

Charter School for Applied Technologies
317 Vulcan Street, Buffalo, New York 14207
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 11/09/2021

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: In person, Joseph Berti, Michael Keller, John Cinquino, Michael Stevens, Kevin Cornacchio **Via Teleconference:** Lisa Smith, Andrea Pasioka, Ian Donnelly

UNABLE TO ATTEND: Kenneth Robinson, Steven Kottakis, Danielle Salasavage

OTHERS PRESENT: In person: Andrew Lyle, Garrick Loveria, Tanya Moore, Ann Morgante, Brett Lutterbein, Susan Jurewicz, Jared Lincourt, Meghan Mercurio, Nicole Killian **Via Teleconference:** Thomas Sullivan, Anthony Favata, Dara Seeley

MINUTES

Motion to approve the October 12, 2021 Minutes, including permanent committee reports and those submitted under ad hoc committee, made by Mr. Keller, seconded by Mr. Cinquino. Minutes approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

PRESENTATION

None

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Cabinet Report- Mr. Lyle began his report by reviewing issues with staffing. We are doing our best to recruit substitute teachers to CSAT. Our full- time staff are working beyond their limits. They are using their planning time to sub and our specials and intervention staff are doing the same. This is hurting our efforts to assist students who are already behind because of COVID and teachers are not able to effectively plan as teams. It's a national issue; teacher burnout, teachers leaving the field of education and students who are falling behind in grade levels. We are seeing local districts using 1/2 conference days just to give their teachers time to breathe and work together. Ann Morgante will speak more about this in Principal's report.

As concerns to busing; David Frank will be at CSAT the first week of December to see first hand the situation with busing. We hope that he can provide us with some form of relief to help with this. We still have students arriving home after 7pm, which is unacceptable. Mr. Loveria mentioned that we may see a slight improvement now that the training of new drivers is nearly complete. We are seeing more parents pick their children up after school. We need to do our best to keep our parents happy by improving the busing issue.

CSAT is bringing in a consultant who has developed a new professional development opportunity called trust- based observation. His name is Craig Randall. The purpose is to renew and improve trust between administration and teachers. We are starting in the Middle School and if it proves to be helpful, we will expand to the other two buildings. The Union has endorsed this as well.

NY State is focusing efforts on testing. CSAT will be undergoing a mid-year review by the Charter Office in Spring 2022. They will be closing monitoring our academic performance.

Finally, we are unable to re-order our fleece jackets due to supply chain and increase in pricing, so we are looking at a few alternatives (samples were distributed for comment). We will be placing an order in the next few days. We do have enough uniform shirts in stock for the remainder of the school year.

Principals Report

Ms. Morgante is reporting on behalf of all three buildings. A major issue we need to help resolve concerns our faculty. We are seeing a number of people who are simply burned-out and exhausted. As seen in the QA report, we are experiencing a high number of absences among staff. We are using our specials and intervention teachers as subs which is not sustainable. Our students need specials and most importantly, intervention, and that is not happening consistently. Our teachers are also giving up their planning times to sub and coming in on weekends to catch up and plan. We would like the Board to consider approving four ½ days in the second semester to relieve the stress level on our teachers and give them time to properly plan and meet. There were a few points brought up by the Board to consider:

- How much push back will the school receive from parents?
- Do parents understand severity of teacher burn-out?
- Will these days impact our charter?
- What other means can the Board help with besides ½ or full days?

Ms. Morgante and Mr. Lyle did say that this would be burdensome on parents, but perhaps we can look at 2 full days rather than 4 ½ days. We could review our calendar and pair those days with a day already scheduled and make it two days in a row such as after a NYS Testing Day. Niagara Falls is implementing this as are other districts across NYS as well. We need to recognize how much our staff is appreciated. Trust will go a long way is making them feel that Board cares about them.

Ms. Morgante did share a good news item. The first marking period at the High School revealed 39% of student body made the Honor Roll!

Mr. Lyle concluded that this teacher fatigue/shortage could provide an opportunity to expand the use of technology in education. It's an out-of-box idea that would not only address this issue but could make CSAT stand out among schools in our area.

PERMANENT BOARD COMMITTEE

Quality Assurance- Mrs. Pasieka highlighted the discussion that took place at the Nov. 8 QA meeting, which focused on attendance of staff and students.

As mentioned in Mr. Lyle and Ms. Morgante's report, our teachers and staff are under a great deal of stress which has resulted in teachers utilizing their personal days. This in turn increases our costs to cover classes. At the moment, 60% of staff have used 1-3 personal days, with 20% using more than 4 personal days. The most affected areas that suffer are intervention and teacher planning. We are averaging 12-15 teachers out each day. As for student attendance, we are meeting the state goal of 90% attendance, but we are behind on our goal of 95% attendance. We have plans in place to address those with excessive attendance issues.

As for busing, our concerns are with those buses that are arriving after 3:30-4 pm and in a few instances after 5 pm. We have teachers who stay with those students until the buses arrive, which in turn increases our costs to compensate them for their time. Costs for all these issues will continue to rise this year. The plan is to reach out to community agencies to help with attracting subs. CSAT is not alone in dealing with this. As Mr. Lyle mentioned, David Frank is visiting CSAT the first week of December to witness PM dismissal. Mr. Lyle also plans to meet with Cheryl Kennedy, BPS Transportation Director, to discuss busing.

Finance- Mr. Cinquino presented the 3-month interim financial statement for the period ending Sept. 30, 2021. He noted that the audit for the period ending June 30, 2021 is complete and will be presented to the Board at the December meeting.

A few highlights from the financial statement:

- The Balance Sheet shows its ratios and liquidity to be very strong, with Debt Coverage at more than 2X and Days Cash on Hand greater than 300.
- On page 2, the net assets vs. liabilities indicates a better than 1 to 1.
- On page 3, it shows expenses are a bit higher due to ordering at the start of the school year as well as the differences in costs associated with COVID and hybrid learning occurring during the prior year.
- As for revenue, the numbers are higher due to slight increases in Per Pupil allocation.
- The school's investments reflected a rebound in the stock market, which resulted in a very good year for CSAT's portfolio during 2020-2021. The first quarter of 2021-2022 indicates a slight loss, however gains are being realized currently.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Appeals- Mr. Donnelly briefly discussed one appeal. The appeal was from the parent of an 11th grader. The student was involved in two physical altercations. The review was completed, and the permanent suspension was upheld.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome- Mr. Berti welcomed Ms. Nadine Powell, Asst. V.P., M & T Bank Tech Academy to the Board meeting. Ms. Powell is exploring the possibility of joining CSAT's Board.

Enrollment-Mr. Loveria reports that enrollment currently stands at 2361, down 4 from our maximum enrollment. We have made gains in 9th grade.

Personnel-Mr. Lyle reviewed the personnel report. We have several new hires, including a new Athletic Director and a new nurse for the high school. We have been able to recruit new substitutes as well as cleaners and monitors for the buildings. Other than that, the report is self-explanatory.

A motion to accept the Enrollment and Personnel report made by Mr. Donnelly, seconded by Mr. Cinquino. Motion approved.

A motion to adjourn to Executive Session @5:45pm was made by Mr. Keller, seconded by Mr. Stevens. Motion approved. No action requiring Board vote arose. A motion to adjourn the regular meeting was made at 7:30pm by Mrs. Pasioka, seconded by Mr. Keller. Motion approved

Next Meeting: December 14, 2021 @ 4:30pm