

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., March 19, 2024

Date of Approval: Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on March 19, 2024. The meeting convened at 6:48 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, Pam Greenblatt, Frances Hoover, Chris Klock, Zach Oberfield (on Zoom), Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Lauren White (on Zoom), and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Marilyn Henkelman

Public Comments: No comments. Member of public present, Judy Wertheimer, non-member of the Nominating and Governance Committee.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the February 20, 2024, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees.
 - Motion – Alice Turbiville
 - Second – Ben Berger
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

President's Report

Don Delson (President)

- Charter Renewal
 - We have been given permission to submit the hard copies on April 1, but we plan to submit the digital copies before then.
- Potential Partnership with Widener University
 - The board agrees this is a program we want to pursue but we will not begin planning until after the charter renewal process is complete.
- HOS Evaluation
 - We received a final draft/month-by-month suggested evaluation process from Michelle Porterfield. That proposal has been added to the charter school renewal application. Once that process is complete, we will work to implement the evaluation.

There was a brief discussion, which covered the following issues:

- CCSA and Widener will seek to glean advice and best practices from Swarthmore and CCC regarding implementing a math tutoring program. It has taken CCC approximately five years to get the results they were after and they have a lot of knowledge to share. CCSA understands it will take time to build up our own program, but we know it can work.
- The targeted cohort of students for the math tutoring program will be students in grades 3-8, which covers the PSSA testing grades. The idea is to start with third grade and scale up one year at a time. This is a topic that will be discussed more in depth with the Education Committee at their meeting in April.
- There was a question regarding whether it would be useful for us to look at PSSA data of current CCSA students who receive tutoring from CCC. Mrs. Watts confirmed we can pull this data.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee (Alice Turbiville)

- Current Budget YTD
 - The Finance Committee reviewed the Budget-to-Actual for the Year to Date for February. There were no big changes from the prior month. One change in projection is we do not think we will require the Foundation's usual contribution this year. Instead, those contributions can be used in the future to help cover the shortfall once our ESSR funds run out.
- Five Year Financial Forecast
 - Key projections indicate stable student enrollment and consistent levels of special education needs.
 - Anticipated increases in per pupil revenues from public school districts are expected from 2026 onwards due to the restoration of state-mandated statutory funding levels.
 - Contributions and interest are forecasted to grow, especially from the CCSA Foundation, with interest income remaining robust.
 - Federal and state funding sources, including pandemic grants, are set to expire in 2026, leading to leveling off with annual inflationary increases thereafter.
 - Expense growth rates are projected to align with inflationary increases, with the potential for competitive cost of living adjustments for CCSA teachers and staff beginning in 2026.
 - New programs and educational initiatives are expected to be funded through enhanced revenue streams.
 - Overall, the forecast indicates sustained financial stability for CCSA, characterized by positive operating margins, adequate debt service coverage, and consistent liquidity to support operational needs.

- The Committee will meet two times before the May board meeting and at that meeting further information on the budget will be provided. Compensation will be the biggest item of review, as well as cost for special education students. Otherwise, the budget is normal in terms of cash flow ups and downs.

Nominating & Governance Committee (Judy Owen)

- Charter Renewal
 - The final draft is nearly complete, and all deadlines have been met, which is quite an achievement.
 - All committee and board members are invited to peruse the documents located on the google drive and provide any notes or feedback.
 - The appendices are extremely lengthy, approximately 300-400 pages. We are waiting to find out if we need to provide hard copies of all the appendices.
 - Once we compile a final digital copy, we will be set to print.

Mr. Delson thanked Ms. Owen for all her hard work on this project.

School Report (Akosua Watts)

- Enrollment Update
 - Budget Target: 699/140 (Total/SPED) vs. Actual: 691/155
 - We've seen a huge jump this year for the number of students who have and will be evaluated for sped services. In looking at who our sped students are now, it's interesting how it correlates to where they were during the pandemic. Those students who experienced the pandemic during years K, 1, and 2 are now the grades receiving the most services.
 - We're not sure if this is a nationwide issue. Local data does not seem to be as high as ours, but there is typically a lag with real time data.
 - Going forward, we might need to think programmatically how we handle this new level of student need. Currently working with leadership to draft plans over the summer.
- Highlights & Academic Updates
 - JHF Visiting Professorship w/ Rev. Dr. Luther Smith, Thursday, February 22
 - This opportunity was made available by contributions from Jim and Wendy Emrich. Dr. Smith met with students, then staff, and then delivered a public speech.
 - MS & HS Dance Showcases, Thursday, March 5
 - MS & HS Voice Showcase, Wednesday, March 6
 - iAM Women in Sports Panel, Friday, March 1
 - People's Light Theater / The ripple, the wave that carried me away
 - Black History Assembly, Door Decorating Contest / Banquet, February 28
- Upcoming Events
 - MS Spirit Day – Thursday, March 21
 - American Red Cross Blood Drive / Friday, April 12

- Recruitment Initiative Calendar
 - Tara Park, Strategic & Special Projects Manager, is working on finding folks for immediate openings, as well as getting our name out to generate word of mouth.
 - Currently building a recruitment plan, with plans to attend job fairs as well as place two billboards in Chester advertising openings.
- Staff Wellness Day
 - Professional development on April 15 will be devoted to staff wellness. There will be offerings of yoga, massage, personal finance, etc. In May we'll devote a whole week to staff appreciation and recognize staff with something special each day.

There was a brief discussion covering the following topics:

- Members expressed interest in sponsoring something during staff appreciation week. It was determined that a breakfast would be the best option and Mr. Delson committed to \$1,000 from the board. Mrs. Watts asked that any available members also come to the school on that day to express their appreciation to staff in person. She promised to share the date of the breakfast once it has been scheduled.
- It was agreed that more effort could be put into engaging with local universities and professors to help with recruiting efforts.
- There was a question regarding whether CCSA could work with Teach for America. In the past they were not interested and were very rooted in Philadelphia. It was determined it would be worthwhile pursuing that once again.

Adjournment: The public meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: May 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.