



Our Mission: We disrupt generational poverty through a primary focus on children & young adults and the specific challenges they face at distinct stages of life.

**Northwestern University Settlement Association
Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee**

1400 W Augusta Boulevard

Chicago, IL 60642

Guild Hall

In-Person Meeting – Mask Wearing Required

Zoom link available: <https://nush-org.zoom.us/j/96996072290>

Dial in via phone: 312-626-6799

Call to order

Amy O'Donnell

Present:

Amy O'Donnell

Bob Best

Bill Welnohofer

Alice Schaff

Sami EISaden

On Zoom: Kathy Elliott

Staff:

Carole Wood

Jen Allman

Cynthia Martinez

Amy called the meeting to order at 12:11 pm.

Amy thanked Kathy for attending on Zoom.

Agenda Item 1. Public comment

Amy O'Donnell

No public comment.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Executive Committee meeting minutes

Amy O'Donnell

- a) [Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting on August 22, 2022](#)

No questions or suggestions.

Alice Motioned to approve, Bob seconded, none opposed minutes are approved.

Agenda Item 3. Board Chair's Report

Amy O'Donnell

- a) North Shore Board HITW Gala Overview
- b) Board Email Addresses
- c) INCS Charter School Fiscal Oversight
- d) Continuing Education Board Opportunities

Amy shared that the North Shore Board had their gala in October which raised \$650,000 and sold out with 450 people around a month in advance. Sami asked about the budget for the event. Bill shared that \$150,000 or so was the cost and that the North Shore Board covers that. Amy thanked the staff that volunteered and shared that Gina can give a full report at the next board meeting. Amy shared that historically we have relied heavily on the auxiliary boards for fundraising. This was a large success due to the board casting a wide net and getting the message out there. This event was successful but we cannot rely on them exclusively.



Amy shared that the board emails are set up and that it is important to set up the accounts and follow the instructions that Jen sent out.

Amy said that INCS has additional charter school training that is useful: Best Practices for Charter Board Meetings and Growing Your Board Thoughtfully in February and April of 2023. Amy noted that there has been a bit of turnover and we need to look at who will be able to help with specific skills when board members leave.

Agenda Item 4. Governance Committee Updates

Kathy Elliott

Kathy shared that one thing the committee is working on is an official Board Vetting process. We have a board interest form, but we need a follow-up process after that form has been filled out by board candidates.

Kathy mentioned that Board Succession is top of mind for the committee. We are discussing what kinds of skills do we need in our new board members. Kathy said that we are looking at the number of Board Members required. We have 27 board members at the moment. Do we need a By-laws revision, and what is the right size for our board? Bob shared that at the last Board of Directors meeting we approved 22-27 members. The By-laws revisions were approved. The official update to the By-laws still needs to be drafted.

Kathy confirmed this and said that we will continue to look at the best number for our board size. Amy encouraged people to go through their contacts to recruit people.

Carole shared that the CPS board is at best neutral on charter schools and people are concerned about the elected board model. More community activists are joining the CPS board and will require that Board members are geographically representative of the people we serve, such as Board members who live in the city or in the neighborhoods we serve.

Agenda Item 5. Education Committee Updates

Alice Schaff

Alice shared that the next meeting is on Friday. Jason and the AP's are working to address all immediate issues within the school. We are also looking at a strategic plan to look critically at school size and how we can best serve the students at our school—keeping in mind that next year we are looking at a 1.5 million deficit due to lower enrollment.

Carole agreed and shared that the new leadership team is working hard to right the ship at the school. The ISBE summative rating marks Rowe as a school targeted for improvement. They are using that money for targeted support such as after-school literacy and math support.

There has been no rating card score for the past 2 years. IAR scores are back, and scores are low, they are on par with CPS but CPS has very low scores so being on par.

2025 Charter Renewal. We have a lot of work to do around fiscal, and special ed compliance and the board is looking at community engagement, parent engagement, at ELL, and how you are serving your English language learners. These are not on the scorecard but are a focus. By state law, you can get a 10-year renewal but CPS is putting a cap on 5-year renewals. Everyone right now is getting a 1–3-year renewal. Everyone says that single-site charters will have the hardest time in renewal.

