

A **FREE**
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Learning Public
Charter School

*Melissa Bassanelli, Superintendent
Brent Givens, Director*

**Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 26, 2023
3:00pm Room 2**

Advisory Council Members:

Absent: Brian Ginter, Linda Rios-Soto,

Present: Brent Givens, Jonathan Elfstrom, Bonnie Bjorgum, Shakila Ahmach, Bob Erickson
Russell Brown, Marybeth Oddo

Welcome

The meeting is brought to order @ 3:07 pm. This is the third quarterly meeting of 2022-2023.

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting – January 25, 2023 (action)

Russell Brown makes a motion to approve the minutes.

Johnathon Elfstrom seconds the motion.

Enrollment & Budget Update

We closed enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year on March 31 and are now focused on enrollment for the new school year. Currently, 268 students are enrolled. There was one info session in April and there will probably be two in May.

Started this year with 245 but lowered it to 210. Our P1 came in at 199 which was short of the 210. P2 number came it at 210.06. We are now on a very tight budget in terms of adding to our reserve. We are healthy financially. We often talk about using our general funds but that does not consider the use of grant money like from Lottery, music, arts and, learning loss and other grants. The key is to use the grants before we use the general fund. Brent hopes to try to match the SJUSD 10% salary increase. Brent does not feel like he is in a place to do that but if Choices continues through the beginning of next year, he will be asking the board to approve a 10% raise with retro. In the fall of 2023 after October (CBEDS date) this is all pending strong enough enrollment number. We want to honor the staff and retain and recruit high quality staff.

WASC & LCAP Update – School Action Plan 2022-23

Will submit the report by April 30th. Kristin is our self-study WASC coordinator. LCAP is a complete review of our school data for the 21-22 school year. Brent will share it with the council.



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Finances

Ending Fund Balance 2021-2022: \$727,753.77

Ending Fund Balance 2020-2021: \$1,496,173.00

Findings from 2021-2022 Audit: No audit exceptions were found.

At this time, Choices Charter School has a healthy financial status. We are keeping a careful eye on spending and managing the financial impacts that resulted from the State of California not continuing the “Hold Harmless” agreement (SB 579) for charter schools for the 2022-23 school year. We are no longer receiving the pre-pandemic level of funding from 2020-21 and are now returning to funding based on the current average daily attendance (ADA). Choice’s enrollment has steadily grown in the current year as we continue our work to recover from a drop in enrollment during the 2021-22 school year (209.28 ADA) compared to the 2020-21 school year (282.99 ADA), a drop of 73.71 ADA. This drop in ADA mirrors what many schools across the state and country experienced due to the pandemic. Our current school enrollment is at 268 students, and we are now looking to grow our teaching staff to account for our larger enrollment.

Two additional financial issues that impacted our ending fund balance in 2021-22 were delayed accounting expenses and staff raises. Due to an oversight caused in part by the pandemic, our annual district oversight fees were not charged accurately in the 2019-20 & 2020-21 school years. We were not charged approx. \$102,000 for oversight fees in 2019-20 and the calculated charges in 2020-21 were short by \$29,205. This worksheet calculation had to be corrected and as a result, we had an extra \$132,122 charged to cover those miscalculations in 2021-22.

Staff raises were approved by the SJUSD Board in 2021-22 to stay competitive with the local area school districts, honor the work and dedication of the Choices staff and to retain and recruit highly qualified teachers. Base salaries were increased by a total of 3.55% effective July 1, 2021 and a one-time, off schedule payment, for all employees equal to 3.5% of their annual base salary. These raises had a total budget increase of \$139,460 with additional ongoing fiscal impacts for future years.

Current projections show a steady increase in ending fund balance for the 2023-24 & 2024-25 school years to maintain a healthy financial status.

The 3.5% raise and one time off 3.5 affected us as well. Our ending fund balance has been hit. This is why we will wait until the fall to decide about raises.

SJUSD is getting a new financial system which will go into effect July 1.

The council should read through the LCAP document and take the survey on page 8. The staff was asked to do the same thing. There is a list of services that were provided from 22/23 on the google form.

I-Ready, CAASPP & ELPAC Testing Update

We are in the 2nd week of CASSSP testing. Molly sent out a list of students that have not completed. Martinez is LPAC testing coordinator. He will be facilitating tests next week with about nine students and he will be working alongside a TOSA mentor for the first round of testing.

When families enroll, they sign something that says they will comply with testing with the option of opting out.

Graduation 2023 Planning

Graduation is June 12th @ 4pm. Information regarding purchasing caps and gowns, senior brunch/awards on June 8th and the grade night trip to Disneyland with Bella Vista was given out at two senior meetings. 8th grade promotion is June 7th.
8th grade promotion June

Looking ahead: Priorities for 2022-2023

Staffing needs for next year: We will be hiring two staff members for English and possibly a third member that will be funded from a grant. Would possibly like to return to some VAPA classes that were dropped. Would like to hire new teachers that are enthusiastic about our model. We have had several teachers interested. The positions will be posted on Edjoin soon.

Increase and improve our online courses. On campus classes should have a strong rationale for kids to be on campus. Offer a hybrid model. Social interaction with peers is important. Renewed website, orientation, parent communication system in June and July. Have parents that are interested in our school. Create automated systems so we can focus more on the actual live enrollment of those students. Counseling will focus on transcript review.

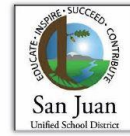
Walk-ins & Visitor Comments

We will be doing a lockdown shelter in place drill next month.
Next Advisory Council Meeting – April 26, 2023

Adjournment

Russell Brown motions to adjourn 4:12

Meetings are open to the public



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