



## UCCS Board Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2023

14613 Steele Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28273

**CALL TO ORDER** – S. Walker called the meeting to order at 5:06pm. The next UCCS Board Meeting is Monday, December 11, 2023

1. **ESTABLISH QUORUM** – There were sufficient members for a quorum
  - a. Members Present: **L. Rakvic, J. Cole, S. Walker, M. McCarthy, and D. Goldfarb**
  - b. Administration Present: **S. Reddick, A. Abraham, A. Hamp**
  - c. Minutes taken by: **C. Brown**
2. **MISSION STATEMENT** - Through classical education’s rigor, Unity Classical Charter School will develop intellectually, morally and physically excellent citizens who embrace learning and the desire to serve.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – L. Rakvic motioned to approve the revised November 13, 2023 agenda. M. McCarthy seconded. November 13, 2023 Agenda Approved.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – M. McCarthy motioned to approve the minutes from October 2023. J. Cole seconded. October 2023 Board Minutes approved.

**NO PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

### PTC PRESIDENT REPORT - D. Williams

October was a busy month. PTC now has 160 parents on the committee.

The PTC Treasurer role was recently filled by Stephanie Hofinga, CPA.

The Chipotle Spirit night on October 25<sup>th</sup> brought in \$133 to the school.

The Parents Night Out: Sip & Paint was held on November 3rd. The Fine Art Booster Club, and the Fine Arts teachers took the lead, and proceeds went to the Fine Arts Department.

Each month, the Booster Clubs host a “dress down day” to raise funds for either Fine Arts or Athletics:

Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> = Book Character “Dress Down Day” for Fine Arts

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> = Jeans & Jersey “Dress Down Day” for Athletics

The Fall Festival on November 9 was a huge success! Vergie Weatherspoon led the event, and the cost was covered by the PTC.

The Winter Fundraiser is coming up December 6-13, and the goal is to raise \$100k this year.

#### **GIRLS VOLLEYBALL & ATHLETIC REPORT: L. Barnes** (UCCS Kindergarten teacher and Volleyball Coach)

The UCCS Girl’s Volleyball team had an amazing season. The team raised their ranking, had a 5-game winning streak at one point in the season, and went to the playoffs. The team finished the year at 5-3.

L. Barnes wants to make the Board aware of the ongoing support the athletic teams need. L. Barnes stated that other schools UCCS competes against have the necessary equipment, and UCCS does not have the same level of equipment. The proper equipment would allow the UCCS athletic teams to improve their performance. L. Barnes stated that most of the financial support comes from parents and the Athletics Booster Club.

Specific needs: ball cart, “Accu-Spike” equipment, volleyball pass and bump trainers, and a regulation sized outdoor net for times when the gym is in use during volleyball practice.

L. Barnes also stated that UCCS coaches are paid the lowest of any other area coaches. \$700-\$1,300 per season is the average. Also, L. Barnes requested that coaches are paid at the end of the season. Right now, they are paid at the end of the school year.

S. Walker asked if L. Barnes had presented her list of requested needs to the UCCS Administration. L. Barnes responded that she has not, but she did present them to the Athletics Booster Club.

S. Walker thanked L. Barnes for the presentation and stated that it is the Board’s desire for UCCS students to be developed both intellectually and physically. She thanked the Coaches and Athletics Dept.

#### **TREASURER REPORT - D. Goldfarb**

Because the November Board meeting is earlier in the month, the numbers from Acadia are not ready. Will report back during the December Board meeting.

Money from the state has not been released yet, and we’ve had to use our cash reserve for the last 3 months.

D. Goldfarb will meet soon with Acadia to develop a process to figure out how much cash needs to be in reserve. Once that is determined, we hope to begin investing that balance in a Federal Money Market Account.

### **BOND UPDATE – D. Goldfarb**

In October, interest rates were skyrocketing, so the bond outlook was not optimistic. However, during the last 3 weeks interest rates are back down a full ½ point.

D. Goldfarb reported that the underwriters invited all capital market investors to view our reports and prospectus. 18 potential investors attended. This coming Wednesday, we will price the bonds.

D. Goldfarb explained that bond financing is a much better scenario than continuing to lease. By moving to bonds, our debt will be fixed at a lower rate than we are paying now. Right now, in addition to salaries, rent is our highest line item. If the bond goes through, we will be able to invest more in teachers and students.

S. Walker asked why the state has delayed funding for over 3 months now. D. Goldfarb said Acadia is actively working to ensure we get access to the funds ASAP.

M. McCarthy shared that the state is sometimes 6 months late in sending money to schools because they are fighting over the terms of the budget.

### **POWERSCHOOL UPDATE – S. Reddick and Team**

S. Reddick shared that the Parent Portal through PowerSchool will be up next week. Communication will go out to all families on Thursday next week. Admin team is prepared for some hiccups in the first few days. The team will prepare for those delays and anticipate what mistakes need to be corrected.

D. Goldfarb asked if Finals site has software that integrates with PowerSchool.

A. Hamp answered that unfortunately the two do not connect.

D. Goldfarb asked if we are paying for that service, and don't we obtain information about students from Finals site?

A. Hamp responded that, yes, we are paying for it, but it no longer works for our needs.

D. Goldfarb stated that we pay \$8k annually for it, so we need to decide how to move forward and if we can get some of that money back.

