

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., December 20, 2022

Date of Approval: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on December 20, 2022. 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 Donald Delson, Ben Berger, Bill Cumby, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Lauren White, Ian Wilcox and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Pam Greenblatt, Mandy Kennedy, Zach Oberfield. All attendants participated via video call.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present and no comment.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the November 15, 2022, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees.
 - Motion – Don Delson
 - Second – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 9 Nays: 0 Absent: 3

President's Report

Don Delson (President)

- Dr. Monica Taylor, Chair of Delaware County Council, was just appointed to the Pennsylvania Board of Education. A key role of that body is to make recommendations for K-12 education policy, which includes charters. We extended invitation to her, and she agreed to come to CCSA on January 10, 2023, for a tour and a meeting with Don and Akosua. One of the goals of meeting is to make sure she understands the differences between the charters, and to gain an understanding of her priorities.

Strategic Plan Execution Update, Ian Wilcox

- Proposed the board take time in January or February to determine use of the \$250,000 reserve funds.
- School Surveys, Marilyn Henkelman for Zach Oberfield

- Comparable schools have been identified and questions for educators have been created.
- Each committee member has been assigned three schools (two charters and one private) and will report results to Zach at the end of January with a plan to present all findings to the board in February.
- Alumni Outreach, Francis Hoover
 - Working on collecting feedback from alumni using three major steps: background research, design of survey, data collection.
 - Data will then be analyzed and the goal is to report findings to the board by May of 2023.
 - Will seek other members out to collaborate on this project.
 - There was a suggestion to share findings with the CCSA Foundation board.

Committee Reports

Facilities Committee, Alice Turbiville for Mandy Kennedy (Committee Chair)

- Financial Timeline
 - Starting to report budget actuals. Projection is \$3.2 million, which is below the \$3.5 million maximum which was authorized. \$1.1 million has already been incurred and funds have been transferred to cover these costs.
 - Construction is currently on-track with no surprises or change orders.

Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville (Committee Chair)

- Long-range Forecast
 - Working on strategies to deal with the impending deficit when the federal grants run out in 2025. One strategy is to use the Foundation's contributions to make whole the budget in 2025.
 - Will reach out to the majority debt bond holder in January of 2023 to see whether that will be well received.
 - Will incorporate feedback and results into a board report for February.
- Budget Results
 - With building construction ongoing a change to formatting in the monthly budget report is necessary. Will go over that in detail at the next meeting.
 - There is a projected budget surplus of a million dollars. Much of that is due to the government grants.
 - There is a shift of special education students above old, assumed percentage. Projections are getting closer to 20% now. This will require resource budgeting because of higher reimbursement rates.
 - Plan to increase budgeted surplus for the following year to cushion when ESSR grants expire.

- Discussion whether there would be another settlement agreement that would change the standard reimbursement rates. The assumption is we will return to the statutory rates and there would not be a need for another settlement agreement.

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

- Enrollment
 - Looking to bring on a few new students to fill some vacancies and plan to enroll siblings and work with families we already know.
 - Those vacant seats are due to several disciplinary incidents, which resulted in voluntary withdrawal, as well as a foster situation which resulted in a student being housed in another district.
- Attendance
 - Despite various ongoing illnesses, attendance is still strong. Messaging is clear and we are continuing positive incentives.
- Senior Class Update
 - Senior pinning ceremony was held on December 15, which is a nice opportunity to celebrate seniors. This year we added a required eligibility to participate in this ceremony; students had to pass all classes in the first trimester. This is typically a good indicator of how students will finish out the year. If students are ineligible for the ceremony, it is a good opportunity for strong course correction.
 - All seniors have begun the FAFSA applications – mandatory for students even if they are not going to college
 - All students are also required to apply to Delaware County Community College, due to the wide array of classes and opportunities that institution provides. At the very least it gives students an option they can count on.
- Philadelphia Union Partnership
 - On December 14 a new cohort of 38 students were brought on to the iAm project. Five students spoke at the event.
- Honor Roll Breakfast
 - Students were celebrated with breakfast on December 20.
 - One third of the student body made Honor Roll: 146 students achieved Honor Roll (all A's and B's) and another 56 achieved Distinguished Honor (all A's). Third through Twelfth grade is eligible.
 - Honor Roll is a great way to measure achievement, both academic and conduct.
- Testing Results
 - Provided overview of PSSA Spring 2022 for ELA, Math and Science, including comparable local scores and state scores.
 - State average is still higher than what we have achieved and that remains a goal. Within the local community we are outpacing other schools in the area. One important point of pride is middle school ELA scores are right in line with state standards.

- Provided overview of Math PQC (periodic quick checks), which looks for a measure of students who perform at 70% or above. One takeaway is K, 1, and 2 have gained strong mastery and performance - these are students who have had the most intervention from the new math initiative. These cycles of assessment provide students the opportunity to address errors and reflect on what they do and don't understand.
- There was a brief discussion about grades 5-8 and lack of progress in math – it's important for students to have that reflection about errors they make to gain understanding. Another area that contributes to understanding is the language used in problems: nowadays it is a language test as well as a math test. It is no longer about just teaching the concept anymore; it is about deciphering how to apply knowledge through language.
- There was a question about providing PQC data for the high school grades and that information will be shared at the next meeting.
- There was a question and discussion about the recent change requiring that all Pennsylvania high school students pass the Keystone tests to graduate. It was explained that there are alternate pathways and combinations of testing that is allowed. We will be doing an analysis of all students and their needs regarding how each one will best be able to succeed in passing the keystones.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m. followed by an Executive Session.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: February 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.