

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
THE ROSS GLOBAL ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2008**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board" or the "Trustees") of the Ross Global Academy Charter School ("RGA" or the "School") was held on September 18, 2008 in room 115 on the ground floor of the Tweed Courthouse located at 52 Chambers Street, New York, New York, commencing at 4:30 p.m.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Courtney Sale Ross called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. In accordance with the New York Open Meetings Law, notices of meeting time and place were posted more than 72 hours prior to the meeting at the New York City Police Department First Precinct, 16 Ericsson Place New York, New York; on the RGA Website; and at Emigrants Savings Bank Building Community Board #1, 49-51 Chambers Street, New York, New York.

**II. ATTENDANCE REPORT**

Board Members Present: *Courtney Sale Ross, Nick Combemale, Robert Torres, Martin Payson, and Jennifer Chidsey Pizzo.*

Board Members Absent: *Jon Leizman and Mary Brabeck.*

Others Present: *Julie Johnson, RGA Principal; Ian Pearce, Madeline Spivex, Sherrill Collins, RGA Parents; Bryan Rosenberg, Felipe Noguera, Ross Institute; Max Garfield, Esq., Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP Pro Bono Counsel and Adam Gartner, Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP Pro Bono Paralegal.*

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees held on June 25, 2008.

**IV. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

RGA Principal Julie Johnson presented her first principal's report of the school year to the Trustees.

**Special Education:** Ms. Johnson explained that there are 38 students with Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs"). There are study teams working to help identify new students who may require extra services. The School also has "at-risk" services in place for students who have not yet had evaluations for extra services. Twenty-one students have received "at-risk" counseling. Further, the School provides "Academic Intervention Services" ("AIS") for students in specific academic areas. Ms. Johnson reported that 57 students had received AIS in literacy and 53 students had received AIS in math. Ms. Johnson estimated that approximately 30-50 per cent of the

students receiving AIS would benefit from more intensive services. Courtney Sale Ross asked if the School would benefit from additional support for special education services from New York University, and Ms. Johnson responded that she would welcome additional support. Ms. Johnson also informed the Board that she had a meeting with Pedro Noguero at NYU to pursue further special education services.

**Assessments:** Ms. Johnson explained the schedule of assessments for the year to the Trustees. Ms. Johnson stated that the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) will be administered for English Language Arts and the TerraNova Assessment will be administered for mathematics. The DRA is administered individually to students and requires approximately 30 to 40 minutes, and the TerraNova Assessment is administered to an entire classroom. The Lower School will finish the DRAs by September 26 and a report on the scores will be available by October 3. The Middle School will finish the DRAs by October 8 with a report available by October 20. Bryan Rosenberg explained that the goal is to administer the DRA three times during the academic year. The TerraNova Assessments will be administered by September 30, with results for Kindergarten and First Grade expected by October 14 and the other grades by October 28. Ms. Johnson explained that the tests being utilized are common and recommended by the New York City Center for Charter School Excellence. Nick Combemale asked Ms. Johnson to prepare an assessment calendar to help the Board track students' progress.

**School Report Card:** Martin Payson noted that the School's report card with the Department of Education is now public and asked Ms. Johnson for her response. Ms. Johnson explained that the school received a "B" as its overall grade. Mrs. Ross noted that the School received a "D" for student environment, which was in part due to low participation in the survey, as only 22% of faculty and parents returned the survey. Ms. Johnson said that the score was also diminished because of attendance problems, and recommended that ATS scanning equipment be purchased to help the School track attendance.

**Gifted Children:** Mr. Payson asked what is being done to help gifted students. Ms. Johnson explained that the administration is looking at the charter goals and trying to recruit faculty that support multiple intelligences and focus on each individual student's needs and performance. Ms. Johnson explained that the goal is to utilize classroom material that is meaningful for students performing at different levels. Ms. Johnson also discussed enrichment clusters, which have been created to help further student growth and which permit students to select a specific program or topic of study.

**Reporting:** Mrs. Ross commented that a newsletter for parents would be helpful to foster communication from the School. Robert Torres commented that it would be helpful for the School to prepare a data plan and report to provide standards and guidance as to how students are progressing.