### **CARPOOL REPORT – A. Reese**

We faced two big hurdles at the beginning of the year that greatly impacted our carpool process: different start times for elementary and middle school, and the failure of the SchoolPass scanners.

After problem solving, we have now given all parents a number that corresponds with their student, and we are able to manually enter those in the program during dismissal. These numbers populate inside a teacher's computer, and let the teacher know when to send the student to dismissal.

In addition to the new process, we have crossing guards in the morning and afternoon. They have helped speed the process up tremendously!

Next year, we are hoping to continue using numbers in addition to SchoolPass. We also hope to keep the crossing guards.

D. Goldfarb commented that hopefully these positive changes will be in place at the beginning of next year, so we don't have the same experience that the beginning of this year brought.

A. Reese agreed and suggested that a Transportation Coordinator role be added at the beginning of the year (part time role), as well as retain the crossing guards. Also, in January 2024 we will begin the approval process to add more buses. In July 2024, we can review the PowerSchool and SchoolPass consolidation.

D. Goldfarb asked if there is anything that can be done to improve communication for new parents regarding carpool.

A. Reese emphasized that parents need to give grace to the carpool team during the first few weeks of school.

It was suggested by a parent in attendance that an introduction to the arrival and dismissal process be shown during Open House. Maybe a video? Maybe an in-person walk through of the process? Experienced parents can mentor new parents about what to expect.

S. Reddick stated that the school sends out a communication (with a detailed video "how to") in the summer to begin prepping families of what to expect the first few weeks.

L. Rakvic asked if Admin is still seeing as many tardies? Is it the same students consistently?

A. Reese answered that, yes, some students are consistently late, but the number has decreased.

S. Walker stated that the idea of a part-time Transportation Coordinator on staff is very appealing so that our Coaches can focus on helping our teachers and not managing carpool.

L. Rakvic asked how many hours would this role be?

A. Abraham answered that between buses, carpool, crossing guard management, etc. It would possibly be full-time at the start of the school year.

## **2022-23 EOG TEST SCORES & FALL 2023 STAR TEST SCORES – S. Reddick and Team**

A. Abraham shared the STAR report with the Board. She stated that the STAR assessment gives a baseline of how students are doing and where they are academically. STAR helps assess where support is needed most.

D. Goldfarb asked what happened in 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading? Is proficiency lower than expected?

A. Hamp reported that we have more new kids in 1<sup>st</sup> grade than in most grades. These students did not experience our Kindergarten program, so they usually need more time to catch up.

D. Goldfarb requested a vintage report. This report should look at students' progress based on how many years they have been at UCCS. This would confirm that the students who have been with us longer are in the higher grade range.

S. Walker reminded everyone that the investors look at our grades. One of their questions during the bond process was: when is UCCS going to be a B school? If we had that vintage data, we could validate why scores are the way they are. If vintage data does not improve our standing, then we need to dig deeper because there may be bigger problems.

The Board requested that a report be pulled that looks at new student vs. returning student scores (students who have been at UCCS 1 year or more).

A. Abraham asked if the Board would like to see this data for all grades?

D. Goldfarb responded yes.

M. McCarthy asked if it is Admin's understanding that the students who have been at UCCS longer are doing best?

A. Reese and J. Jones responded yes. Teachers and Admin can tell right away which students have been at UCCS for a while and which ones are new.

D. Goldfarb stated that this data is not just for investors, it is for parents also. We can share the data found and do the work to determine the cause of the lower ranking.

S. Reddick suggested that our lower ranking may be because we have grown very quickly, and because our curriculum is not geared towards testing.

There was some concern from the Board as to why 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading scores were so low.

Administration answered that this could be because of new to UCCS students, or ELL/EC students.

D. Goldfarb stated that we must set our sights on better test scores. Let's tag these students who are "RED", and let's follow them along and see where they progress at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, etc. Are they still languishing, or are they improving with the resources we have? The Board needs to have some insight into this progression.

J. Cole stated that the kids in the "middle" should not go unnoticed. He urged the Board to focus intervention on the "middle" kids. The kids in the "RED" may not be able to be proficient, especially if they are EC. However, the middle kids will make or break the proficiency. Don't give up on the "REDS", just look at different ways you can help them succeed.

A. Abraham moved to the EOG reports from last school year. Given 67% growth, we did well. It shows we are a C school. But, the report also shows for reading and math we maintained stats. Last year, we dropped a lot in science. This year, they are doing a much better job in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade science class is a work in progress. The curriculum is very difficult.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – S. Reddick**

The PTC has worked very hard to raise the funds to improve our gymnasium sound system. Our first phase of equipment has arrived and will be installed soon.

Thank you to all the volunteers and PTC leaders for the very successful Fall Festival! We will improve a few things and incorporate for Field Day in the Spring.

We were recently the benefactors of an anonymous donation of turkeys and Thanksgiving fixings. We gave them to UCCS families in need, as well as teachers who were recognized for their recent hard work.

**CLOSED SESSION** – M. McCarthy introduced a motion that the Board go into closed session under NC General Statute 143-318,11.(6). D. Goldfarb seconded the motion, and the Board moved to closed session at 6:49pm.

**ADJOURN** - The Board Meeting returned to open session, and there was no further business. Motion to adjourn made by S. Walker, and seconded by M. McCarthy. The Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.