

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of  
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees  
January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**

The **175<sup>th</sup>** regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **January 22<sup>nd</sup>** 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 1/19/24. Public notice was posted on TEP's website at [www.tepcharter.org](http://www.tepcharter.org).

**The following Trustees were present:**

Laura Tavormina joined in person.

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

600 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

235 N Mountain Ave  
Montclair, NJ 07043

630 Park Ave  
Brielle, NJ 08730

Cap Juluca, A Belmond Hotel  
Maundays Bay, 2640 Anguilla

**The following staff members were present:**

Casey Ash, Aaron Villela, Shelly Gupta, and Jenoah Jerome.

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm.

**Meeting Agenda and Notes:**

**1. Arts & Athletics at TEP**

Casey Ash, Principal, began by reminding the Board of TEP's vision to achieve educational equity for students from traditionally underserved communities by utilizing master teachers to provide rigorous Academics, Arts, and Athletics instruction (the 3 A's). The primary commitment to this vision is expressed in the student schedule, as students across all grades have P.E. and Music 5 days a week, alongside core academic blocks.

TEP also has additional enrichment opportunities that are included in our school program, known as "Period 10" or "P10." Options include a wide range of choices in three categories: competitive teams (e.g. Boys & Girls Basketball, Baseball, Girls

Volleyball), competitive performance groups (e.g. Cheerleading, Step Team, Band), and clubs (e.g. Improv, Reading is Lit, Newspaper Club). These opportunities not only foster a sense of community, but also motivate students to regularly attend school and maintain good behavior and good grades. Mr. Ash shared pictures of P10 in action, and the Board provided suggestions such as a cooking/food related P10 opportunity.

Mr. Ash also shared that our Middle School location at 153 Sherman Avenue is serving as a Community Hub as well. Every Saturday 10 schools in the area (including TEP) partake in basketball community programs. TEP is partnered with Asphalt Green – a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping New York City residents live active and healthy lifestyles through high-quality sports, fitness, and aquatics programs.

## **2. Teacher Bonus Update**

Mr. Ash went on to inform the Board of a delay with this year's Teacher Bonus – an important recruitment and retention tool. TEP awards teachers based on school performance with bonuses calculated using data from the School Quality Snapshots and School Report Cards. The 2022-23 reports are delayed and expected to be available in early February. The school anticipates that the Board will vote on the approval of these bonuses in the next meeting.

## **3. Financial Banking Update**

Shelly Gupta, CFO, shared that TEP will transition its primary banking relationship to Provident Bank by opening a Checking and Savings account with them. This was a requirement from Provident Bank when they agreed to finance the loan for 153 Sherman. TEP currently enjoys a robust primary banking relationship with Capital One and, as part of its risk management strategy, will maintain its current accounts with Capital One. Lastly, as part of this transition, TEP will terminate its banking relationship with TD Bank.

## **4. Student Spotlight**

Stella Ma, Early Childhood Campus Director introduced the Board to JD, a 7-year-old 1<sup>st</sup> grader who loves dinosaurs. JD has a fantastic personality and stands as a shining example of a successful retention student.

Ms. Ma explained that TEP looks at students holistically to determine if a student should be retained due to its impact.

During the 2022-23 school year, JD had faced over 20 behavioral incidents. However, the school has witnessed a great transformation this year, with JD experiencing only 2 incidents. Overcoming initial challenges of classroom engagement, JD is now actively participating and fully engaged with the classroom community. In the previous academic year, JD's report card indicated a Below Grade Level status, but the current assessments indicate that they are On Grade Level in most areas.

The school is excited to see this intervention be successful and set JD up for success into his later schooling and beyond.

The Board was also glad to hear of JD's growing success and look forward to future Student Spotlights.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Minutes recorded by Jen Mulhern.