

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School Board of Trustees
March 11th, 2024**

The 177th regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Equity Project Charter School was held on **March 11th** 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 3/7/24. Public notice was posted on TEP's website at www.tepcharter.org.

The following Trustees were present:

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

235 N Mountain Ave
Montclair, NJ 07043

1350 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02138

630 Park Ave
Brielle, NJ 08730

60 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10165

The following staff members were present:

Casey Ash, Aaron Villela, Shelly Gupta, Anatea Carpenter, and Jenoa Jerome.

Meeting called to order at 5:34 pm.

Meeting Agenda and Notes:

1. DEIB Climate Assessment Review

Aaron Villela, CEO opened the Board Meeting with a discussion of TEP's Staff Climate Assessment Data, which was presented to staff during TEP's Spring 2024 Institute. The topic presented a review of some of the work towards becoming an anti-racist school and a presentation of TEP's Racial Equity Leadership Team (RELT) and TEP's Anti-Racist Mission Statement.

TEP's Racial Equity Leadership Team (RELT) is comprised of Senior Leaders and additional TEP staff members, and is organized into three subcommittees – one for students, one for staff, and one for families. The RELT's staff subcommittee created and administered the Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Belonging (DEIB) Climate Assessment, and its results were shared during TEP's most recent Spring 2024 Institute Week. Trustees and TEP staff reviewed the findings, followed by an open floor for questions.

Anyeli Matos asked how the discussions went and how the results aligned with TEP's perspective.

Aaron Villela shared that this was the first time TEP has ever taken a baseline assessment regarding racial equity. While TEP is interested in the entire survey, during the Spring Institute staff were asked to focus on the *Equity* section, to provide ideas and suggestions for continued improvement. Staff assembled into groups without leadership to discuss their experiences and share suggestions to maximize equity within the TEP community. Mr. Villela expressed that this work is important and we are never satisfied, resulting in our continued efforts to look deeper into the data and continue to partner with our school community. TEP will continue to prioritize this work and the RELT subcommittees will continue to meet and dive further.

Ms. Matos also asked how we will assess the climate among students.

Casey Ash, Principal and Anatea Carpenter, MS Director, shared that the student subcommittee is responsible for planning. As of now, the student subcommittee has selected to read *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You* to students during the Social and Emotional Learning periods. They have identified different portions of the book to be shared with students across campuses. We also get a small look at student sentiment in our Anti-Racist Mission Statement video.

TEP reiterated its commitment to fostering an anti-racist community as we continue to learn and grow.

2. Schoolwide Updates: FTCS, Upcoming NYS Testing, Staffing

Mr. Ash took over for this agenda item to update the Board of Trustees on recent developments at TEP.

TEP recently wrapped up its second round of Family Teacher Conferences with 90% completion for the lower grades and 80% for the higher grades. TEP emphasized the importance of in person family engagement and that extends to TEP's Family Teacher Conferences. Families are asked to attend in person, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The schoolwide average is 85% for attendance on the scheduled date, and TEP will reach 100% through makeup conferences in the coming weeks.

New York State (ELA & Math) testing season is approaching in early April and early May. 5th and 8th graders will be taking the exams online and TEP has spent time making students comfortable with the new format during TEP's mock state exam periods. The New York State English as a Second Language Test will be administered after the ELA and Math Exams, in addition to Regents Exams for select 8th grade students. Last year, 68% of TEP graduates were able to transition to high school with high school credit after taking Living Environment, Algebra I, and/or U.S. History exams. This year, TEP aims to increase this rate to 75%.

As for staffing updates, Stella Ma has been promoted from Assistant Director to Director of the Early Childhood Campus. TEP is always excited to have former teachers step into leadership positions. Mr. Ash also shared that there are 10 upcoming parental leaves this Spring. Sean Juan asked how TEP covers parental leaves, and TEP shared that workload is redistributed among staff. Because most classes are co-taught, one teacher typically assumes responsibility in the absence of another, offering students a smooth transition. TEP has hired three part-time teachers to support at the ELEM campus, where there is a need due to multiple leaves.

3. DOE Visit

Mr. Ash proceeded to share that TEP hosted a successful visit from the Department of Education (DOE). Thanks to Andrew Buher's DOE connection, Chief Operating Officer Emma Vadhera visited TEP's Early Childhood location. Ms. Vadhera displayed genuine interest in getting to know the school, visiting classrooms and spending time asking questions about the school with Mr. Ash and Mr. Villela. TEP expressed gratitude to Mr. Buher for facilitating the connection.

4. Student Spotlight

Ms. Carpenter introduced the Board to two students – JG and MV. They are two new TEP students who are in Ms. Carpenter's small ELA group.

Both students are 10 years old and from Peru. MV started at TEP late last school year, while JG enrolled this year. They are both English Language Learners (ELL) and working with Ms. Carpenter on their developing literacy skills.

MV and JG were asked how they are enjoying their first year at TEP to which they both responded that they have been able to learn a lot of different things, especially the English language which makes them happy.

Many ELL students come to TEP and are more reserved, but these students have been exemplary in their willingness to embrace opportunities to communicate.

The Board thanked Ms. Carpenter and look forward to future student spotlights.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:24pm.

Minutes recorded by Jen Mulhern.

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