

AECI CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK
838 Brook Avenue
Bronx, New York

MEETING OF THE BOARD

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024
Time: 6pm
Location: 116 East 169th Street
Bronx, New York

1. Welcome Role Call: Present were Irma Zardoya, Shameeka Gonzalez, Alberto Villaman, Paul Comrie, Peter Quiñones,

Chief Executive Officer	Derick Spaulding
Human Resources Director	Hector Rodriguez
AECI HR/Payroll Assistant	Veronica Echevarria
Director Post Secondary Readiness	Lauren Quigley
Principal AECI I	Colin Healy
Assistant Principal AECI I	Tamara Williams
Assistant Principal	Nancy Dooley
Principal AECI II	Santiago Taveras
Assistant Principal AECI II	Christopher Mastrocola
Counsel:	Flora Edwards, Esq.
BoostEd:	Joshua Moreau

Guests:
Carlo Schiattarella, Schoolhouse Project, Inc.
Tyra Williams

2. Tyra Williams - Candidate for Principal of the AECI I Middle School introduced herself to the Board

3. **Approval of Minutes of October 8, 2024**

Moved by Peter Quinones seconded by Paul Comrie to approve the minutes of October 8, 2024. Approved unanimously

4. **The Passing of School Safety Office, Juan Santiago**

Juan Santiago had been employed by AECI I for more than 10 years passed away on October 14th 2024. Staff and students came together to offer their condolences and raised funds to support his family. AECI contributed by covering a portion of his funeral expenses. Additionally, the family was able to access financial support through his life insurance benefits provided by AECI's benefits package.

The Board expressed its sorrow at the loss of this valuable long term employee and extended its condolences to Mr. Santiago's family

5. **Human Resources Report**

- a. A final draft of the Employee Handbook was prepared and submitted to legal for review.
- b. Outreach to Charter School Center for development of a compensation study
- c. Policies Procedures and Reviews include the creation and review of the following new policies to be included in the Handbook:
 - i. FERPA Policy
 - ii. Whistleblower Policy
 - iii. Workplace Safety and Health Guidelines
 - iv. School Property Policy
 - v. Social Media Policy and Guidelines
 - vi. Work Product Policy
 - vii. Schools Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- d. **Partnerships** - Outreach has been initiated to the following institutions to create a pipeline for teacher recruitment.
 - i. CUNY
 - ii. PACE University
 - iii. Columbia University - Teachers College
 - iv. Relay Graduate School of Education
 - v. Bank Street College of Education
 - vi. NYU Steinhardt's Teacher Residency Program

6. **Postsecondary Report**

- a. Application Update
 - i. CUNY Applications 85% of students have completed CUNY applications
 - ii. Suny Applications are submitted
- b. Syracuse University Advanced Program Update: Guaranteed Orange Program
 - i. At least 6 SUPA credits with a 3.0
 - ii. HS GPA 3.7 or higher
 - iii. Admission to College of Arts and Science

Currently 20 seniors are eligible for the program. If admitted students will receive \$20,000 in academic scholarships

c. Pre-College Recruitment

- i. SEO
- ii. OppNet
- iii. Thrive Scholars

7. **Principal's Report - AECI I**

- a. Enrollment - 462 (an increase of 15 students) - 112 Freshmen, 127 Sophomores, 133 Juniors and 110 Seniors. There are 980 applications pending for the coming school year.
- b. Attendance for October was 90.23%
- c. Instructional focus included:
 - i. Joint midterms in ELA and Living Environment are scheduled for January 2025
 - ii. Monthly professional development in student engagement
 - iii. Co-teaching strategies
 - iv. Data is being gathered on intervisitation program
 - v. Targeted professional development by staff mentors
 - vi. Senior took the SAT Test on October 17th
 - vii. Juniors took the PSAT Test on October 24th
- d. School Activities
 - i. Clubs this year include Video Game, Black Pearl, Chess, Global Bites, Jam Club, NHS, Spanish, Poetry, Zen, Yearbook, STUCO.
 - ii. All students in clubs and societies attended trips over the last month: Center for Architecture, Apple Picking, Museo de Bario, Nightmare Before Christmas Trail, Suff's on Broadway

- iii. Spirit Week October 21-25 included Pep Rally and culminated in a Homecoming Dance with 100 students in attendance. Students raised \$2,300 for Juan Santiago's family.
- iv. Poetry Staff Appreciation Night was held on October 23rd
- v. Halloween Movie Night was held on October 27th
- vi. Senior Trip Fright Fest for academically eligible students was held on October 30th.
- vii. Student Council Elections were held on November 6th
- vii. Student Mediators Induction Ceremony was held on November 4th
- viii. College visits included trips to : Seton Hall, Mount St. Vincent, College Fair at Mercy College
- ix. Breast Cancer Awareness Walk
- x. Flag Football Team in Championship Game

Congratulation to AECI I team for winning the overall City Championship for flag football!
- xi. Mediation Center Update.
- xii. Hispanic Heritage Month
- xiii. HBCU Football Game
- e. Behavior - No physical altercations 1 suspension for the month of October ,4 for the year.

