

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School

January 31, 2014

Dear Parents,

We know many of you have been receiving anonymous and unsigned emails or hearing about emails sent from several groups that identified themselves as representatives of parents, students and teachers. These emails have included false and misleading statements that are harmful to Bronx Lighthouse Charter School's (BLCS) teacher, parent and scholar community, morale and reputation. The Board is planning to hold a town hall meeting in the upcoming weeks to have a dialogue about the situation and wanted to provide you with some information prior to the meeting.

The assertion that Ms. Hardcastle will assume a K-11 principal's role permanently is false.

Ms. Runco submitted a letter of resignation to the Board on January 17. The Board attempted to work to convince Ms. Runco to stay at the school for the remainder of the school year. Unfortunately, we were unable to do so, and the Board accepted Ms. Runco's resignation on January 24. Ms. Hardcastle, who led the College Prep Academy last year and presently, agreed to serve as interim principal at the Board's behest until a new principal is hired. The leadership structure at BLCS has not changed.

In addition, several staff members' employment was terminated this week. Legally, the Board is not able to discuss specifics of any personnel matters. It is important to understand that any terminations were done pursuant to the human resource policies of BLCS and transition plans were created and implemented to minimize any negative impact on the instruction of our scholars.

The assertion that Lighthouse Academies (LHA) or Charter Facilities Management owns the College Prep Academy building is false.

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School opened in 2004 with 128 students. As enrollment increased, the school moved to its current site at 1001 Intervale Avenue, a facility the Board leases from New York City for \$1.00 a year. In 2009, the Board began planning the expansion of the facility and opened the new College Prep Academy in 2013. LHA the nonprofit that help found the school, has no financial interest in the school building, with the exception of providing a \$500,000 loan guarantee to help secure the financing needed to build the facility. Neither LHA nor any related entity owns the school. In the event of a school closure, the College Prep building's ownership/occupancy would become a matter for the lenders to determine. Additional information on this matter will be posted on the BLCS website.

The assertion that LHA receives \$150,000 to support school operations in addition to its annual fixed fee of \$225,000 is false.

LHA is paid a flat fixed fee of \$225,000 to support the school, plus a possible bonus of up to \$35,000 based on performance of the school. In addition to extensive back office services including technology, payroll and facilities, Lighthouse also has two full time employees based in NYC who provide instructional and operational support to BLCS.

The assertion that Ms. Hardcastle is responsible for the school receiving a D is false.

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School achieved an A grade in 2008 and 2009, a B grade in 2010 and a D grade in 2011 and 2012. The school leaders who were at the school when the school received a D grade are no

Bronx Lighthouse Charter School

longer at the school. The school received a B grade this year, and we are excited that the College Prep Academy outscored the Community School District and the state on the Regents exams.

A quorum of the Board did not meet on January 10 at the school.

Although several members of the Board visited the school on January 10th to observe how the school functions and meet with scholars and teachers, at no time did the Board have a quorum present or take any official actions.

The Board makes every effort to comply with the Open Meetings Law of New York State.

Monthly board meetings happen on a predictable and regular schedule, and many of you have attended in previous months. At the beginning of each school year, a calendar of the date of each board meeting is posted on the website. In addition, notice of each regularly scheduled meeting is posted on the doors of each building and on the website in advance of the meeting. The Board did cancel its regularly scheduled board meeting on January 23 because the weather did not allow a quorum of the Board members to attend. Although not required under New York State law, the Board felt it was important to reschedule the meeting in January in order to conduct business of the school and address the concerns of the school community. Because the meeting date was scheduled less than 1 week in advance, under the Open Meetings Law of New York State, the Board was only required to give “reasonable” notice of the meeting, not the 72 hours’ notice normally required for meetings scheduled more than 1 week in advance. The Board intended for notice of this meeting to be backpacked home, and we apologize that this did not occur.

As mentioned above, the Board will be holding a town hall meeting in next few weeks. We hope to discuss many of these matters in addition to any other questions you may have. We encourage for this to be done in a respectful way, in accordance with the spirit of excellence we all seek to teach our scholars. BLCS has always maintained an open and transparent relationship with our parents, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders. We will continue that relationship and do our best to correct any misinformation that is distributed.

We want to be clear that our first priority is your child, our scholars. Every decision we make is made with each scholars’ ultimate success in mind. We invite your continued active participation in the life of the school and encourage your involvement in your child’s education. We encourage you to attend the regular board meetings and provide feedback during the public comment portion at each meeting. As partners – parents, school staff, the Board and the community – we will continue to provide a world class education and look forward to our first graduating class in 2015.

Sincerely,

The Bronx Lighthouse Charter School Board of Trustees