

**Charter School for Applied Technologies  
2303 Kenmore Avenue, Buffalo NY 14207**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING 10/10/17**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** David Quackenbush, Karen Kelley, Andrea Pasioka, Lisa Smith, John Cinquino, Ian Donnelly, Danielle Salasavage, Michael Keller, Robert Mikulec, Joseph Berti.

**Others Present:** Efrain Martinez, Garrick Loveria, Bob Shannon, Nadine Williamson, Sue Jurewicz, Andy Lyle, Fred Carstens, Ann Morgante, Tralina Middlebrooks, Tanya Moore, Tracey Simchick, Adam Brignone (Fine Arts Director), Nick Paterson (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher)

**MINUTES**

Motion to approve the September 12, 2017 Minutes including permanent committee reports and those submitted under ad hoc committee by Mrs. Kelley, seconded by Mr. Keller. Minutes approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Fine Arts Director, Adam Brignone, discussed the student photography hanging on the walls outside the Board meeting room and how the burgeoning student artists who produced them are involved in a local contest. Additionally, Brignone mentioned an upcoming MS Chorus Pancake Breakfast that will be held at Saia Hall as a fundraiser for future Chorus fieldtrips. Lastly, Brignone mentioned that future musical performances will no longer be held at Cardinal O’Hara. Instead of paying to utilize an out-of-district venue for concerts, CSAT will now be holding future performances the middle school gym.
- Sixth Grade Social Studies Teacher, Nick Paterson requested that the Board consider his concern for the fairly recent trend of CSAT losing teaching staff, at least in the K-8 grades, to other districts. Paterson postulated that some of the reason that CSAT may be experiencing increased teacher turnover could be linked not only to local shortage of teaching candidates but also to the overwhelming daily stress that our teachers are exposed to. Paterson believes teachers are exhausted on a daily basis and that he felt the Board should reach out to the staff via survey to determine if this was indeed the case.

**FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S)**

- None

## **PRESENTATION**

- None

## **PERMANENT BOARD COMMITTEES**

- **Quality Assurance** – Ms. Smith recounted the discussion at the last Quality Assurance committee meeting that revolved around the topic of last year’s grade 3-8 NYS Assessment results. Initially, Smith thanked both Mrs. Williamson and Mrs. Cebulski for disaggregating the detailed reports necessary begin the analysis. Smith began by stating that overall the data results looked positive, as the school beat the state averages for growth in almost all grades. During the prior year the QA committee arbitrarily chose a cumulative average target growth goal of eight (8%) percent for all six grades, to which the school achieved an average of five (5%) percent. While the school did not meet this goal Smith also pointed out that the figure was not based on any prior benchmark. When creating district goals, the main focus is upon perpetuating the school’s charter and ensuring that these growth measures are the first to be met. Martinez added that growth targets are difficult to predict as they are comparative measures based on average state performance which is not known by the public until state scores are released the year following the assessment. Mrs. Kelley inquired as to any additional testing changes to this coming year’s examinations to which Mrs. Williamson answered that the actual length of the tests is slated to be decreased from three down to two days. Additionally, the state is also pushing for schools to adopt an online testing procedure which is also accompanied by its own set of challenges. Student participation rates for CSAT remain high, especially in comparison to some other districts throughout the area. Lastly, the committee discussed the challenge that CSAT is encountering across all grade-levels in hiring the most qualified teacher staff and how the district might develop internal incentives to offset these difficulties. The next QA meeting is scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **AD HOC BOARD COMMITTEES**

- **Facilities** – Mr. Keller gave an update on the status of the high school construction project which as of September 25<sup>th</sup> the first-floor expansion was opened up to staff and students. The second-floor is scheduled to be opened for business on October 16<sup>th</sup> though the school is still in the process of seeking a variance from the town on the parking lot issue. Concerning the budget, the

Facilities committee is forecasting to be slightly under budget including the contingency budget. Bob Shannon provided a few photographs of both the finished and current construction.

