



Board Members in Attendance:	Absent Board Members:	Other Attendees:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr.Geraldo Vasquez, Board Chair - Rosann Santos, Vice Chair - Harini Mital, Treasurer - Tameka Beckford-Young, Secretary - Matthew Kirby-Smith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raghav Thapar - Marlin Jenkins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristen Shroff, Head of School - Erienne Rojas, Director of Operations - Derian, Edtec - Brad, Edtec - Nick Martinez - Janneth Gaona - Members of Public - Emblaze Teachers - Members of Public - Emblaze Parents

Agenda Items

The meeting was called to order at 6:48pm by Gerry Vasquez.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- The Item will be addressed in future board meetings

Management Report

Facilities

- Full Kitchen Needed
 - o As the school increases enrollment, the building needs a full kitchen so that we can prepare meals for the students.
 - The school currently provides meals through a satellite meals program. Another school prepares meals for us each day and delivers them to the school. But this is not sustainable as the school grows.
 - o The lease requires the Landlord to up-fit the school with a full kitchen, i.e. absorb the cost of the improvement.
 - o Emblaze, however, has to pay for all major kitchen equipment, however. The estimated cost of this is \$180K.
 - o Management has been working with the architect (Rainer), SchoolFoods, the DOE and the Mike Ronan (Emblaze’s Consultant) to finalize the kitchen layout.
 - o Management is proposing that the school finance this cost using a nonprofit lender
 - o This item will be discussed in more detail at the May board meeting, or special board meeting if required.
- Science Lab
 - o Management would like to add a hands-on curriculum component to the science program.
 - o Specifically, management would like to move forward with Lablearners Science Program which provides a 5-8 curriculum and includes a fully installed 5 Station LabLearner lab (furniture, equipment, storage), on-site installation and teacher training and in-going support.
 - The start-up cost is \$70K
 - Annual costs: \$27/student
 - Additional costs: workbooks per unit level

- This item will be discussed in more detail at the May board meeting, or special board meeting if required.

Student Recruitment

The public lottery for new students took place on Monday, April 13, 2020.

- The school received 369 applications for 115 seats (across all grades) for the 2020-2021 school year
- 141 students are returning (based on the “Intent to Return” to form sent to families)
- At present, the 5th grade class has 46 students confirmed out of the 9- available seats, Summary of Enrollment Stats are below for the 2020-201

Grade	Enrollment Goal for 2020-21	Confirmed Attendance for 2020-21 Year	Available/ Empty Seats to meet Goal	# of Students with offers	#of Students on Waitlist
5 th	90	47	43	18	0
6 th	90	78	22	25	105
7 th	100	113	0	N/A	N/A

- School is expected to meet 6th and 7th grade enrollment targets.
- Regarding 5th grade, but as recruitment efforts are still underway, and it’s still early in the recruitment process, management is confident that it will be able to reach or nearly reach the enrollment goal of 90 students.
 - If meeting 5th grade enrollment numbers are low, the school could create an additional section of 6th graders or take on up to 20 additional 7th graders.

Hiring & Staff Culture

- Management shared the feelings expressed by the rest of the Emblaze team after its the Q&A with the board to discuss the HOS search. The expressed that the “tone of the meeting was wrong” and that they felt “overwhelmed.” Management offered to share notes from its meeting with staff with the board.
- Every staff member who received an invitation to return has verbally accepted.
- Management only offered COLA raises in light of the conservative budgeting for the upcoming school year. Certain staff members are negotiating hire raises.
- There are ten (10) open positions to fill for the upcoming schoolyear.
 - HOS believe that we fill all positions will be filled by June despite the delay. In previous years, there might be 5-6 outstanding positions. May is still a prime time to find talent.