Bill asked for more detail. Carole shared that scale is a factor. Noble is too big to fail, they have 13,000 students, and we have 800 or so students so we are competing with CPS as their enrollment decreases.

Carole and Danielle met with Adrian Segura he is at CPS, and he has good community relationships. He suggested that we need to demonstrate that we are needed in this community. Adrian grew up here, and was part of Northwestern Settlement.



Sami asked about what has happened with Legacy? Amy shared that she is not sure how they fared. Pre-Covid we had looked at merging with them, but it wasn't financially viable. Amy suggested, could we get Noble to stick up for us on our behalf. Can we partner with Christopher House or Legacy? Carole shared that Christopher House is up for renewal right now on its own. We all must apply individually. Carole shared that the site visits can be intense. Carole said that she thinks that we will definitely be renewed, we're just not sure if it will be for one or three years.

Carole shared that we are in the bottom 15% of all schools based on the ISBE summative scores, they are looking at growth in test scores. They are using that because there is no scorecard. There may be a scorecard next year. Sami asked about our pre-covid ISBE composite score. Carole shared we were not targeted but we are on the decline. Carole said we weren't paying attention to the ISBE score because we were focused on the scorecard. We must be focused on both.

Carole shared that Jason and his team are putting together a plan for how to address this. A lot of this has to do with special education. There are lots of students with IEPs and more significant needs at the middle school. Jason and his teachers are meeting parents to make sure they have the best option, even if relocating to a different school is better for that family.

Sami asked for clarification about charter renewal. Carole shared that she is optimistic because the board is interested in more than just academic growth. Carole shared that in the next year we should be able to demonstrate how vital we are to the communities we serve.

We will be in compliance with ELL and Special Education. Carole shared that we will be able to access all of the low-hanging compliance fruit. We will do a Parent University Program. Carole anticipates growth in scores as well and the charter renewal board will appreciate that growth. We will encourage after-school and summer school—it can't be required but we will talk about how important it is.

Carole shared that she wants to partner with external organizations or vendors to help improve literacy in the home for families who do not speak English as a first language—then we can help those families support their scholars. Carole shared that she has good relationships with 2 members of the board and with elected officials. The strategy will be to prove that we are too engaged in the community to fail. Carole wants to have a Settlement House reunion. We need people who live in the city and will go to the charter school renewal board meetings to speak on our behalf.

Carole shared that CPS never wanted charter schools, so renewal will always be a struggle. There are only 37 neighborhood high schools left across the city. There is a gap for neighborhood high schools but there are many CPS neighborhood elementary schools.

Carole shared that Christopher House has a new Principal. They are smaller than Rowe and their scores are higher. Their reality includes a Union: CTU unionized Christopher House last year. CPS does site visits and focus groups with parents and students. The focus groups are random, they will pull in any parents or students for the focus group—they will also call up parents. This can affect renewal; it is randomized. Alice said we can engage the parent community and academic growth and that will help. Alice shared that overall, the focus should be on bettering the education for the scholars. Carole agreed that should be the focus but focusing on bettering the scholars' education will not help us on Charter Renewal alone.

Amy said that it seems like we are doing all we can. Amy shared that we would like to see more scholars in After School tutoring and in summer school. Carole shared that we do have the funds to hire more teachers to teach After School and with Summer School.



Carole mentioned that Jason and his team took the scores to all their teachers and were direct with teachers about what the scores mean and what that means for where their scholars are. There are now parent-teacher conferences with report card pickups. Parents are seeing how their child scored on IAR and how we are doing by grade level.

Amy asked about the culture among the teaching staff. Carole said some teachers were defensive and some are quick to blame families, but most were receptive to the information and reflective on how we can improve.

Bob asked about volunteering tutoring, would that help? Bob mentioned in his experience even reading or helping with math for an hour you see a lot of growth from an academic and a social-emotional standpoint as they have a new adult to connect with and to learn from. Carole said we would definitely be interested in that.

Carole shared that Auxiliary Board members used to volunteer in classrooms often pre-Covid and we want to ramp that backup. Carole shared that the Parent University that CPS runs has proven very helpful, but we need to be strategic and tactical about all of these changes.

Amy shared that corporate contacts and other organizations may be able to help as well. Carole agreed that the background check takes a bit of time for onboarding.