8. **Principal's Report AECI II**

- a. Enrollment 447 Students consisted of 108 Freshmen, 121 Sophomores, 107 Juniors and 111 Seniors. There are 690 applications for the new year.
- b. Attendance for October was 90.61% versus 84.3% from previous year.
- c. 4 Suspensions in the month of October versus 10 from previous year.
- d. Tutoring program - Students met with college students for tutoring in various subjects

- e. National Youth Poetry - conducted their first poetry slam
- f. Homecoming Dance
- g. Halloween Dance
- h. I Commit Day- was a success, with positive feedback received from the speakers who participated.
- i. Parents ESL Classes - 23 parents attended, will begin computer classes soon.
- j. Senior college Trip - Students visited Lehman College

9. **Finance Committee**

The Committee met on October 22, 2024, at which time the auditors made a formal presentation of the Audit Report for fiscal year 2023-2024

10. **Facilities Committee**

To be discussed in Executive Session

11. **Human Resources Committee**

The Committee met on November 8, 2024 to review new hires. The committee also discussed the reference check process as it applies to new employee applications

The review of the new policies to be included in the employee Handbook was postponed to the December meeting of the Committee, Copies of the policies will be distributed prior to the meeting.

The Committee received an update on AECI's response to a release of an employee's records

Mr. Santiago's son, Jose Castro's application for employment at AECI to fill the vacancy left by his father's passing was reviewed and accepted

12. **New Business**

- a. **APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL FOR AECI I MIDDLE SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, AECI Charter School Network, applied to the New York State Board of Regents for amendment of the Charter of AECI I to include a middle school and

WHEREAS, AECI's application was approved by the New York State Board of Regents; and,

WHEREAS, the AECI I Middle School is scheduled to open September, 2025; and

WHEREAS, it is vital for the success of the Middle School to engage a Principal for the AECI I Middle School in sufficient time to involve the Principal in planning and development of the Middle School program consistent with the mission of the AECI Charter School Network; and

WHEREAS, AECI has conducted a thorough search and has interviewed a number of qualified candidates;

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that Tyra Williams be appointed Principal for the AECI I Middle School commencing November 18, 2025

Moved by Paul Comrie Seconded by Alberto Villaman. Approved unanimously.

b. New Hires

Moved by Peter Quiñones seconded by Paul Comrie to approve the following appointment for AECI I.

José Castro School Safety/School Aide

Approved unanimously

c. OPENING OF AECI II MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL 2026

WHEREAS AECI Charter School Network, applied to the New York State Board of Regents for amendment of the Charter of AECI II to include a middle school and;

WHEREAS AECI's application was approved by the New York State Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the original application, it was projected that the school open in September, 2025; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that additional time is required for preparation and identification of an appropriate facility that is not only suitable but also close enough to foster a unified community between the middle and high schools which is essential in maintaining a shared culture, sense of community, and ease of operations between the two schools;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the opening date for the AECI II Middle School be extended to September 2026 to provide sufficient time for planning and identification of an appropriate facility that is not only suitable but also close enough to foster a unified community between the middle and high schools.

Moved by Paul Comrie Seconded by Peter Quinones. Approved unanimously

d. **LEARN AND EARN GRANT**

WHEREAS, New York Edge has received a grant from the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development entitled the Learn and Earn Grant Program; and

WHEREAS AECI Board member, Peter Quiñones, Chief Compliance Officer of New York Edge has been instrumental in sharing the mission and outcomes of AECI with New York Edge

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Grant, New York Edge will provide services to AECI 2 to offer high school juniors and seniors with training in work readiness, skills, college access support, and summer internship/employment opportunities; and,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the AECI Board expresses its thanks and appreciation to Peter Quiñones and NY Edge for this partnership which plays a vital in enhancing the Network's capacity to provide meaningful opportunities for our students and ensuring continued success in our mission.

Moved by Paul Comrie seconded by Alberto Villaman. Approved unanimously.

e. **AECI II - Renewal of Schools That Can Contract**

Moved Paul Comrie and seconded by Peter Quinones to renewal of Contract for Schools That Can to provide career readiness workshops, co-planning sessions with teachers, student centered curriculum, and events for AECI II which include industry professionals at a cost not to exceed \$26,500.00. Approved unanimously.

13. **Executive Session**

Moved by Alberto Villaman and seconded by Paul Comrie at 7:20pm to go into Executive Session to discuss real estate. Approved unanimously.

Moved by Paul Comrie seconded by Peter Quinones at 7:47pm to return to the record.
Approved unanimously.

14. **Adjournment**

Moved by Alberto Villaman seconded by Paul Comrie at 8;00pm to adjourn. Approved
unanimously.