

## Integration Charter Schools

### Board of Trustees Meeting February 25, 2021 6:30PM Minutes

<b>Trustees Present</b>	Sheldon Blackman, Michael Caridi, Joseph Carroll, Bonnie Fritz, Ed Fucini, Denis Henick, David Lehr, Jill Patel, Deborah Miller, Doris Schuler, John Strand and Nelly Tournaki
<b>Trustees Absent</b>	Robin Lefkowitz, Dirk Tillotson
<b>Staff Present</b>	Ken Byalin, Mary Cottingham, Samantha LoCasto, Elaine Bartley, Theresa Peterford, Jessica Hart, Alessandra Demeo, Michele Chiehaski, Florence Strezbala, Ivette Dempsey, Maria Rodriguez, and Rei Rexha
<b>Parents Present</b>	None
<b>Others Present</b>	Eduardo LaGuerre, Kathlyn Barrett
<b>Approval of the Consent of Agenda</b>	<p>A motion was made by Nelly Tournaki seconded by Deborah Miller and unanimously approved by all to accept the February 2021 Consent Agenda :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Adoption of the agenda</li><li>● Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting</li><li>● Executive Committee</li><li>● Finance and Audit Committee</li><li>● Education and Accountability Committee</li><li>● President's Report</li></ul>
<b>Mission Story</b>	Jessica Hart, Teacher Assistant for Lavelle Prep Highschool Division spoke to the Board about her inspiring story on how she worked one on one with a student who was falling behind and in jeopardy of not graduating and getting back on the right track.
<b>Resolutions</b>	A motion was made by David Lehr seconded by Michael Caridi unanimously agreed by all to establish the new board Task Force for The Bernie Glassman New Ventures Charter School in Yonkers, The Task Force would be chaired by John Strand and includes Ed Fucini, Dirk Tillotsen, Eleni Tournaki and Eduardo LaGuerre.
<b>Committee Reports</b>	<p><b>Governance and Nominating Committee Report:</b> This Committee met on 2/23/21 Present: Robin Lefkowitz, David Lehr, Joseph Carroll, Deborah Miller, Mary Cottingham and Elaine Bartley</p>

The Committee discussed forming a task force to help oversee the school operations of the Bernie Glassman New Ventures Charter School. ICS Trustee Ed Fucini, Dirk Tillotson, and Nelly Tournaki have agreed to be involved and John Strand has agreed to Chair this task force once it becomes a Committee. Mike Caridi has declined to join this task force.

A motion was made by Joe Carroll, seconded by Deborah Miller and unanimously approved by all to form the BGNVCS Task Force which will eventually become a Committee upon full Board approval.

#### **ICS Executive Committee**

#### **Met on February 10, 2010**

Present: Jill Patel, Ed Fucini, David Lehr, Dirk Tillotson, Deborah Miller, Ken Byalin and Mary Cottingham

Jill Patel informed the Committee she is working on a project with Math, Engineering, and Science Academy (MESA) in Brooklyn. The Committee unanimously feels this is NOT a conflict of interest at this time.

A recommendation for a Board Committee to be created for the proposed Bernie Glassman School (BGNV) was discussed. The group would include Ed Fucini, Mike Cardi, John Strand as Chair, Dirk Tillotson, & Nelly Tournaki and ICS staff. The Governance and Nominating Committee will be asked to consider a resolution.

At the February Board meeting we will hear from staff; what makes ICS successful in the classroom? Other topics for future discussions:

- Virtual tour of CC3.
- How we define success, what are the indicators we think are important?
- How do we develop a plan to upgrade our Marketing, Communications, and Social Media.
- Board education on the schools and students.
- If no other Charters are available what are our growth options?
- What is ICS doing to engage parents

Jill will reach out to Board members to gauge interest in interacting with students via school activities (i.e. career day discussion, read a story, talk to a small group.)

The Committee agreed to use the CSP funding for Board development on a presentation on a Charter Management Organization (CMO).

ICS will continue to be fully remote with a tentative reopening date of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Discussion of a summer program is beginning.

COVID and winter weather continue to be a challenge with the construction site at CC3. At this time ICS has not paid any rent. We believe the building will be ready for September 2021.

We are in the due diligence period on the Barnes & Noble building.

Three legal matters were reviewed

A former staff member, who resigned in lieu of termination, is now threatening a lawsuit.

The lawyers representing ICS on the Synod & Eltingville case are hopeful that ICS will be dismissed from the action. The local church has \$60,000 of ICS's money.

There is an outstanding lawsuit by a family.

Ken Byalin updated the Committee on the interim plan to fill the Principal position in the LP Middle School. While we continue the search for a new Principal, Theresa Peterford has agreed to step in temporarily.

**Finance and Audit Committee Report:**

Meeting began at 4pm Wednesday February 10, 2021.

Present were Board members David Lehr, Jill Patel, Joe Carroll, Ed Fucini as well as President Ken Byalin, staff members Dana Volini and Jonathan Lipschitz.