Finance and Facilities Committee Report - Financial Update as of March 2020

Emblaze March Financials

- School has a revenue shortfall
 - This is due primarily to the fact that the school did not meet expected to meet enrollment goals during the 2019-20 school year (210, projected; 163 actual for the remainder of school year)
- Expenses were cut, but the large expense of having to pay rent on the former Williamsbridge Road facility is large and was difficult to overcome with the revenue shortfall
- School has an operating loss of approx. \$152,021
 - Budgeted Income: \$4,054,797; Budgeted Expenses: \$3,658,415
 - Actual Income: \$3,201,844; Actual Expenses: \$3,353,865

2020-21 Budget

- Finance Committee, Management and Edtec to finalize draft 2020-1 budget for review at May 2020 board meeting. We need to have the finalized budget and voted on May board meeting

Friends of Emblaze (FOE) Board

- Treasurer and Board Chair to speak with FOE board about any monies or expenses that should properly fall within FOE budget and to determine whether surplus monies should be donated to Emblaze.

Finance and Facilities Committee Report

- This will be provided at the May board meeting.

Governance Committee Report

HOS Search

- The hiring committee will set a recurring time to meet every two weeks (beginning next week) to review and discuss resumes that come through.
- Staff (2 staff members) and parents will be involved in the hiring process, whether as a separate interview or as part of the hiring committee.
 - o Two Emblaze staff members have already volunteered
 - o Half a dozen parents were recommended for the role. One parents (half a dozen parents) on committee

Review and Vote on New Board Members

- The Governance Committee is putting forward three new board members for inclusion on the board
 - o **Francine Cruz:** She is a 27 NYC DOE veteran; retired in February 2020
 - Although she retired, she doesn't want to stop working, she wants to use this experience to learn about charter schools
 - Special Education Teacher for 11 years
 - SPED specialist trainer
 - Principal at International School for Liberal Arts, which educates a student body that is primarily ELL
 - The HOS noted that International School for Liberal Arts students performed below the district average.
 - Her resume was forwarded to Gerry; does not know anyone personally on the board.
 - o **Janneth Gaona:** She has a background in Finance, currently works at a healthcare NP and is newly minted CPA
 - She wants to use her expertise to give back and she feels the best way to do that is helping to improve educational opportunities.
 - Gerry was her first accounting professor
 - o **Nick Martinez:** He has 10 years of informal education; works to get students of color interested the STEM; has a background in non-profit management
 - Nick wants to work with Emblaze because he knows how important middle school is for students and the impact that can be made on children at this time.
 - Knows Rosann
- Rosann provided additional information about the board member candidates, speaking to their professional experience and desire to help students of color/the south Bronx community that each of them shared during their respective governance committee interviews. Rosann also acknowledged the information that the HOS shared about the performance of International School for Liberal Arts and noted that much like Emblaze which has a higher number of SPED students, the International School is mostly ELL learners and for that reason both schools have lower test scores when compared against the district.
- Gerry explained that each of the candidates was proposed to help fill certain gaps in coverage or expertise on the board. Janeth could serve as a co-treasurer and as treasurer when Harini steps down. Francine would chair an academic achievement committee and Nick could assist Marlon with fundraising activities.

A motion to vote on each of the additional board members was called:

Motion to Vote Francine Cruz as a new Emblaze Board Member

- Gerry: Yes
- Rosann: Yes
- Matt: Yes
- Harini: Yes
- Tameka: Yes

Unanimous Vote to approve.

Motion to Vote Janneth Gaona as a new Emblaze Board Member

- Gerry: Yes
- Rosann: Yes
- Matt: Yes
- Harini: Yes
- Tameka: Yes

Unanimous Vote to approve.

Motion to Vote Nick Martinez as a new Emblaze Board Member

- Gerry: Yes
- Rosann: Yes
- Matt: Yes
- Harini: Yes
- Tameka: Yes

Unanimous Vote to approve.

Succession planning

- Board Chair will be leaving the board at the end of this year (12/31/20)
- The Vice Chair will be leaving the board at the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm by Gerry Vasquez.