

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., August 20, 2024

Date of Approval: Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on August 20, 2024. The meeting convened at 6:52 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, Grant Gegwich, Marilyn Henkelman, Frances Hoover, Chris Klock, Zach Oberfield, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Judy Wertheimer, and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Pam Greenblatt, Lauren White.

Public Comments: No comment.

Approval of Minutes

A technical issue arose with the June minutes, and we will present them for approval at the September meeting.

President's Report, Don Delson (President)

- Renewal Application
  - The receiver sent us a draft approval document, which we commented on and returned. The next scheduled meeting with the receiver is August 29, at which time it is very probable that our charter will be renewed for the next five years.
  - The comments had to do with dates, etc., confirming that our current document accurately reflects our charter. There were no issues with content.
  - Many thanks again for all those involved with the renewal process.
- Head of School Evaluation

- This recent evaluation was a 360 opportunity for direct reports and instructors to provide feedback, as well as all board members. Michele Porterfield has reported on the staff piece and a summary of board feedback will occur during an Executive Committee meeting. Results will be shared with Ms. Watts at the September meeting.

## Committee Reports

### **Nominating and Governance, Judy Owen**

- Board Governance Workshop
  - This workshop will take place on Saturday, October 19 from 8:30 - 2:30 at Swarthmore College. Many thanks to Ben Berger for securing the location.
- Board Orientation
  - The orientation materials are almost complete and new members will have the opportunity to review them, as well as meet with committee chairs and/or the president if necessary. A request that emerged from the board evaluation was a call for more mentorship after onboarding.
- Parent Board Representation
  - Parent member Lauren White is leaving the board for personal reasons. Ms. Watts has been compiling a list of new candidates and will begin searching for Ms. White's replacement once the charter has been renewed. This is a timely issue as the board is legally bound to have a parent member.
- Board Officer Selection Protocol
  - Ms. Owen reviewed the draft document outlining the three main sections of the proposed protocol and received feedback from the members present.
  - Ms. Owen will take board feedback, incorporate it into a new draft, and present it to the board for approval at next month's board meeting.

### **Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville**

#### Balance Sheet

- Current Assets increased by \$648K since June 30, 2023, mainly due to a \$2M increase in cash, with decreases in District (\$1.4K) and State (\$140K) receivables. Cash balances stand at \$10.2M, equivalent to 270 days of cash-on-hand.
- Current Liabilities, including Accounts Payable/Accrued Expenses (\$343K) and Accrued Payroll (\$755K), are operating as expected.
- Committed Fund Balance is \$7.8M (for future lease obligations), and the Unrestricted Fund Balance is \$1.3M. Net Income from operations is \$723K after 12 months.
- Key metrics: Current Ratio is 9.5, Equity is \$12M, and Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) is 1.26, exceeding the 1.10 requirement.

#### Budget vs. Actual (12 months)

- Total Revenues are \$14.6M, below budget by \$294K. Major income sources include ARP ESSER (\$1.41M), NSLP (\$500K), Titles I-IV (\$583K), and 21st Century Grant (\$450K). Cash balances earned \$441K in interest.
- COVID-19 relief funds (ARP ESSER) were largely allocated in FY22 and FY23, with a remaining balance of \$1M recognized in FY24.
- Expenditures total \$13.9M, with a variance of +\$529K. Significant variances include Professional Services (+\$525K) and Other Purchased Services (+\$255K), while Equipment costs were lower (-\$195K). Special Education and Transportation costs increased.
- The school closed FY24 with an Operating Surplus of \$723K, pending year-end audit adjustments.

There was a brief discussion which covered the following points:

- At the next meeting, there will be an update regarding the district reimbursement formula. If the calculation is correct, we could potentially receive approximately \$1M from the district.
- CCSA is paid a flat rate based on the settlement rates. But there is an adjustment for actuals, which is where this excess money will come from.

#### **School Report, Akosua Watts**

- Charter School Annual Report
  - Ms. Watts provided an overview of this document, which has information that is required by the state.

- After reviewing that all board members' names were included in the document, Mr. Delson called for an approval of the Charter School Annual Report. All members in attendance approved the report.
- Enrollment Update
  - We are fully enrolled and fully staffed. Enrollment numbers are slightly high to accommodate for likely withdrawals.
- School Highlights
  - All seniors graduated in June except for three who successfully completed credit recovery requirements over the summer and received their diplomas in August.
- PSSA Results
  - Ms. Watts provided an overview of the PSSA results, including Science:

Indicator	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Goal	2023-24 Actual
ELA PSSA (3-8)	32.6% (Adv & Pro) 19.0% (Bel Bas)	40% (Adv & Pro) 15% (Bel Bas)	35.0% (Adv & Pro) 12.4% (Bel Bas)
Math PSSA (3-8)	7.1% (Adv & Pro) 67.8% (Bel Bas)	10% (Adv & Pro) 60% (Bel Bas)	13.1% (Adv & Pro) 51.4% (Bel Bas)
Sci PSSA (3-8)	36.5% (Adv & Pro) 31.7% (Bel Bas)	40% (Adv & Pro) 25% (Bel Bas)	48.5% (Adv & Pro) 24.3% (Bel Bas)

- Pennsylvania has transitioned to the PA Steel Standards, which is a different set of standards so assessments will be changing. No benchmarks have been released yet, but we do know tests will now take place in 5th grade instead of 4th.
- At an informal gathering of both boards in October, comparable state and local PSSA data will be presented for review.

There was a brief discussion covering the following points:

- CCSA is planning to start a tutoring program with 3rd graders, staffed by CCSA. We have been in communication with Widener and hope to expand the program to include them. The school's primary objective remains to provide opportunities within the school day.
- The Director of Special Education role has turned into the Student Services Coordinator. The aim is to shift how we work with IEP students so they are more integrated into classrooms rather than treated as a subset.

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

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: September 17, at 7:00 p.m.