

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., September 19, 2023

Date of Approval: Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on September 19, 2023. The meeting convened at 7:03 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 zoom), Pam Greenblatt, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover (via zoom), Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville (via zoom), and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Bill Cumby, Mandy Kennedy, Chris Klock, Zach Oberfield, Lauren White.

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

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the August 29, 2023, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees, with changes made on page 4 to the name of the October joint gathering, which was recorded.
 - Motion – Judy Owen
 - Second – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 5

President’s Report

Don Delson (President)

- Board membership update
 - Mandy Kennedy is stepping down from the CCSA Board of Trustees due to her travel schedule.
 - Motion to accept resignation - Judy Owen
 - Second - Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Absent: 5

Committee Reports

Finance, Alice Turbiville (Chair, Finance Committee)

- Summary of Finance Committee Meeting

- Committee met on September 18 and began long range planning. The forecast is looking better than last year when a deficit was projected.
- A contributing factor is the change in ratio of special education students. The other factor is the rise of interest rates which has increased our cash reserves.
- The Committee will conduct a sensitivity analysis to determine if we should expect a deficit.
- The final S&P report showed a favorable outlook. Copies will be submitted to all board members.
- Questionable charges from our bank were noticed and Corliss Boggs, treasurer of the CCSA Foundation board, is reaching out to inquire about refunds we are due. This issue was raised with our bank nine months ago and the situation has still not been rectified.

Education, Don Delson (President), for Marilyn Henkelman

- PSSA Results
 - Akosua Watts will have the numbers from comparable programs to present at our October 26 gathering.
- Artificial Intelligence
 - Akosua Watts provided an overview of a draft of CCSA's acceptable uses of AI within the school.
 - On September 22 the committee will meet over Zoom with Michael Jabbour of Microsoft Education. We are hopeful he will be able to provide information and guidance. It will also be an opportunity for us to ask questions.
 - A draft of the school's AI policy has been uploaded to the Education Committee's shared drive.

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

- Enrollment Update
 - Special Education numbers are on the rise.
 - Still working to fill seats in certain grades, particularly ninth. Some students in that grade have recently transferred out due to sports and other issues.
- Start of the School Year 2023-24
 - The new cell phone policy is going well. There have been relatively few incidents of students acting out. Student engagement is greater, both in and out of the classroom. Parents are generally on board and supportive.
 - School Day time change is going well but transportation remains an issue. We have three different companies working to provide our transportation and it has been challenging to maintain consistency.
 - We have adopted a K-12 approach to social emotional learning (SEL). It is a pre-planned curriculum that doesn't require a lot of prep for teachers but allows them to lead meaningful discussions. There is one topic a week that is reiterated every day.

- Part of the SEL curriculum is the use of an app called Positive Behavior Incentive System (PBIS). It allows teachers to provide positive feedback in real time throughout the day, either to individual students or an entire class.
- Police presence in the city has diminished recently due to various issues with the receivership. Kids are taking advantage of this and gathering in larger groups. Some CCSA students have been tangentially involved. We held a meeting this morning with parents of students who were recently involved in an incident. Social media is having a negative impact on these types of situations as incidents are filmed and then spread. We are trying to help parents navigate this dynamic.
- Staff have been put on notice to lookout for particular incidents.
- Another challenge is shifting parents' attitudes by encouraging them to support their kids in ways that don't promote fighting.
- There was a brief discussion regarding the future of the police department in Chester and the need for the CCSA Board of Trustees' liaisons to the city to stay on top of the situation.
- Events
 - Back to School Nights for Middle and High School were held on September 13 and the Elementary School will have their turn on September 20.
 - 21st Century after school programming will begin on September 26.
 - Blood Drive sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta will be held on September 30.
 - We will host an Educator open house on October 21. We're inviting educators to come and see the school and leave their resumes.
 - We will host a Healthier You Conference on November 11, which will be sponsored by Kristin Motley. This organization is devoted to doing wellness work in Chester. We are hoping some of our students and families will attend.
 - Annual Family Math night will happen on November 16.

Adjournment: The public meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

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