Confirmed with the committee that Richmond Prep will require an AUP(Agreed Upon Procedures) audit similar to the AUP audit done for the Nicotra school. Dave Ashenfarb has been notified and Schall & Ashenfarb will handle that for us as they have done in the past.

The ratio analysis document was discussed in detail with various financial ratios captured as required by Federal & New York Charter School guidance. All of our ratios met the guidance thresholds other than the enrollment variances for New Ventures and Nicotra. New Ventures was under the 95% variance due partially to high graduation rates. Nicotra was under the 95% variance only for SPED student numbers as their overall student numbers hit budgeted amounts.

Discussed the January 2021 financials for ICS. All schools were thus far operating with positive net income. Overall ICS was performing better than budget, however, New Ventures was coming in short of budget but still with a positive net income. New Ventures student enrollment is under budget which causes their budgeted to actual income variance to be under budget. Cash flow continues to be adequate for the fiscal year as our per pupil funding is coming in without being cut this far.

The updated dashboard agreed to with the committee was finalized and will be included in the overall board package with other documents from the various committees. We have set the dashboard up as a monthly document to be submitted.

Meeting was adjourned at 5pm.

It was agreed that future meetings will be on a Thursday each month instead of Wednesday. Schedule was distributed by Jill Patel on 2/13 via email.

#### **Education & Accountability Committee**

This Committee met on 2/10/21

Trustees present- Dirk Tillotson, Dr. Nelly Tournaki, Bonnie Fritz, Doris Schueler, John Strand. Deborah Miller

Staff present- Aimee Horowitz, Yelena Osoro, Theresa Peterford, Samantha LoCasto, Ryan Melis, Amelia DePompo, Rei Rexha, Tamasia Wright.

Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 1:32PM

**Data:**A written report was provided to the committee, outlining, YTD Attendance Rate and Chronically Absent data, NYS Report Card: Graduation Rate, and NYC School Quality Review for Lavelle and New Ventures.

**Attendance:** Aimee expressed attendance does not mean learning, getting the students there is just the first part. An attendance team was implemented in every school and goals were set at the beginning of the year for all schools in terms of attendance rate and chronically absent.

**NYS Report Card: Graduation Rate**

- Lavelle's 4 year graduation rate for all students is 98%. This is 13% above NYS and 14% above Staten Island's.
- Lavelle's graduation rate for students with disabilities is 34% above NYS and Staten Island's.
- New Ventures' 6 year graduation rate for all students is 74%. This is 13% below NYS and 11% below Staten Island's. It is important to note that this 6 year graduation rate is for all schools not only transfer schools.
- NV's graduation rate for students with disabilities is 8% above NYS and 11% above Staten Island's.

**NYC School Quality Review:** After reviewing the NV data for students after graduation, Ryan expressed the remaining 78% of students who did not enroll in a 4 year or 2 year program; enrolled in a trade school, enlisted in the Military and/or sought full time employment. New Ventures was always envisioned as a College Prep school but, this data has shown that New Ventures is not just a College Preparatory school but also a Career Preparatory school. Bonnie mentioned there is currently a big demand for Trade Schools and if society is changing maybe our mission should change also. Nelly agreed but was interested to know if we have this data on other schools. Yelena stated Concord is similar but she would have to do more research on Public Schools. NV has hopes to partner with Unions for Internship placements in the upcoming years.

**NV Highlights:**

- NV is #3 on the Top 10 performing transfer schools in the state
  - All 74%
  - SWD 75%
  - ED 60%
- Staff was provided with a training in Project Based Learning to now be implemented in the classroom
- Attendance Team reengaged 15 students this year

**NV Challenges:**

- Attendance remains the number one priority
- Post Secondary Transitions
  - Students are "self sabotaging" their graduation date in fear of leaving the New Ventures family. Why? How can we fix it?

	<p>NV has created an Exit Boot Camp course to help students for PostSecondary success. Feedback was provided to extend Zoom support for students after graduation, possibly add a check-in procedure, and include social workers in Post Secondary transitions</p> <p>Nelly initiated a conversation to discuss the current situation regarding the middle school principal vacancy. Theresa briefly spoke on the steps, procedures and goals put in place for the interim. Now until June, Theresa will be the Principal for the middle school. ICS hopes to identify a leader who is able to bring a fresh perspective to Middle School and ICS. This person will train though the Summer allowing for a fresh start come September. Deborah suggested reaching out to Board Trustee, Kathy Laine as a resource while searching for a Principal.</p> <p>Dirk asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nelly moved and Deborah seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.</p>
<b>Committee Dashboard</b>	<p>This month’s dashboard from the Education and Accountability committee shows the percentage of YTD absences and percentage of chronic absences in all schools.</p>
<b>Strategic Discussion</b>	<p>Educators from each school presented to the board on what makes ICS successful in the classroom.</p>
<b>President’s Report</b>	<p><b>Pandemic Update</b></p> <p>The health and safety of students and staff of Integration Charter Schools continues to be our primary concern. Faced with the fact that positive COVID-19 cases were high on Staten Island and out of concern that school break socializing could lead to another spike, we continued the suspension of all in-person learning which began on Monday, November 16, 2020 through at least Friday, March 5, 2021. We are hopeful that in-person instruction will resume on Monday, March 8, 2021, but we will re-evaluate our plans in the days prior. We have and continue to be in constant contact with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOH) regarding safety protocols.</p> <p>Some recent good news reported in the New York Post: “The Department of Education must begin administering COVID-19 tests in charter schools, a court ruled Friday. New York County Supreme Court Justice Frank Nervo determined that the DOE ‘shall provide and administer COVID-19 screening tests to students and staff of charter schools upon identical terms as testing provided to public schools,’ court papers say. The decision is a win for charter schools and families</p>

who complained that the city had unfairly denied them coronavirus tests despite public schools receiving them weekly.”

