

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

7:00 p.m., September 17, 2024

Date of Approval: Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public Board Meeting in Chester, PA on September 17, 2024. The meeting convened at 7:00 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: Mr. Delson welcomed Domi Waldron, Executive Director of the CCSA Foundation.

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of the June 18 and August 20, 2024, meetings of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees
  - Motion – Judy Owen
  - Second – Judy Wertheimer
  - Ayes: 12    Nays: 0    Absent: 2

President's Report, Don Delson (President)

- Status of Board Presidency
  - Mr. Delson announced his retirement from the CCSA Board, effective January 1, 2025. The presidency position is open for nominations.
- Charter Renewal
  - Our charter has been approved but we are waiting on a signature from the secretary of the public-school board, who is currently ill. Our attorney is on top of this issue.
  - The CUSD district filed an amended district plan with the commonwealth court to get out of receivership.
  - It appears the district wants to negotiate an extension of the settlement agreement with CCSA. We authorized our lawyer to file a simple statement with the judge expressing hope we are not bound in any way by this amended financial recovery plan and that we do not have any interest in this extended settlement agreement.
- There was a brief discussion, which covered the following points:

- o Not having the charter signed and the proposed district financial plan are not linked, but while we do not have a signed renewal, the receiver has some leverage over us.
- o Charter schools are typically not allowed to accept rates lower than in the statute, but in an extraordinary case like in CUSD, the judge can rule on lower rates. We were forced into the settlement agreement by the judge at the time.
- o Our charter status is not at risk as it doesn't expire until November 20, 2024, and we expect to have the new charter signed by then.
- Executive Committee/Head of School Evaluation
  - o Michele Portefield met with Ms. Watts and reviewed the results of the staff survey.
  - o The Executive Committee will meet with Ms. Watts on September 18 to go over all results. Mr. Delson will provide a full report during the Executive Session at the November meeting.

CCSA Foundation Update, Domi Waldron, Executive Director

- Ms. Waldron provided a summary of the Foundation's current plans:
  - o Will be pursuing more EITC funding.
  - o Planned Giving will be a major focus.
  - o Working towards developing a more robust Donor Recognition Program.
  - o Madison Beebe has begun her role as a Development Officer and there are plans to hire a part-time administrative support person.
  - o There was a brief discussion regarding developing new sponsorship relationships. Mr. Delson recommended approaching Kevin McKenna again.

Committee Reports

Nominating and Governance, Judy Owen (Chair, Nom/Gov Committee)

- Process for Board Selection (VOTE)
  - o Ms. Owen provided an overview the final of draft of the Protocol for Selection of Board Officers.
    - Motion – Alice Turbiville
    - Second – Bill Cumby
      - Ayes: 12    Nays: 0    Absent: 2
  - o The process for the rest of this year will be collecting nominations, including self-nominations, by the November meeting. Normally this occurs in May and June, however this year it is different. The next vote will take place in May, so that we can get back on track.
- Board Orientation
  - o Board Handbooks are completed, both in digital and hard copy form.
  - o New members are encouraged to seek out mentorship and can reach out to the Nom/Gov Committee for assistance.

- o The governance workshop will be rescheduled for March 2025. The three potential dates are March 1, 8, and 15, which are all Saturdays. Please let Nom/Gov know of any conflicts.

#### Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville (Chair, Finance Committee)

##### August Financials

- Balance Sheet (as of August 31, 2024)
  - o Current Assets decreased by \$807K since June 30, primarily due to a \$1.2M drop in cash and a \$379K decrease in federal receivables, offset by an \$808K rise in district receivables. Cash on hand is \$9M (229 days).
  - o Current Liabilities, including Accounts Payable (\$120K) and Accrued Payroll (\$24K), are following normal cycles.
  - o Committed Fund Balance stands at \$7.8M, with an Unrestricted Fund Balance of \$1.46M. Net Income is a \$161K surplus.
  - o Key metrics: Current Ratio (68.1), Equity (\$12M), and Debt Service Coverage Ratio (1.12).
- Budget vs. Actual (through 2 months)
  - o YTD Revenues are \$1.82M, \$18K below budget, with \$98K from federal grants and \$87K earned in interest.
  - o COVID-19 relief funds (ARP ESSER) were fully allocated by June 30, 2024, with \$14K of learning loss funds recorded in Q1 FY25.
  - o YTD Expenditures are \$1.65M, \$137K below budget, with notable variances in Professional Services (+\$33K), Other Purchased Services (+\$26K), and Supplies (+\$34K).
  - o Operating Surplus: \$161K.

#### School Report, Akosua Watts (Head of School & CEO)

- Enrollment Update
  - o We are fully enrolled with 111 new students. Besides Kindergarten, tenth grade received the highest number of new students. There was a lot of movement this year in ninth and tenth grades. We are working to analyze and understand this and respond programmatically to make high school stronger as well as retain students.
- Current School Highlights
  - o iAM Career Assist Summer Program - 23 students participated for 6 days of onsite work-related experience at the Union headquarters. All students received \$750 scholarships, as well as a MacBook Air as gifts for successful completion of the program. This is our second year participating in this program.
  - o LSA (Language Services Associates) Two students participated in virtual summer internships. The internships were unpaid, but students did such a good job they received a stipend.
  - o Back to School Night (Grades 5-12) was held on September 11, with 44 families present.

- o Eagle Mobile Eye Exam powered by Vision to Learn will be performing free eye exams to all students who need services.
- o Senior Jacques Mason, who plays soccer for Chester High School, was scouted by the Union Academy team. He is hoping to be a professional soccer player
- o High School Culture & Climate – things are going smoothly so far this year. Leadership is great and the culture seems to be shifting positively.
- o College & Career Readiness (CCR) – all high school students take this course. The Senior CCR Class has plans so far to visit Immaculata, Thaddeus Stevens, DCCC, Widener, Penn State, and Cheyney. They will also be attending college fairs, including an HBCU fair. Most of this senior class want to apply to four-year schools.
- o Strategy Planning: Begun work with leadership to consider future program/facility development, particularly considerations at the high school level.
- Upcoming Events
  - o Wed., Sept. 18 at 3:45pm / MS Girls' VBall HOME v. Collegium Charter
  - o Wed., Sept. 18 from 5:00pm - 6:30pm / Back to School Night (Gr. K-4)
  - o Thurs., Sept. 19 at 3:45pm / Girls' VBall HOME v. Faith Christian
  - o Mon., Sept. 23 at 3:45pm / MS Girls' VBall HOME v. Renaissance Academy

There was a brief discussion covering the following points:

- The transportation and bus situation are going smoothly so far. We are working with the same vendors from last year and had been in touch with ahead of time to avoid issues.
- Our College and Career Counselor, Kathleen Carpenter worked with students all last spring navigating the new FAFSA. She has also made herself available to alumni who have decided to apply to school after working.
- The joint board get together will occur in October, with the date TBD. Typically, this meeting provides in depth analysis of the PSSAs. All members agreed there is room for a more diversified agenda and Ms. Watts will suggest topics to both board presidents prior to the get together.

Adjournment: The public meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Date of Next Scheduled Public Board Meeting: November 19 at 7:00 p.m.