- **PAC** – None
- **Appeals** – Mrs. Kelley stated that there has been a total of four appeals since the beginning of the year, one requiring a subsequent hearing and was resolved. Another case where the original hearing recommendation has been upheld and it related to fighting. There are two cases outstanding that the committee is currently considering.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Policy Approval** – Director of Student Services, Garrick Loveria, recalled the previous month’s Board meeting in which he distributed a heavily revised Student Code of Conduct for the Board to consider adopting. Many of the proposed revisions were attributable to procedural suggestions put forth by the school’s legal counsel to ensure that there were no gaps in school’s disciplinary process as it relates to student due process rights. There were also several suggestions relating to notifications that were incorporated at the behest of NYSED Charter School Office. Loveria reviewed two last minute additions that he distributed between meetings via email; the first relating to a minor change in footwear in grades 6-12 and the other addition was the complete grades 9-12 electronics policy as an appendix to the code.
  - The Board discussed the code of conduct as a whole, mentioning that many of the changes were necessary and therefore not debatable however Mr. Berti voiced concern that some of the policies, specifically dress code, had been effectively altered and implemented in the school without Board approval and that this vote for approval of existing practice was essentially to bring policy into alignment with current practice. This process runs contradictory to the methodology that the Board should be following in which policy drives practice. Superintendent Martinez did acknowledge that in this specific case, the process was unfortunately inverted but not through deliberate insubordination on the part of the administration but rather by mistake. Chairman Quackenbush decided to move the issue forward by suggesting that the Career Readiness committee investigate the role that dress code plays in impacting our mission as it relates to both student performance and career readiness. The committee will report back its findings to the Board for a specific vote at that time. Motion to approve the proposed CSAT Student Code of Conduct excluding the proposed language as it relates to dress code by Mrs. Smith, second by Mrs. Kelley. Code of Conduct approved.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Enrollment** – Mr. Martinez reviewed the enrollment report on page nine (9) which illustrates that the current enrollment of school stands at 2185 students.
- **Personnel Report** – Mr. Martinez reviewed the personnel report on pages ten and eleven (10-11) of the packet which includes the separations from night-time cleaners. Martinez also stated that there were also two resignations in the middle school, a Science and a Music teacher. Martinez went on to discuss how the middle school is still actively recruiting for a Math teacher and noted that recruiting qualified teaching candidates has become increasingly difficult and therefore he and Human Resource have been planning how to address this deficit by possibly instituting an incentive program. Martinez will report back more details of the plan once the ideas are vetted and a clear proposal developed. Lastly, is the list of current and impending leaves of absence under DBL/FMLA. Motion to approve the personnel report by Mr. Berti, second by Mr. Keller. Report approved.
- **Resolutions** – Mr. Martinez requested the Board vote to execute the previously discussed and vetted Sale-Lease-Back proposal for the middle school facility. Motion to approve the action by Mrs. Kelley, second by Mr. Cinquino. Approved.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

- Martinez announced that NYSED has awarded CSAT an honor for its hiring of persons with disabilities in its food preparation department.
- The WNY STEM Hub award has also been bestowed on the high school the ranking of Emerging STEM Excellence School.
- The Charter School for Applied Technologies Teachers Association has agreed to a memorandum of understanding that will permit staff titled as Dean of Students to conduct classroom observations.
- The Charter School for Applied Technologies Teachers Association has agreed to a memorandum of understanding for delaying reviewing and determining the way student achievement component of the evaluation will be asses to November 1 as to give enough time to incorporate iReady<sup>®</sup> measures is appropriate. This would prevent unnecessary testing.

- Martinez informed the Board of an altercation that transpired recently between several of our students and the employees of a local gas station following dismissal. Since the time of this incident the administration has taken disciplinary measures.
- K-8 transportation issues continue to plague the school and have raised serious concerns over the extent to which our legal agreement with BPS regarding transportation is being executed. Martinez elaborated on three reasons cited by the subcontracted transportation company, First Student, for their inconsistent transportation service to this point.
- **Online Teaching and Learning** – pushed to a future meeting
- Lastly Martinez discussed the recruitment and retention of teachers by citing that early anecdotal reports from the middle school have been quite positive to this point in comparison to the previous years. Students are arriving early to breakfast in the classroom at the K-5 might be taxing the teacher staff as Paterson alluded to in his statement. Martinez also mentioned the possible value of psychological paychecks as one strategy to pay back staff for their robust efforts. In terms of recruitment, Martinez proposed a new strategy of traveling to areas in which there are surpluses of teachers or new college graduates in order to recruit.

### **AGENDA SETTING**

- **Next meeting November 14 at 4:30 p.m., Family Support Center**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

- Motion to adjourn the regular Board meeting at 6:35 p.m. by Mr. Mikulec, seconded by Mr. Keller.  
Meeting adjourned.