

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees
October 16th, 2023**

The **172nd** regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **October 16th** at The Equity Project Charter School's Middle School location at **153 Sherman Avenue New York, NY 10034** pursuant to due notice to Trustees via electronic mail sent on 10/13/23. Public notice was posted on TEP's website at www.tepcharter.org.

The following Trustees were present:

Laura Tavormina joined in person.

Sean Juan, Brooks Clark, Andrew Buher, and Anyeli Matos joined via videoconference from the following public locations posted in advance on TEP's website:

30 W 44th Street
New York, NY 10036

600 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10016

630 Park Avenue
Brielle, NJ 08730

1350 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

The following staff members were present:

Casey Ash, Aaron Villela, Shelly Gupta, Jenoa Jerome, and Andres Esguerra.

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm.

Meeting Agenda and Notes:

1. Welcome New Trustee!

This portion of the meeting began with the team welcoming new Trustee, Anyeli Matos. As a Washington Heights native, Anyeli is passionate about the community and excited to be a part of the team.

2. 2023 NYS Exam Data & DOE Family Survey Data

Casey Ash, Principal, began this item on the agenda comparing 2022 NYS Exam data to 2023 NYS Exam data from TEP, NYC, and District 6 (CSD 6).

We took a look at ELA data first. TEP's ELA proficiency went from 41.8% to 44.5% while NYC went from 49% to 51.7%. We are ahead of CSD 6, which went from 37.9% to 42.1%, but still behind NYC in terms of overall proficiency. We looked at Math comparison data

next. CSD 6 (from 27.3% to 41.3%) and NYC (from 37.9% to 49.9%) both saw an increase in Math proficiency, and TEP did too. TEP's increase is especially impressive though, with an increase of over 20% (43.1% to 63.6%). TEP's 2023 proficiency in both Math and ELA are TEP's highest proficiency rates to date. TEP's 63.6% proficiency in rate is significantly higher than the NYC rate of 49.9% and the CSD 6 rate of 41.3%.

Mr. Ash honed in on 8th grade, identifying the impact on students who have been at TEP the longest. There were very substantial increases in both Math (35.2% point increase) and ELA (17.2% point increase). TEP 8th graders also out perform the city and the district by significant margins in both ELA and Math.

Mr. Ash then spotlighted the performance of IEP students. About 25% of TEP students have IEPs. The school is proud of the increase in proficiency, especially in Math where there was a 21.5% change from 2022 to 2023. This shows us that students with IEPs can succeed on standardized exams.

Aaron Villela, CEO, took over to share results of the 2023 DOE Family Survey. This survey is administered every year for all NYC Public Schools to give school leaders a better understanding of what the school community thinks about their school. The citywide average response rate for the 2022-2023 school year was 40%. TEP's response rate for was an impressive 97%. The school's parent response count and rate are both #1 among all NYC Charter Schools and also #1 for all K-8 schools, traditional public and charter.

Results were extremely positive with 90% or higher of families responding "agree" or "strongly agree" as their response.

Trustees asked if there was anything on the surveys that called for their attention. Mr. Ash shared that there was nothing notable on the family survey, but from feedback on the student survey, TEP is taking steps to reduce bullying in our community.

3. Sherman Tiger LLC Resolution

Shelly Gupta shared that in order to successfully refinance the existing Deutsche Bank construction loan for 153 Sherman, TEP has finalized a refinancing deal utilizing tax-exempt bonds. These bonds will be issued by BuildNYC and require the borrower to be a 501c3 organization. Since TEP Charter School Assistance Inc, (the current borrower of the DB loan) is a 501c4 organization, a new financing structure has been created involving the formation of a new entity - Sherman Tiger. Sherman Tiger is a wholly owned subsidiary of TEP Charter School and will therefore be a 501c3 entity. Sherman Tiger and TEP Charter School Assistance Inc, will be the co-borrowers of the refinanced loan. A resolution was presented to the board for the approval of the formation of Sherman Tiger and for all activities as needed to close out the financing of the tax-exempt bonds and installation of new leases as it relates to the building of 153 Sherman Ave.

Sean Juan made a motion to approve the Sherman Tiger LLC Resolution.

Unanimous vote to approve.

4. OneTEP District Safety Plan

Mr. Villela ran through the Safety Plan which covers the below items:

- Risk Reduction/Prevention Strategies
- Trainings, Drills, and Exercises
- Emergency Evacuations (including drills)
- Intruder/Hostage/Threat of Violence Alert
- Code Blue (medical emergency)
- Holding and dispensing students during emergencies.

Mr. Villela also directed the Board to the Public Info page, where the District Level Safety plan lives.

Sean Juan made a motion to approve the District Level Safety Plan.

Unanimous vote to approve.

5. Student Spotlight

Andres Esguerra, Assistant Director of the Middle School, introduced the Board to one of his students, ZJ.

ZJ joined TEP is the 2021-2022 school year. They identify as Black of Dominican descent and have three siblings. They are culturally aware, socially aware, and empathetic.

The Board heard from ZJ in a video.

ZJ was asked to use word to describe themselves and chose the word insightful. They are great at speaking to other people, wise with their words, and aware of their surroundings.

ZJ was asked if they had any advice for their ten-year-old self. ZJ said they would tell themselves to love themselves, be kind to themselves, and not to chase after people who don't really care about them. They emphasize the importance of finding people who love and support you. ZJ says they know the primary reason for school is to learn and not for the purpose of finding friends, but they acknowledge how helpful to and supportive of your journey friends can be.

Trustees thanked Mr. Esguerra for sharing his student and remain excited for future Student Spotlights.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:13 PM.

Minutes recorded by Sean Juan (Secretary Jen Mulhern was not present).