

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30 p.m., February 18, 2025

Date of Approval: Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on February 18, 2025. The meeting convened at 7:13 pm. Members of the Board in attendance (at the time of the call to order): President, Frances Hoover; Ben Berger; Bill Cumby; Don Delson (via Zoom); Pam Greenblatt; Marilyn Henkelman; Chris Klock; Zach Oberfield; Judy Owen; Alice Turbiville; Judy Wertheimer; Chanel Young and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Grant Gegwich

Public Comments: Members of public present: Mindy Ngyuen, Lisa Wilson.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the December 21, 2024, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees
 - Motion – Judy Owen
 - Second – Chris Klock
 - Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

CCSA Mission Moment - Mindy Nguyen, *Director of Curriculum and Arts Integration*

- Ms. Nguyen provided personal reflection on CCSA's impact:
 - Values K-12 continuity allowing teachers to follow students through graduation
 - Highlights arts integration approach helping students access content through different modalities
 - Appreciates balanced approach between core teaching and data-driven instruction
 - Notes CCSA naturally embraces SEL, arts integration, and equity as core values
 - Emphasizes school's founding principle that all children deserve respect and rigorous curriculum
 - Board can support these efforts through their continued actions, as well as utilizing any political connections to affect policy and change

President's Report, Frances Hoover, *President*

- Board President Transition

- Mr. Delson and Ms. Hoover have been working together on the transfer of knowledge and the transition is going well
- Ms. Hoover thanked Mr. Delson for all his support
- Changes in Meeting Format
 - In preparation for the March Governance Workshop, Bob Clothier provided feedback about how the board operates its meetings:
 - A flipped agenda is the first recommendation, which will entail members reading all reports prior to meetings
 - This format will free up time for strategic and impactful discussions, and not require every committee to provide an in-person update
 - All members will need to commit to come prepared and provide written materials by a deadline
 - It was agreed that all materials would be uploaded to the shared drive by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to a meeting
- Interboro School District Settlement (VOTE)
 - CCSA received an offer from the district for a settlement of \$7,500 for a late payment. It is the recommendation of CCSA's attorney to accept the offer.
 - Motion to accept the settlement offer – Don Delson
 - Second – Zach Oberfield
 - Ayes: 12 Nays: 0 Absent: 1

Mr. Delson left the meeting

School Report, Akosua Watts, *Head of School & CEO*

Enrollment Update

- Current enrollment is strong but continuing to show shift in special education population
- Special education identification continuing to increase beyond budgeted 20%
- Operational impacts:
 - Requires immediate service implementation for new IEPs
 - Creating need for additional push-in supports
 - Affecting salary/professional services budget lines
 - Recent programmatic adaptations include:
 - Implemented co-teaching model in grades with high IEP concentration
 - Redesigned reading intervention program to better match student levels
 - Adding support staff as needed for compliance

Sports Highlights

- Boys' varsity basketball currently competing in first round of a state tournament

- Indoor track wrapping up successful season with many records and personal bests
- Continuing to grow both programs, both have strong, committed coaches
- Continue to hold high expectations for scholar athletes

Strategic Initiatives Progress

- Alumni Engagement:
 - Successful January 11th homecoming event
 - Launched first annual alumni brunch with 30 attendees, planning to make this an annual event
 - Planning additional summer event
- Career Exposure:
 - 10 students visited Bucks County Justice Center
 - Students met with judge, probation officers, public defender, sheriff, and DA
 - This visit was coordinated through the iAM Project, who had the connection to Bucks County
- Community/City Engagement:
 - School joined Lead Free Chester Project
 - Developing school-based initiative for lead testing awareness
 - Project contains funding opportunities for remediation
- Educational Partnerships:
 - Currently hosting 2 student teachers from West Chester
 - Multiple practicum students from Swarthmore are observing
 - Continuing to work towards cultivating pipeline of future educators

Proposed Career Readiness Initiative

- Concept presented for potential expansion and use of floors 2 and 3:
 - Create specialized learning labs
 - Offer certification opportunities
 - Partner with institutions for blended learning approach
 - Focus areas could include culinary arts, media production, and other modalities that would prepare students for immediate gainful employment
 - Program could address growing number of students who want to go directly into the work force
- Board Discussion Points:
 - Concerns about infrastructure scale for only 200 students
 - Suggestion to phase implementation
 - Need to consider resource allocation
 - Potential for external partnerships to reduce costs
 - Project to be considered in upcoming strategic planning process

Committee Reports

Nominating/Governance – Judy Owen, *Committee Chair*

- Governance Workshop
 - Saturday, March 15 from 8:30-2:30 @ Swarthmore College

- Would like 100% board attendance.
- Bob Clothier has already put in a huge amount of work.
- Let Ben know by Saturday March 8 if you will be attending.
- Emeritus Board Member Protocol (VOTE)
 - Ms. Owen provided an overview of the proposal and informed the members that CCSA currently has no protocol for designating emeritus board members.
- Board discussion points:
 - Is emeritus status a lifetime appointment?
 - Who is eligible for emeritus status?
 - What are the privileges granted with emeritus status?
 - It was agreed by all members to postpone the vote and allow the Nom/Gov Committee to further define the process

Strategic Planning – Judy Wertheimer, *Committee Chair*

- Consultant selection (VOTE)
 - Ms. Wertheimer summarized the committee’s recent efforts to hire a consulting firm:
 - Received five proposals total
 - Brought in two firms for in-person presentations and interviews
 - Align Partners emerged as recommended firm for the work
 - Motion to move forward with Align Partners – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 11 Nays: 0 Absent: 2
 - Motion for approval to receive an amendment to the budget of \$50,000 for strategic planning consultant work – Alice Turbiville
 - Second – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 11 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Education Committee – Zach Oberfield, *Committee member*

- Mr. Oberfield summarized the recent work of the ad-hoc Compensation Committee:
 - Understanding the desires of teachers
 - Mapping out possible approaches to pay
 - Committee will distribute an anonymous compensation satisfaction survey to all CCSA staff
 - Goal is to share more in-depth report at the March meeting

Finance Committee - Alice Turbiville, *Committee Chair*

- Cash management discussion:
 - Need to determine minimum cash reserve level
 - Exploring use of excess cash for
 - bond payoff in 2026

- addition of needed classroom space

Board Resolution Action Items

- Immigration Resolution
 - Motion to adopt the Student and Employee Immigration Policy – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 11 Nays: 0 Absent: 2
- Title IX Resolution
 - Motion to reinstate the 2020 Title IX Policy and Procedures – Zach Oberfield
 - Second – Judy Wertheimer
 - Ayes: 11 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Adjournment: The public meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: March 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.