

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., September 27, 2022

Date of Approval: Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on September 27, 2022. The meeting convened at 6:58 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 Donald Delson, Ben Berger, Bill Cumby, Pam Greenblatt, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Mandy Kennedy, Zach Oberfield, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Lauren White, Ian Wilcox and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. All in attendance participated via video call.

Public Comments: No comment. Members of the public present: Chris Hanlon, Executive Director, CCSA Foundation; Barbara Klock, former CCSA Board President.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the August 23, 2022 meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees.
 - Motion – Ian Wilcox
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

President's Report

Don Delson (President)

- Education Committee
 - Reviewed the decision not to hire an educational consultant, but instead have the Education Committee conduct research and examine organizational charts of comparable institutions. The Committee will report on preliminary findings and ideas at the November board meeting.
 - There was a suggestion and brief discussion regarding the benefits of closely examining actual job content to gain best understanding of institutional structures.
- Head of School Evaluation
 - Reviewed objective of establishing written protocols for evaluating the Head of School.

- Implementation of a timeline is necessary to set goals – potentially a two-year plan with review and reflection by President of the board and Head of School after one year with intent to adjust goals for the second year.
- Collection and presentation of data to the board is still being considered, particularly regarding how the data is collected and how questions are formulated to capture that data.
- The board is considering three ways to structure this evaluation: goal setting, feedback, and climate survey. Whether or not a climate survey will remain internal or include the parent community is under consideration.

Committee Reports

Facilities Committee, Mandy Kennedy (Committee Chair)

- Planning Permission Update
 - The building plan was presented to the City Planning Commission on September 14 and was approved.
 - The City Planning Commission was unable to get the building approval on the agenda for presentation at City Hall on September 28. Approval will now have to wait until the next meeting, which is scheduled for October 12.
 - Pending approval, new scheduled construction start date is now October 17.
 - Optimistic that this expansion will go well and come in under budget like the construction of the school building, which was overseen by the same company, BSI.
 - The permit fee is currently \$80,000. We have requested it be lowered to \$57,000 and our lawyer is working to negotiate that.

Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville (Committee Chair)

- Financials
 - Work on a long-range planning model has begun. The Finance Committee will meet two more times before that model will come before the full board for review. There are two major factors influencing modeling: the end of ESSR funding and the settlement agreement.
 - Minor budget adjustments are necessary because of the teacher stipend approval and two recent grant awards. These adjustments will be put forward for approval at the next board meeting.
 - Enrollment is strong, no unfavorable variances on revenues.
 - There was a brief discussion regarding how outside factors will affect our ability to model scenarios. Inflation and macro-economic issues will affect CCSA Foundation but not the school. Cost pressures facing the school are likely to be teacher retention, compensation, and health care.
 - A question was raised about the nature of the new grants. One was not unexpected, though there had been a recent break in funding, and that is the 21st Century Grant, which funds before and after school care. The other is a state grant, the PCCD Health and Mental Safety Grant. Half of this grant will be added to the budget and half will be offset.

School Report, Akosua Watts (Head of School/CEO)

- Renewal of Wellness Policy
 - Provided a brief overview of the Wellness Policy: the school is committed to providing students with opportunities to move more, as well as with healthy meals and snacks. The Wellness Committee reviewed the policy before presentation to the board.
 - Motion – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Second – Ben Berger
 - Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 0
 - There was a brief discussion regarding whether a nutritional advisor was consulted about this policy. There was not a nutritional advisor but strict prescribed guidelines in the policy dictated compliance. Additionally, school menus are designed by food provider Linton's with the help of nutritionists. The Wellness Committee is made up of school staff, including the school nurse and physical education teacher, who also provided guidance.
- Attendance Campaign
 - New attendance banners, logos and signs have been put up around the school, along with daily messaging to students and families.
 - So far, the school is meeting its goal of 95% daily attendance rate.
 - The internal goal is for 90% of students to attend 90% of the time. Currently, we are slightly below that at 88%.
 - Consulted our attorney regarding tying the ability to re-enroll to a student's attendance. Feedback from some parents has been that there are no consequences for habitual lateness and chronic absenteeism. Asking the board to consider whether this is a reasonable consequence.
 - A question was raised around the issue of schoolwork and chronic absenteeism. In some cases, students can catch up and for others the logical consequence is a low or failing grade. Ultimately there is no substitute for missing live instruction.
- Assessment Practices
 - Recently introduced the PQC (periodic quick check), which is a shorter assessment.
 - Currently going through data cycle to develop instructional plans in response to that.
 - Will share October benchmarks at the November board meeting.
- Partnerships
 - Chester Community Coalition
 - Working with organization to train high school students to be part of a Mental Health Team. Students will work with peers and refer them to appropriate resources. Great opportunity to leverage social capital of peer influence.
 - Chester Education Foundation
 - They will provide onsite work opportunities for students at CCSA – helping with tutoring, before and after care, etc. Students will go through job readiness training and be paid by the Foundation.
 - Chester Fire Department
 - Establishing a program that will allow interested students to get exposure and training for firefighting and EMT work.

- League of Women Voters
 - Representatives came in to work with seniors, many of whom have already registered to vote and volunteered to work polls.
- I Am
 - Continuing work with them, preparing to host a speaker in November
- Rodriguez University
 - They will work with middle school STEM classes to expose students to surveyor and water management work and the many job opportunities in those areas, with particular attention to the science connection.
- Wawa Day
 - Wawa will host this free lunch event on the grounds of the school on Friday, September 30 from 11:30-1:00. This event has been in the works for several years and was delayed by Covid.
 - Invited guests include donors and supporters. All board members are encouraged to attend.
 - Chris Gheysens, CEO of Wawa, will attend and deliver a short speech.
 - This event is an important opportunity to partner with Wawa.

Motion to adjourn – Ian Wilcox

Second – Mandy Kennedy

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: November 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.