Elm Community Charter School
Board Meeting Minutes
1/3/18

Present: Anupa, Chris, Lawrence, Debbie, Prijo, Saffiyah, Priscilla

Agenda
I.   Facilities Committee Update (Lawrence/Priscilla)
    A. Update on short-term and long-term sites
    B. Friends of Elm Community Charter School: Reasons for opening
- insulate the school from financial flak, specifically serving as a bankruptcy remote entity in the event the school had to break its lease and you wanted to protect the assets of the school
- Create a vehicle for you to maximize the facility rental subsidy to the extent that your rental costs are less and you otherwise have some debt service or other operating expenses you want to get reimbursed. By serving as an intermediary, the friends off holds the lease and then re-leases to the school with both a passthrough of the lease expense plus potentially other ineligible expenses to create a new lease expense for the school.

    C. Friends of Elm Community Charter School - Update
- Process of creating a Friends Of
  a) 5 board members, only 2 of which can overlap with the Elm Community Charter School organization
  b) Submit an application with separate by-laws, conflict of interest policy
  c) filing for tax exemption status
  d) hiring of a financial firm (EdTec) to do the auditing, financial process
- Starting a Friends Of can potentially also allow us to raise donations in a way that the school may be limited to, but this needs to be further researched.
- **Susan (Cohen Schneider)'s thoughts...**
  a) Flat fee of $4500
  b) She is encouraging us <u>not to open </u>a Friends Of, especially if it is primarily for capturing the entire rental assistance.
  c) Instead, try to negotiate "additional rent" items being rolled into the base rent.
  d) She said it is not sure-fire that we will receive entire rental assistance from NYCDOE just b/c we have a friends of organization leasing the facilities agreement.

In Conclusion

There isn't a rush to start this, especially since we have not executed a lease. Meanwhile...

- It seems like this will be something we still may want to consider if we end up with a facilities that does not capture the entire rental assistance amount.
- We should generally try to negotiate for costs to be included in the base rent instead of additional rent category.
- I have asked for a general understanding of the cost involved in creating a Friends Of Elm CCS from Cohen Schneider.
- I've reached out to Lawyers Alliance to get a second opinion. Particularly b/c lawyers seem generally hesitant to offer any advice until there is an engagement letter, which we already have with LA.

II. Finance Committee Update (Anupa/Priscilla)
   A. Auditor Selection
   B. E-rate selection
   C. November Financials

III. Update on Staff & Student Recruitment

IV. Board Member Elm CCS Email Account - connected to website (public forum)

V. Academic Committee Update (Saffiyah)
   A. Insights while reviewing the draft of academic goals Priscilla shared with us:
   https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WE48MJV6nYafZsx5bFM7r6mMH_cl0ZZ5
   - The goals generally felt realistic and feasible for year 1.
      a) Putting together the research or experience used in developing the specific metrics/numbers. These felt right to us; let's have the data to back that up.
   - Wanting to better reflect on the school's mission, and pedagogical and curricular focus - the spirit of authentic inquiry. Able to capture this spirit in performance tasks and portfolios. Setting goals around this.
   - In terms of looking at the whole child, we just wanted to learn more about the social emotional curriculum.
   - In terms of or most at-risk students, we put forward more concrete suggestions:
      a) For year 1, in addition to data on EBL, FRPL, and SpEd, we suggest gathering data around: race/ethnicity (disaggregated where possible), gender, students in temporary housing, newcomers to the country.
      b) The objective for year 1 is to gather this data, analyze/asses, and then set goals - we can't quite set goals right now. We do know that we'll be looking at "no gaps" among groups, but we have to set those goals after the data is collected. <-- We're hoping that we can name this "goal" (of gathering this data) explicitly.
   B. How we will talk about student outcomes during our board meetings?

- Continue providing common definitions ← check us on our jargon
- Taking into account teacher reflections as well
- **What are you most curious about as it relates to student outcomes? What are you most interested in knowing?**
    a) Chris: Showing art work and student projects from the students during meetings. As parent of K, going to teacher's conferences I was showing things like progressing towards drawing a circle. Being able to see that from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Something that is measurable and important - we were told that is a milestone we were told. Be able to draw body parts like a head, etc.
    b) Prijo: Most things seem really straightforward that we can interpret. Getting to the point of social emotional intelligence. Assessing growth on school-wide behavior system. What this looks like. How we go about tracking (not evaluating) - how people are growing in their creativity, community. How do we be intentional about those specific values? Putting that into the curriculum? How do we even begin to assess that?
    c) Anupa: Not being from world of academics - I know we have benchmarks, etc. Another thing that would be helpful for me. Some kind of tool or slide or something - something that we connect how students are doing and connect that to vision. Specific vision that we have for the school, how they all tie in together. We can get lost in the details, but to be able to see high level. Each month as we progress we stay true to vision and mission of the school. Showing something, high-level, where we're going as a school still sticking to.
    d) Priscilla: Presentation from academic committee to the board. I would generate reports for the academic committee and based on that we would tell Priscilla what to create in order to present to the board. A good framework is the vision and specifically the mission statement - includes socio-emotional, holistic. I could then turn this around to the staff.