

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., November 15, 2022

Date of Approval: Tuesday, December 20, 2022

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on November 15, 2022. The meeting convened at 7:02 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 (via video call), Bill Cumby, Pam Greenblatt (via video call), Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Mandy Kennedy (via video call), Zach Oberfield (via video call), Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Lauren White, Ian Wilcox and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts.

Public Comments: No comment.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the September 27, 2022 meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees.
 - Motion – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Second – Ian Wilcox
- Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 0

President's Report

Don Delson (President)

- Planning to reach out to alumni this winter to discover where they are with their post-graduation plans; are they happy, prepared, satisfied with their lives, etc. Hoping to gather some kind of statistical sample in order to make a judgment about how CCSA's program is working.
- Crozer Hospital in Chester announced it will be closing in three years. The Foundation for Delaware County sought an injunction against this and the matter is likely to be stuck in the courts. If the hospital does close it will undoubtedly affect Chester and its residents, including our students and families.
- Last week the receiver for the city of Chester put the city in bankruptcy. This will likely lead to layoffs and reductions in pensions, etc. While CCSA will not directly be affected, our families and the city will be. We need to be mindful of any families that may need help.

Ian Wilcox, Strategic Plan Update

- Review of the plan's Four Initiatives,
 - Need to develop a tracking plan for each initiative and possibly shine a spotlight once a quarter on one of the initiatives.
 - Suggested the group hold a space at every meeting where the dashboard can be discussed as it relates to our progress.

- There was a brief discussion regarding the overlap of some initiatives being directly related to committee work and that those committees will also provide updates on their own dashboards.

Committee Reports

Facilities Committee, Mandy Kennedy (Committee Chair)

- Update on the school expansion project
 - Concrete and masonry foundations have been completely finished.
 - Underground plumbing was completed on November 10; steel work will begin November 21.
 - Roof deck and outer wall work will begin in December and inner wall work is scheduled for January.
 - An additional cost of \$3,700 was incurred due to the need for heat during the concrete process because of the recent cold weather. This is a result of starting construction a few weeks later than planned because of the delay in permits.

Education Committee, Marilyn Henkelman (Committee Chair)

- Update on research of other schools' organizational structure
 - Narrowed the list down to 11 charter schools and 7 independent schools for deeper review.
 - Committee has devised a list of questions they will present to schools.
 - Planning to present findings at the March meeting.
 - There was a brief discussion regarding what the committee will be looking for when talking to schools. Committee has devised a list of short answer questions, as well as interview based questions that will cover a variety of topics. One member offered to help in the area of organizational assessment through the use of a "spans and layers" tool, which is helpful for determining structural ratios.

Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville (Committee Chair)

- FY23 budget revisions:
 - PCCD grant for \$140,000 was received after the budget was approved and needs to be added.
 - Expenditures for the 21st Century grant of \$375,000 need to be added to the budget to match revenues; it is a reimbursement based grant.
 - Retention bonuses for returning staff, which was approved by the board in August, was added to the budget.
 - Insurance premium decreases (workmans comp and healthcare).
 - Placeholder intact for available \$250,000 to implement strategic plan initiatives.
 - There was a brief discussion about the need for careful planning regarding strategic planning spending.
 - Approval of budget revision
 - Motion - Ian Wilcox
 - Second - Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 0
- Update on committee's activities
 - Long range financial modeling:

- Facing two difficulties: the expiration of federal grants along with the structural inequity of the settlement agreement. These issues will require careful planning regarding next year's budget and the committee is coming up with strategies that will be shared at a future meeting.
- There was a discussion about the need for careful management of the ESSR funding we've received and the strategic decisions that have been made so far. Also discussed ways to avoid having to report a deficit and the need to communicate with our bond holders.

Nominating/Governance Committee, Judy Owen (Committee Chair)

- Update on board orientation
 - Orientation of new members took place on November 11.
 - Working to streamline the process in the future; one possibility is to provide a physical handbook to new members and then schedule conversations with various committee members so the process is less didactic and more of a dialogue.
 - Emphasized the need for more documentation on processes, for example cultivating new members as well as supporting those whose terms are ending.
 - Excited about the pipeline of potential candidates and will provide more details at a later meeting.

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

- Update on attendance and enrollment
 - Budgeted enrollment is 698 and we are at 701.
 - Will continue to keep seats filled and accept new students as needed until December.
 - For the first time the school-wide student body breakdown is approximately equal between males and females.
 - Attendance was strong at the beginning of the year but has fallen recently due to various illnesses going around, particularly through the elementary grades. Daily attendance rate is currently at 93%.
- The 21st Century program began on Monday, November 14 and will continue until mid-December. It will restart in January and run through to the end of the school year.
- Assessed nine students this year as English language learners (ELL). The broader community seems to be shifting which is resulting in changes to our student body.
- Update on partnerships
 - The Fire Explorer program is under way; once a month firefighters and EMTs come to campus to share information about their professions.
 - ArtSmart is back: high school students have the opportunity to audition and receive vocal training. The program will accept about ten students.
 - We have a new partnership with the Widener Athletic Training Program. Students from that program come to campus to work with our students and share their knowledge.
 - High school theater students will work with artists from the Lantern Theater on a reading of the play The Royale and then will take a field trip to see the play at the Lantern in Philadelphia.
 - A new cohort of students will begin working with the I AM program (our partnership with the Philadelphia Union) for this school year.

- Begun a partnership with the Chester Education Foundation STEP Program, which employs our students in our afterschool program as assistants, providing real world work experience.
- Chester Community Coalition is finishing up a training cycle for a teen mental health first aid program. They worked with students in health class on how to recognize students who are in need and how to help those students find resources. Small group work will continue in January.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: December 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.