around; Steve stated that to do a turnaround you have to really be over-resourced and we are not in that position now. It is the great exception to be able to turn around a school in a year.

ReNEW staff member Lisa Giarratano who served as principal for MCPA last year spoke on behalf of keeping MCPA;

Kevin stated that when the year started, we were hopeful for MCPA, and had an excellent new principal recruited from Philadelphia, but once the scores came out in November, this was the turning point driving the decision to give the charter back.

Amanda Copeland, kindergarten teacher at MCPA, stated that she feels that giving up is not the solution.

At this point in time Noah Hardy made a motion to relinquish the MCPA charter to the state; the motion was seconded by Mykell Clem and Steve requested a roll call vote on the proposal. The Board, all present, voted unanimously in favor of relinquishing the charter. The motion passed with 9 ayes and 0 nays.

Steve and Kevin thanked all staff and guest for coming to the meeting; for sharing key perspectives; and for the work they do every day. N. Hardie made a motion to relinquish the MCPA charter. M. Clem seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call R. Roig Aye P. Parquet Aye K. Parke Absent K. Conklin Aye N. Hardie Aye

M. Clem Aye L. Sherman Aye B. Weimer Aye J. Marshall Aye S. RosenthalAye

### **III. Academic Committee Report**

#### **A. Academic Committee Report**

Due to end of semester testing results not yet being available, The Academic Committee meeting has been moved to January 4th.

### **IV. Finance**

#### **A. Finance Committee Report**

Board Treasurer John Marshall stated that we are projecting a \$995,533 loss which is larger than the \$530,420 budgeted. The loss of 45 kids is the driver of this additional deficit. It looks like we will reduce the deficit by an estimated \$100,000 from the 2/1/2018 student count.

Kathy Conklin stated that as we are downsizing and whether the board should look at whether the CMO is staff-heavy, per comments made earlier. Kevin stated that we used attrition and some layoffs to already reduce CMO staff this year. Steve stated that typically the stronger charter organizations have strong central staff. Noah stated that this is a problem in other industries as well. Steve said that if the board wants to take a granular look at positions within the CMO, we should get professional guidance. Kevin further stated that ReNew is currently finishing up the annual Insight teacher survey. We should have results soon, that the board can review at the Academic Committee meeting, along with testing results, that the whole board will be invited to.

### **V. Closing Items**

#### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

J. Marshall made a motion to adjourn the meeting. N. Hardie seconded the motion. The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion. There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, L. Sherman