**Wait List:** Ms. Johnson discussed the status of the wait list. The status of each grade is as follows:

<b>Kindergarten</b>	42 Total Students	4 Open Seats	7 on Waitlist
<b>First Grade</b>	45 Total Students	1 Open Seat	2 on Waitlist
<b>Second Grade</b>	45 Total Students	2 Open Seats	19 on Waitlist
<b>Third Grade</b>	45 Total Students	1 Open Seat	1 on Waitlist
<b>Sixth Grade</b>	38 Total Students	10 Open Seats	18 on Waitlist
<b>Seventh Grade</b>	48 Total Students	0 Open Seats	16 on Waitlist
<b>Eight Grade</b>	50 Total Students	Overenrolled by 2 students	10 on Waitlist

Ms. Johnson explained that the eighth grade is over-enrolled by two students. She said two students showed up late, but at that point the School could not turn them away. For sixth grade, Ms. Johnson said that the School has called 6 students to consider the School and she hopes to have the grade filled by October 1. Mr. Combemale explained that having 15 vacant student seats results in an economic loss of approximately \$180,000 for the School.

**Hiring Update:** Ms. Johnson reported that there are currently 3 open teacher positions, 1 open associate teacher position, and 1 position for a Lower School office manager. She said that one of the openings is for a Lower School Chinese teacher.

**Teacher Certification:** Ms. Johnson reported that 19 of 24 teachers at RGA are currently certified, which means that the School is compliant with the requirement of 70%. She also told the Board that the School will have 24 of 24 teachers "highly qualified," which is the requirement under No Child Left Behind.

**Facilities Update:** Ms. Johnson reported that the students are adjusting well to the facilities. The School has had problems recently with rodent abatement and animals at the Lower School facility that have prevented students from going outside for recess. Ms. Johnson said that the students would be taken to the park for recess if the situation is not resolved shortly. Ms. Johnson reported that she is pleased with the new Middle School facilities.

## V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Brian Rosenberg distributed a series of handouts to the Board detailing Professional Development projects the School is pursuing. Mr. Rosenberg explained that the purpose of the development is that programs conform with New York State educational requirements. Mr. Rosenberg explained that the leadership of the Ross Institute is working directly with the leadership at RGA. Julie Johnson commented that the School and the Ross Institute are working well together. Nick Combemale recommended that Mr. Rosenberg make a more detailed presentation of ongoing professional development activities to the Academic Affairs Committee.

## **VI. FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Year-End Budget:** Nick Combemale distributed the year-end balance sheet and reported that the School is unencumbered by debt. He noted that expenses for the previous year were within 1% of the budget. Mr. Combemale explained that the School is currently working to improve its tracking and categorization of expenses. Mr. Combemale noted the fact that since teachers are paid over a 12 month period, the payment for one fiscal year continues into the next fiscal year.

**Audit Update:** Mr. Combemale reported that the School's audit will be completed in two weeks.

**Charter School Business Management Contract:** Mr. Combemale reported that he solicited a bid from another vendor to serve as the School's management company. The services provided by the vendor did not include human resources functions and the vendor refused to provide an estimate. Accordingly, Mr. Combemale recommended that the Board renew its contract with Charter School Business Management ("CSBM"). Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board ratified the School's contract with CSBM on the same terms and conditions as were in place during the previous year.

## **VII. FACULTY HANDBOOK**

The Board reviewed a revised version of the Faculty Handbook. Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted, the Board of Trustees approved the 2008-2009 Faculty Handbook.

## **VIII. BOARD INITIATIVES**

Courtney Sale Ross discussed different initiatives for the Board to consider during the next academic year. Mrs. Ross noted that the Board needs a strategic plan. She also commented that the School is seeking new member to join the Board. Mrs. Ross said that she has been working with Howard Rubenstein and different organizations in the community to recruit potential Board members from the minority community.

Martin Payson asked about the status of finding a new parent representative for the Board. Mrs. Ross stated that following the first few weeks of the new school year, it is a high priority for the School. One parent in attendance explained that the parents are starting to develop working relationships and noted that now would be a good time to start pursuing creation of a new Parents Association.

Mr. Payson suggested that the next Board of Trustees meeting take place at the new Middle School facility.

A parent asked about whether the School would be starting a high school class next year. Mrs. Ross said that she believes the School should have a high school but noted that a

concern remains having sufficient available facilities to support further grade levels. Mr. Payson recommended the Academic Committee put together an action list of the what the School would need to do to ensure a properly functioning high school and report to the Board at the next meeting with its recommendations.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.