Bill asked if we should engineer the school around 750 or try to ramp up to 900. Carole said she is personally torn. Jason is torn as well. If you go back to 900 or 950, we get funding, but it won't actually help the students when the classrooms are bigger. If we have more students, we need more teachers which is more expensive.

Carole shared that kids do better with smaller class sizes. Should we shrink and provide more individualized attention?

Sami asked about the unit economics, and how does the cash flow adjust per scholar/class/teacher ratio. Bill shared that it is between 10K-12K per scholar in reimbursement. Sami shared that if you get too big you have to add a teacher but there may be an optimal class size for scholar/teacher cost and reimbursement ratio.

Bill asked do we want a stretch goal to try to reverse the trends, or if should we accept the reality that the city and the school-age population is shrinking. Amy mentioned that we need to recruit for kindergarten.

Carole shared that currently, 6th grade is the largest grade, and we want to focus on recruiting K-5 scholars. We have 58 Kindergartners in 3 classrooms. The model for Rowe had 4 classes for each grade level, around 120 kids per grade level. K-3 had 2 teachers per class. We have only retained an assistant teacher in kindergarten.

Carole shared that she continues to ask the school leadership team, what is the best model to really improve our education for the scholars. Alice agreed—what is the tactic? What do we need in the classroom? And then we can look at how to fund it.

Carole shared that it is easier to fundraise for tutors or math motivators, and enhancements and enrichments is more appealing to funders and philanthropy. They won't cover the salaries of our teachers.

Amy shared that because we are on two campuses, would we achieve any savings if we combine into 1 building?

Carole shared we would save some on personnel, but it wouldn't be significant because the main personnel cost is the teachers.



Sami asked, is 30 students/teacher the ideal ratio? And Carole shared no that is a high ratio. Carole shared that Noble is at 28 scholars per classroom. High-performing schools have a smaller scholar/teacher ratio. Carole shared that the average CPS elementary school has only 400 students. So, we have a much larger school population.

Bob mentioned that if we shrink the size of classrooms, it could be a financial concern based on paying off the middle school.

Carole shared an idea, that we could run a Parent-Child center in the middle school building with additional classrooms and parent-learning resources. Carole shared that the building could be After-School Programs, Teen Programs, and the building could be useful or worst case, we could rent it out.

Sami asked, how do we cut 1.5 million dollars out of the school budget, where is the opportunity to cut costs?

Carole said that some of this could come from layoffs of some personnel like Deans and the back office, but that is currently 900K in their budget. Carole said that we are inefficient in some areas, but we don't know the answer yet.

Sami asked, can we look at other schools and figure out who is breaking even with declining enrollment, how do you right-size the school?

Carole shared that since she arrived, she was in a meeting about how we couldn't afford the school model at 960. Carole shared that the budget has never really matched the number of scholars at Rowe. Bill confirmed yes, at one point we were even but it hasn't matched for a long time.

Bill shared that there is 900K in administrative overhead for the school. We looked at how much of the 900K can we reallocate to Northwestern Settlement's budget vs. Rowe's budget, the 200K that could move over could then be fundraised for under Northwestern Settlement's budget. Sami asked if we look at where we are now compared to 2018, and 2019, what was driving the health at that time?

Bill said that we were putting more scholars into the schools at that time, at over 30 scholars. We had more funds, but that is when we dropped from a 1+ school to a lower rating. Carole shared that academic growth is a factor, and scholars were not scoring well.

Amy shared that we weren't very well off in 2019, we were looking at taking 400K out of the endowment. We needed PPP loans to get through during Covid. Amy shared that the Rowes were providing 500K per year which helped close the gap.

Alice asked can we break out which Special Education needs, and scholars are we serving well and where can we improve. Can we focus on that specifically to increase our compliance to increase charter renewal? Amy asked for specific details. Carole shared that we do have scholars with behavioral needs (11 SECAS—personal aids and we could use more) and scholars on the autism spectrum. Carole shared that we have 21% of our kids with Special Education (IEP) needs. That is almost twice the amount of many CPS kids. That is a lot of kids and a lot of extra work for teachers. We are struggling to hire teachers and we are understaffed with Special Education teachers. Alice and Carole agreed that this also affects the education of neurotypical learners. Teachers are spending a lot of time correcting behavior with disruptive children and it affects education quality for other kids. Carole shared anecdotally there are many 7th grade scholars who read at a 3rd grade level, and these are not IEP learners. We have to correct that and it is challenging for any teachers in addition to teaching the other 27 scholars in the classroom.