Each of our schools and divisions is in the process of developing plans for a return to greater “normalcy”. What can we do to help students overcome what has been and is being lost as we battle the pandemic? Much is still unknown and CDC guidelines are being updated frequently. We will keep you posted as planning continues.

### **Lavelle Prep Middle School**

In the past month, the Lavelle Prep Middle School Division faced an unanticipated challenge. Acting Principal Meagen Moeller suddenly announced her- intention to abruptly leave ICS for a position with the NYC DOE. Several meetings with Meagen made clear that she was firm in her intention. And then in exploring options on how to manage over the short term, we learned that Kristina Mazza, the Middle School Principal, currently on Parental Leave, had decided that she did not want to return as Principal, although she does want to return to ICS. Although Kristina’s decision did not come as a shock it presented us with both a more difficult challenge and a new opportunity.

The Lavelle Prep Middle School is our longest operating division. Although our middle school students have gone on to great success in high school, graduating at very high rates (100% this year), they have not shown the progress toward proficiency during middle school that both we and our authorizer would like to see. While we see great advantages in promoting leadership from within, our middle school leadership crisis offers an opportunity to really take a fresh look at how we do middle school. As a first step in this process, one of our Vice Presidents for Education, Theresa Peterford, is stepping into the Middle School Principalship for the remainder of this school year. This will allow her and us to get a more intimate view of the challenges we face there. At the same time, we are beginning a search for a new principal both within and outside ICS.

### **Facilities**

Progress toward acquisition of the former Barnes & Noble building is proceeding according to plan. All documents required by Build NYC for approval of tax-exempt bond financing have been submitted. These include a clean transportation survey and a clean environmental survey. We continue to expect approval by the Build NYC board by mid-March and anticipate closing by mid-June

Although winter weather has slowed construction progress at Corporate Commons 3, we expect to occupy well before September. If we are able to occupy earlier, the additional space will allow us to more rapidly expand in-person instruction as it becomes safe to do so.

### **Bernie Glassman New Ventures Charter School**

While we have continued to receive encouragement regarding the application, questions have arisen as to whether the application can technically be submitted by ICS prior to the opening of Richmond Prep in September. The alternative of creating a new corporation as part of the application process has been suggested to us as a relatively easy work around. (This is what we did when we opened New Ventures. We operated for several years with two education corporations and a Memorandum of Understanding regarding shared staff).

We have begun the process of selecting a Founding Principal for BGNVCS. We met with an impressive group of candidates prior to vacation to discuss the ICS mission and the general plan for opening in Yonkers following a planning year on Staten Island. A first round of interviews with interested candidates will begin shortly.

Work on the charter application continues on schedule for a possible mid-July submission. One area receiving particular attention was raised as concern at a previous Trustees Meeting: How much time will senior management be spending in Yonkers?

The following plan was discussed in the BGNVCS Task Force Meeting: Senior ICS staff will regularly be onsite at BGNVCS. Each Vice President of Education will spend two days a month in Yonkers. The President and the Vice Presidents for External Affairs and Administration will each spend one day a month in Yonkers. To supplement this, ICS will hire a coach to work with the founding principal through the planning year and the first two years of operation. The coach will be onsite one day per week to join the principal in team meetings, teacher observations, and meetings with students and parents in order to ensure that learning the New Ventures way to success is acquired as quickly and smoothly as possible. The Coach will be available remotely for additional periods of reflection and consultation as needed. Ron Gorsky, Founding Principal of NVCS will serve as Founding Principal Coach for BGNVCS. In addition, all ICS Senior Management will be available regularly and on an as needed basis for teleconferencing. As part of the Founding Faculty, we will select at least one member of the

	<p>founding team who has the background and capacity to serve as acting principal of BGNVCS on an emergency basis should the need arise.</p> <p>ICS will utilize a variety of strategies to address support functions at BGNVCS. For Human Resources, Finance, and Program Evaluation, an Administrative Assistant based on site at BGNVCS will serve as the local representative of centralized ICS departments. ICS intends to negotiate an agreement with the Charter School of Educational Excellence (CSEE) in accordance with which ICS will license facilities from CSEE, insuring greater use of the CSEE facilities, and a complementary MOU through which CSEE will provide janitorial, security, and nursing services of BGNVCS.</p>
<b>New Business</b>	None
<b>Adjournment</b>	A motion was made by Jill Patel seconded by Michael Caridi, and unanimously agreed by all to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm. The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2021 @6:30pm.