

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., May 21, 2024

Date of Approval: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on May 21, 2024. The meeting convened at 7:21 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 (on Zoom), Grant Gegwich, Pam Greenblatt, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Zach Oberfield, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Lauren White (on Zoom), and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Bill Cumby, Chris Klock.

Public Comments: No comments.

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 – Judy Owen
  - Second – Marilyn Henkelman
    - Ayes: 9      Nays: 0      Absent: 2

Committee Reports

Nom/Gov Committee (Judy Owen)

- Board Terms Renewal
  - Frances Hoover and Pam Greenblatt renewed their board terms for another three years.
- New Board Member Votes
  - Ms. Owen provided an overview of candidate Grant Gegwich’s bio and resume. Ms. Owen called for a motion to elect Mr. Gegwich to the board.
    - Motion – Marilyn Henkelman
    - Second - Zack Oberfield
      - Ayes: 9      Nays: 0      Absent: 2
  - Mr. Gegwich joined the meeting. Introductions and greetings were exchanged. Mr. Gegwich recited the CCSA Board oath of office and was sworn in as a board member.
  - Ms. Owen put forth Judy Wertheimer as a candidate, and reviewed Ms. Wertheimer’s bio and resume. Ms. Wertheimer has been a non-board member of the Nom/Gov committee

and is available to join the board as of July 1. Ms. Owen called for a motion to elect Ms. Wertheimer to the board.

- Motion – Don Delson
- Second – Marilyn Henkelman
  - Ayes: 9                      Nays: 0    Absent: 2
- Governance Workshop
  - Barbara Klock offered to fund a governance workshop run by Bob Clothier, an expert on the subject. Ms. Owen and Mr. Delson met with Mr. Clothier on May 15 to determine details. The board will need to cover the expenses that Ms. Klock is not paying. That cost includes a board evaluation. Ms. Owen called for a vote approve the funding for the governance workshop.
    - Motion – Don Delson
    - Second – Marilyn Henkelman
      - Ayes: 9                      Nays: 0    Absent: 2
  - Suggested dates for the workshop are October 19 or 26. Ms. Owen requested the board let her know if either of those dates are an issue.

### **President's Report**

Don Delson (President)

- Charter Renewal
  - The receiver will schedule a hearing at his office regarding the charter renewal, most likely on June 27. Mr. Delson, Ms. Watts, and Ms. Trubiville will attend. All signs point to approval, but the hearing is required.
- Widener Partnership
  - Ms. Watts has taken the lead for designing this program and by the June meeting we'll have an update regarding that possible partnership.
- Head of School Evaluation Process
  - Ms. Watts sent Mr. Delson her goals for the year and Mr. Delson has reviewed them. Ms. Watts will provide a self-assessment against those goals before the June meeting, and the Executive Committee will review. Board and staff surveys will also be a part of the process and should be ready by the end of June.

### **Committee Reports (con'td.)**

Finance Committee (Alice Turbiville)

- April Financial Results
  - Since the last meeting our surplus has decreased to \$712,000 because we held back the unrestricted contribution from the CCSA Foundation.
  - One major variance are the Special Education numbers, which have increased significantly since January. The costs associated with this growth are for students who have been placed outside of the school. Next year's budget takes this projection and grows it by 3%. We want to be on the safe side and not have a deficit.

- Our Debt Service Coverage Ratio is at 1.26.
- Cash balances are \$8.6M.
- 2024-2025 Budget
  - Revenues
    - The expected loss of ESSER funds will be supplanted by the buildup of contributions from the Foundation (this year and next year), as well as some savings from new market tax credits. Those funds will get contributed in FY25 to the school.
    - Additionally, the annual endowment distribution, which will be raised to the highest level of statutory rate, and will add approximately \$236,000 to the budget.
    - Total local revenues will be about \$1M in next year's budget.
    - Enrollment is projected at 700 students, with a 21% special education ratio. If the special education numbers grow, the school will receive additional district revenues. After next year, the settlement rates will expire, and the school will receive the current statutory rates.
  - Expenses
    - Four main areas: salary increases, new positions, benefit changes, and special education costs.
      - \$4,000 salary increase for teachers and administrators, \$2,000 for all other staff. This amounts to an increase of 5.7% over the 23-24 total salary budget.
      - Medical/Vision reduced by 10.7%, with 5% increase for Dental.
      - Total Personnel Costs increase ~\$559K over FY24 projection (7%).
      - Though normal pay increases come in at about 3-4%, we are hoping the current increase will help to avoid any difficulty in hiring and retaining teachers, which has been a major challenge.

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

- All agreed that the staff salary increases are necessary. We are still behind district wages, but this increase will get us closer to the market value. When we get to statutory rates we may be able to look at salaries and budget increases more aggressively.
- Last year we conducted a wage comparison analysis. Going forward, it would be a good idea to do this every few years to make sure we are keeping up with market wages. This current increase is a good cost of living increase.

Education Committee (Marilyn Henkelman)

- Widener Partnership
  - Ms. Watts will share information and updates at the June board meeting.
- Teacher Pipeline
  - Ms. Watts has strong connections with teacher prep colleges in the area and she will work on and maintain those relationships. Ms. Owen and Mr. Oberfield know folks from the education departments at Haverford and Bryn Mawr. They will arrange a school tour for those department heads so they can promote the school to their students.

**School Report (Akosua Watts)**

- Enrollment
  - We are slightly under our goal, but the special education numbers counteract any funding losses.
- Highlights & Academic Updates
  - iAM Project – Boeing / Language Services Associates / Vincera Institute
  - Trips – NJ Aquarium (4th Gr.) / Media Theatre (Musical) / Widener (HS Sci)
  - Justice in Education – Fair Funding Advocacy; Participated in a meeting and some went to Harrisburg.
  - Author Visit – Donye Price, Chester’s 1st Female Firefighter
  - Staff Appreciation Week
- Upcoming Events
  - Wed., May 22 at 9:15am – Spring Musical Matinee (K-5)
  - Thurs., May 23 at 5:30pm – Spring Musical
  - Wed., May 29 at 9:45am – MS & HS Voice Showcase
  - Wed., May 29 at 5:30pm – MS & HS Dance Showcase
  - Thurs., May 30 at 10:00am – Music Showcase (2nd Grade)
  - Fri., May 31 at 10:00am – Music & Violin Showcase (3rd Grade)
  - Tues., Jun. 4 at 9:00am – End of the Year Ceremony (3rd Grade)
  - Wed., Jun. 5 – Trip to Tyler Arboretum (K & 1st Grade)
  - Wed., Jun. 5 at 9:30am – Violin Showcase
  - Thurs., Jun. 6 at 8:45am – Senior Awards & Signing Ceremony
  - Mon., Jun. 10 at 8:30am – Moving Up Ceremony (8th Grade)
  - Tues., Jun. 11 at 9:00am – Moving Up Ceremony (Kindergarten)
  - Thurs., June 13 at 6:00pm (previously 1:00pm) – Senior Graduation @ LPAC

Adjournment: The public meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: June 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.