Alice asked about what Jason suggested to address this situation. Carole shared that he is trying to figure that out. What additional support can be provided? Jason purchased a few technology options for support. We have homework again and



we don't want to suffer from Summer Slide. We need an afterschool academy and a Saturday academy. Carole also shared that middle school teachers are not trained on how to teach reading, as most students should be reading by then. Teaching that skill is out of the scope of those teachers' training.

Carole mentioned that math motivators at the middle school is a new partnership and Jason wants to hire one of those professionals to come in and help improve the math scores.

Amy asked if Jason is optimistic, and Carole said yes.

Bill asked about the 100K we wanted to allocate for marketing to increase enrollment and whether should we reallocate that for educators. Carole said that might be helpful. She is talking to Bill Gerstein about options.

Alice and Bill agreed that the leaders are doing great work, but they have only been onsite for a few months and it's difficult because we need to give the leaders time to plan what they are going to do to improve.

Carole shared that we want to change the schedule to be academics in the morning and enhancements and enrichments after lunch until 5 pm. The APs want to move K-3 over to the middle school and Grades 4-8 into the bigger building. The larger scholars will have more space over at the other campus if we switch over.

Sami shared that if we are missing the 500K donation from John Rowe, can we get donations from another source of private philanthropy? Bill agreed. Bill shared, could we demonstrate to donors why they should donate to the school directly for better teachers? Carole said that the campaign might work but private dollars for something that is publicly funded can be more difficult. Carole said it could work if we find an individual donor that fell in love with Rowe or with the Settlement, that would work but donors and funders are more likely to give money to specific line items like technology or books or resources, rather than salaries.

Alice shared that foundations can help raise funds for schools and to sponsor specific expenses, such as Carole mentioned. The enrichment campaigns work well to bring in funds.

Bill shared that we don't get reimbursed from the state completely for our total costs. Sami asked how does Noble succeed? Carole shared that they have a huge network of donors and lots of major gift donors. Sami mentioned that back when we looked at combining with Legacy, it wouldn't bring us more money necessarily.

Bill asked about Bain. Carole mentioned yes, we have talked to them, and they want to help us with data collection and using Salesforce. PwC offered as well. Bill mentioned that we have a structural deficit at the school. Carole shared that they are always surprised by the Bain study for Rowe, they had never seen something like that before. Carole agreed we should reach out for a new or updated model and some help.

Sami said it might be helpful to pursue a consultant who used to work for Noble to help us. Amy said we could reach out to INCS for help with a structure. Amy shared that the Bain study is about 20 years old. Bill shared that 5 years ago they looked at our model and the report said that we were spending too much money on personnel.

Sami would like to see the benchmarks from the recent Bain study and talk to INCS about how it looks. Kathy added that it would be interesting what a top-rated scholar is spending per scholar. Amy shared that Carole could look into that. Alice shared we should look at their funding sources.

Bill shared that our audit is due tomorrow. We got an extension, and it is due tomorrow. We just got a draft from ORBA last week. There are two write-ups as promised, we are in the process of resolving those two issues: the enrollment



overpayment and the other issue is that we received a pledge from Baum for the Teen Program with funds restricted to hire someone to run that program and we have not received those funds—we are in the process of hiring.

Other than those 2 issues we should be on track with our audit. Sami asked for clarification on scholar enrollment. Carole shared that our reimbursement for next year will be 765 (the count on the 20th day). If the average for the year is higher than that number on the 20th day we would get reimbursed for the higher number. Bill said right now we are 117 students short or about 1.5 million in deficit for funding of lower enrollment of those 117 scholars between what we are reimbursed for this year and are on track to be reimbursed for next year.

Bill shared that the Settlement is in a relatively strong position right now—plenty of cash and no borrowings but we have the upcoming deficit on the radar for next year.

