

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30 pm, Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Date of Approval: Tuesday, September 15th, 2020

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on August 18, 2020. The meeting convened at 7:00 pm. An Executive Session took place in advance of the public Board Meeting to discuss personnel and litigation matters. Members of the Board in attendance (at the time of the call to order): President Barbara Klock (ph), Ben Berger (ph), Don Delson (ph), Marilyn Henkelman (ph), Ramona Jones (ph), Dion Lewis (ph), Ellen Milgrim (ph), Judy Owen (ph), Alice Turbville (ph), and Head of School Akosua Watts (ph). Special guests in attendance, Ryan Fisher (ph) CCSA Athletic Director and Jennifer Camp (ph), act as secretary. Absent: Joan Richards, Ian Wilcox. The meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Comments: No Public present.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees with one revision: the date of approval in heading to be changed from Tuesday, August 21, 2020 to Tuesday, August 18, 2020.
 - Motion – Ben Berger
 - Second – Dion Lewis
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

President's Report

Barbara Klock (President)

- Invited committee chairs to report on recent activity:

Building and Safety Committee, Don Delson

- Thanked all who participated in the committee.
- The current focus of the committee is on air quality safety for staff and students. Based on what experts recommend, the committee made a recommendation to the school regarding upgrading the filtration and ventilation system for the school building.
- Will meet with Academic Excellence Committee to gain understanding of who will be coming in and out of the building in the near future.

Academic Excellence Committee, Marilyn Henkelman

- The main goal is to support the head of the school in providing the best education for students.
- There are four areas of focus this year: 1.) adjustment to virtual instruction 2.) adjustment to hybrid instruction 3.) suspension of standardized testing 4.) mental health of all students.

Nominating and Governance Committee, Ben Berger and Dion Lewis

- The recent board survey was used to guide setting these goals:
 - Create official nominating/recruiting criteria.
 - Formalize the board orientation process.
 - Annualize a joint retreat with the CCSA Foundation board.
- Akosua provided an overview of the procedural revisions made to Title IX.
 - Educational Institutions are now required to have new procedures in place, mostly to do around the subject of sexual harassment and protections for both the accuser and accused.
 - Our law firm is working to make sure they have tools in place to help guide us through this process and to train appropriate staff and any interested board members.
 - Barbara Klock and Ellen Milgrim volunteered to participate in training.
 - A Title IX coordinator will need to be in place in case there are any issues. Akosua will likely take on that role.
 - There was a brief discussion around procedures during virtual learning. If a student has a school device then they are held accountable for their behavior.

Approval of revised Title IX procedures

- Motion – Don Delson
- Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2
- Barbara welcomed Ryan Fisher, Athletic Director at CCSA
 - Ryan provided an overview on the athletic offerings at CCSA for fall and winter 2020.
 - The Governor's office would like sports to be pushed off until January but they will not mandate. Most districts are moving forward with athletics.
 - Final statements from PIAA about fall sports will be issued on Friday, August 21. They will likely leave decisions up to schools.
 - CCSA fall sports – volleyball, cheer, and cross-country – will be cancelled due to logistics.
 - CCSA families and players want pre-season basketball practices to occur.
 - Protocols for practices would be prevention: family education, no shared water, sanitizing equipment, no contact, etc.
 - CCSA board members expressed the following concerns about hosting basketball practices:
 - How can safety be guaranteed when it is essentially a contact sport?
 - Without testing protocols, how do we prevent spread?
 - Families would need to sign a waiver acknowledging risk.
 - Could basketball practice be held outdoors?
 - There was a brief discussion about the unintended consequences of not having any sports programming this fall:
 - Athletics is not just about wins and losses; it is about building students up.
 - Time away from role models and surrogate parents.
 - Some students are vying for scholarships and this is a benchmark year.
 - If students are not at practice, there is the chance that they may be influenced by negative factors in their community.

It was agreed to table the discussion until PIAA's announcement on Friday, August 21.

Ryan Fisher left the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

School Report

Akosua Watts, Head of School/CEO

- Provided an overview about planning for the upcoming school year:
 - CCSA has ordered enough technology so we are on a one to one basis with chromebooks.
 - Supply kits are also being prepared for students. Students will receive a milk crate to hold their supplies, books and chromebooks. This is to help support learning routines at home and teachers will build that structure into their classroom routines.
 - Each student will also receive dry erase boards and markers in order to increase engagement. Students can show work immediately to the camera.
 - There will be three different tech/supply distribution days: August 25, 26, 27. The following safety measures will be in place:
 - The days are organized by student last name and distribution spots will be dispersed throughout the building.
 - Staff and families will be masked and sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the school.
 - Fans will be placed throughout the building to aid in airflow and some doors will be open as well.
 - Waivers will not be used for tech/supply distribution but CCSA staff will enforce safety measures.
 - CCSA will continue meal distribution during virtual instruction. We are working with Linton, our food provider, to iron out logistics.
 - New teacher orientation began August 18 and will continue in to next week and will dovetail with returning staff orientation and professional development. All safety measures will be in place and meetings will happen both virtually and in person, but no large group gatherings will occur.
 - Held a virtual meeting with parents on Monday, August 24. The purpose of these meetings is to prep families and answer questions. All meetings are recorded and made available. The response from families so far has been positive and they feel connected.
 - Provided update on increasing revenue:
 - In order to prepare for when we have to start paying back the principle on the bonds, a number of strategies need to be explored.
 - One possibility is increasing class size from 26 to 27.
 - The concerns with this idea are:
 - Puts more burdens on teachers and staff.
 - Small class sizes are what attract our teachers.
 - Studies continually show that student success is directly related to small class size.
 - Recommended taking this measure while in the virtual arena, as it is easier to increase class size and integrate students in a virtual arena.
 - Recommended that the board explore other budget relieving ideas so that increasing class size does not occur every time there is a financial need.
- The board agreed to adopt the increased enrollment measure for the 2020-2021 school year only.

Financial Report

Alice Turbiville (Finance Committee, Chair)

- Reviewed the need to focus on increasing revenues. There isn't much room to change expense base but by pursuing the following, we can begin to increase reserves in the short-term:
 - Enrollment Trajectory and Settlement Rate
 - Increase from CCSA Foundation
- Reviewed the FY21 budget:
 - FY21 budget was based on a hybrid model and we had no major concerns.
 - There will be some variances for technology, which will be offset by facilities.
 - If we do go back to hybrid, we will freeze the variances so we don't have to revisit at each board meeting.
 - This fall the Finance Committee will be working on projections. We will pivot mid-year to do annual budget process.

Nominating and Governance Committee

Ben Berger and Dion Lewis (Nominating and Governance Committee, co-Chairs)

- Reviewed the results of the board survey:
 - The survey is a first step in a three-part process. The next step will be evaluation and third will be a retreat where we can delve deeper in to some of the short answer responses.
 - There were variances in many of the responses in all sections of the survey, which helped to identify issues that need addressing.
 - Will revamp questions where there were large variances and will work on step two of the process.
 - Thanked the board for participating in the survey.

Motion to Adjourn

- Motion – Barbara Klock
- Second – Ellen Milgrim
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 7:00pm preceded by Executive Session at 6:30pm

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Jennifer Camp, (serving as secretary)