



The Sojourner Truth Public Charter School  
Board of Trustees meeting  
April 4, 2020. 10:00 a.m. By video conference.

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Board members on call:

Sarah Navarro  
Atalie Jacobs  
Caroline Hill  
Jonathan O'Connell  
Craig Robinson  
Richard Pohlman  
Kiva Zytnick  
Wendy Pugh  
Laure Fleming  
Charis Sharp (ex-officio),

Board members absent:

Marlena McWilliams

Staff on call:

Justin Lessek

### **Orders of Business**

#### 1. Announcements

##### a. Background checks

Sarah reminded board members to complete their background checks.

##### b. Minutes

Jonathan explained that he would be taking minutes and would discuss minutes and transparency further at the June meeting.

#### 2. Update on state of schools during pandemic

Justin provided an update on what the pandemic could mean for Truth. DCPS, OSSE and DCPCSB have regular updates and opportunities for schools to express concerns or ask questions. Schools are wondering about graduate requirements and community service expectations.

Sarah said DCPS is focused on equity, as well as grading, graduation and promotion. Charis said schools are trying to determine how to measure success. Caroline said some schools are experimenting with curriculum with state testing off the table.

Action: Sarah proposed an ad hoc leadership team to answer pandemic questions. Wendy, Charis, Laure and Sarah volunteer to join. Sarah said group will form some questions and share them with the group.

### 3. Recruitment

Justin provided an update. We should try to enroll more than 90 so we will have at least 90 by Oct. 5, count day. We had 151 lottery applications. Truth has 97 matches and an additional eight post-lottery applicants. Students can continue to apply at any time. There are 105 families who could do their enrollment Monday. Five are enrolled already. Also 17 have submitted most materials, 19 others started the process but did not submit. Five others said they are not enrolling at Truth.

Justin said recruiting events have had to go online. He is still looking for opportunities to build community, and began virtual book club with two dozen members. There is concern about how best to reach at-risk population given how much is happening online right now. Caroline raised the idea of working with the other two new middle schools to make sure all the students get the best spot for them rather than compete.

### 4. Staffing

Justin provided staffing proposals. Truth plans to have a salary plan. There are strong candidates for all positions now. It is a tenuous time for the city's budget, which could affect funding levels. Caroline raised the possibility of seeking stimulus money because the pandemic could affect enrollment and thus budget levels. Craig said it would be good to apply. Rich asked what the next steps for Justin and for the board are. Justin asked for approval to hold back on hiring a second SPED teacher and social worker but move forward with provisional offers for other positions. Rich wondered if we can combine any positions. Atalie and Laure emphasized how important SPED will be coming out of the pandemic. Rich wondered if Truth could share some positions with LAMB. Caris said LAMB is open to that.

Action: Sarah put forth a 15-person staffing plan for 80 students ("B" plan). Rich seconded. Board approved "B" and Justin moves forward to hire. Additional hires to be released after enrollment is at 82 or SPED enrollment climbs to point where 2nd SPED teacher is necessary. Vote is 10 ayes and zero nays.

### 5. Budget

Craig provided an update on grants and grants disbursement timeline. Truth has a strong cash position. EdForward and Citybridge funding helping overall budget. Atalie asked what risks are posed by the pandemic. Craig said Title V-B funding should be

good for the year. Craig and Rich mentioned concern about corporate philanthropy drying up. Rich said D.C. government projecting budget holes and dried up rainy day fund, so could be a really tight couple of years for D.C. government.

## 6. Board terms and committees

Rich presented a plan for board terms and committees. Truth needs two parent board members. Truth also needs chairs for governance and development, as well as ad hoc facilities committee. Jonathan volunteered to chair ad hoc facilities committee. Board still needs chair for pandemic/emergency response ad hoc committee.

## **Next steps**

Craig and Justin will share financial controls and budget information before the next meeting. Rich will send out committees and board terms. Call needed to elect committee chair for governance committee.

## **Closing**

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

## **Materials**

My School DC Demand Report 4/3/20:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DDZ1L3\\_0TxbTgPSsQXLnTDJ4DPGvmLtz/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DDZ1L3_0TxbTgPSsQXLnTDJ4DPGvmLtz/view?usp=sharing)