Amy asked about ORBA and Bill's assessment of their work. Bill and Sami said that they don't have an extremely supportive attitude, it feels more like policing our staff and grilling them on every item to try to find something to write us up about. Sami asked if it is particular personalities or the firm in general. Bill said he wasn't sure; it may be personalities, or it may be firm-wide. Bob and Sami agreed that Bill should sit down with Jim Quaid to discuss this feedback to see what happens. Amy shared that they have been auditing us for 8-10 years. Bill said yes, and there were new findings this year they wrote us up about with no notice that the new pronouncements were changing.

Bob is looking through documents at the archive to prove that we have use and ownership of this building but was given only 1 weeks' notice to locate these historic documents. Carole shared another example: we are getting a write-up on attendance, we are lower than we should be but if they had looked at our attendance in June when they were here, we were in compliance but they did not note that at that time-- so that has been an internal struggle.

Agenda Item 6. Audit & Finance Committee Updates

Bill Weinhofer

- a) [FY23: NUSA Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2022](#)
- b) [FY23: NUSA Overall Budget Report as of October 31, 2022](#)
- c) Endowment Reports
 - i. [NUSA Portfolio Overview Report as of October 31, 2022](#)
 - ii. [NUSA Endowment Portfolio with William Blair as of October 31, 2022](#)
- d) Bid on New Audit Firm
- e) CEO Expense Reports Review

Amy shared that we had not made a point to look at CEO Expense Reports in the past but we should going forward. At this point, there are no expense reports as Carole has not been expensing anything, for the sake of saving funds for the organization.

Agenda Item 7. CEO's Report

Carole Wood

- a) [CEO's Report](#)

Carole shared the updates from the CEO report.

Carole shared that Family CARES is excited to receive the congressional earmark to hire someone who can run billing internally. The Food Pantry is looking at adjusting its hours to accommodate more families. We are doing a Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway on Saturday. There will be flyers in the bags of food with additional resources we offer.



We are in the final stages of interviews for the VP of Youth Services which will oversee programming at House in The Wood, there are 3 candidates left. Danielle and Carole met with the founder of the Outdoor Ed curriculum to refocus the curriculum on field science. The focus is on how to create a curriculum that we can bring to the city and use at Rowe as well. Katie Miesle gave a quote of 10K to revamp the curriculum.

Carole shared that the After-School program is changing its name to Out of School Time and we are no longer turning away scholars who age out at age 13. We have organized clubs: theatre, a videography program (they are making a virtual tour of Rowe), and sports, we want to partner with Urban Initiatives for more sports, and robotics. We want to form partnerships with Eckhart Park and Pulaski Park to enhance those relationships. We want to improve academics through After School academy: a debate program for example. We want it to be fun for kids but educational as well.

Operationally, HR is struggling to keep up with everything, but they are doing a great job standardizing something. Carole shared Development updates, tomorrow is Jen's last day. Leslie is focused on filling those positions. Leslie is feeling positive even if we are a bit behind our fundraising goal. There has been a big focus on cleaning up the data and the database in order to enter gifts and steward donors correctly. We need to make sure all donors need to be receipted, including auxiliary board donors. Leslie has been really cleaning up our grant writing process and filling in the gaps of what has been missing historically.

There are lots of teens in the area and the new VP will help build out this program. We have reached out to additional youth organizations for potential partnerships and advice, such as Boys and Girls Clubs. CPS parents have been asking for resources for their teens so we are excited to see this program built out and we will be able to raise funds fairly easily once we have this program up and running. We want to have a computer lab and digital lab for our scholars for additional teen enrichment.

Carole mentioned that we had touched on a plan or strategic plan for Rowe. Carole shared she would like a 3-Year Institutional strategic plan with a targeted strategic plan for Rowe. Amy asked will the staff be upset about a strategic plan that shows a restructuring to focus on Rowe. Carole said yes, many staff are resistant to refocusing on the school. Carole shared that everyone sees that Rowe is the biggest piece of the Settlement House and the budget. Carole affirmed that this plan and transparency may help all other programs understand and buy into this plan.

Sami asked, how do we measure our mission? We need to show that we are progressing as an organization and supporting a change in families' trajectories. Carole agreed. Sami said we should double down on our wrap-around services to serve families. We have indicators along the way, and we haven't been analyzing and measuring them—how do we measure the impact of our mission if you are not aligned with the school?

Carole shared that the previous strategic plan seemed to be created outside of staff engagement, so they have not bought into past plans. Carole said that Adrian Segura credits Northwestern Settlement for he and his wife's success.

It had After-School programming and homework help, much like a Boys and Girls Clubs. It kept them off the street and provided resources and food when they needed it. It's hard to quantify but anecdotally it is a powerful story now that he has a cabinet position with CPS.

Sami asked can we quantify the progress of the family trajectory quarterly so that staff can get behind and get excited about it. We get anecdotal feedback, but we do need the data. Can we tell donors about our stories so that we can measure how we have impacted the lives of children and their families? This could excite staff and donors.



Carole shared that the Food Pantry neighbors and the school don't have much overlap. Carole also mentioned that for example, House in the Wood serves primarily Network 11 students and if we only serve Rowe scholars at camp, we are displacing those kids from getting that experience.

Carole asked the question: Are we a School with Wrap Around Services or a Settlement House that has a school? Sami said he doesn't think it is either definition, it is an organization with all these resources to change trajectory.

Amy shared that each program director can do their part. For example, the ECE families can be supported but we can't force families to send their students to Rowe and to HITW.

Sami shared that the number one place that families go to for resources and support is their friends and families for word-of-mouth referrals. Sami shared this finding came from a focus group. Sami mentioned if you are not focused on a few specific families or a cohort of families to track and measure, we won't know how the trajectories are changing. We need to target neighbors so that we can measure how we have affected them. Bill agreed we need to demonstrate with data that we are progressing toward our mission's goal to secure large donations.

Amy shared that drivers of mobility have not changed and what we can do has not changed: early childhood care, mental health care, and education. We provide some of those drivers. What data can we measure in those spaces with the people who come to us? Amy shared that we thought we were operating with one set of parameters and things have changed. Sami affirmed we were not aware of the issues at the school when building the last strategic plan and doing the focus groups. Sami shared that pre-Covid the focus groups shared only positive feedback on the school.

Carole agreed yes, parents and scholars are for the most part very positive about Rowe when they are here. However, scholars are not ready or prepared outside of Rowe when scholars go to high school.

Bill asked if Carole could look at the draft of that older strategic plan. Carole said that we have started to look at that plan as a staff and we can continue to try to work on that buy-in with staff. Amy suggested can we take that research and repackage it to fit our new reality. Carole said that process does feel like updating what has been here rather than embarking on a whole new plan which feels more difficult for staff buy-in.

Kathy mentioned that we are trying to disrupt generational poverty and we won't know if we're successful until those children are grown up. We won't know for 10-20 years. Sami said that we don't have to wait for a generation due to leading indicators of change in people's incomes. For example, for the first, second, and third waves of child development is something we can measure: for example, the ability to read. We can measure the indicators before we measure the generational trajectory.

Kathy mentioned the anecdote Carole shared about Adrian Segura. Now we should build out some of those stories by researching who has been through our doors for 20 years and finding where are they now.

Alice asked, could we start with one neighbor we know and ask who is their network and are there more people we can talk to? Kathy suggested asked Settlement staff who have been around for a long time as well.

Sami mentioned that there was someone on staff using Salesforce data to create that measurement system. But we're not sure what happened with that.

Agenda Item 8. Closed Session pursuant to: Section 2(c)(1) of the
Illinois Open Meetings Act to consider the appointment, employment,
compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of one or more
specific employees

Amy O'Donnell



Agenda Item 9. Questions / Other

Amy O'Donnell

- a. Next meeting: Thursday, February 23, Noon | In-person | Guild Hall
- b. Thanksgiving Meal Distribution Day: Saturday, November 19, Noon | 1400 W. Augusta
 - Email Victoria at vallen@nush.org to volunteer to pack bags in the morning
- c. Giving Tuesday is November 29. Follow along on Facebook and Instagram throughout the month of November
- d. Adopt-a-Family and the Holiday Toy Room will run December 19-22.
 - Email Victoria at vallen@nush.org for more information
- e. Holiday Closures
 - Thanksgiving: November 24-25
 - December Holidays: December 23-January 2

Adjourned 2:23pm.

Minutes submitted by: Jen Allman, edited by Cynthia Martinez