

Call to Order: The Board of Trustees for the Chester Charter Scholars Academy held a public

CHESTER CHARTER SCHOLARS ACADEMY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

6:30 p.m., September 16, 2025

Date of Approval: Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Board Meeting on September 16, 2025. The meeting convened at 6:30 pm with Executive Session to follow to discuss personnel and litigation matters. Members of the Board in attendance (at the time of the call to order): President Francis Hoover, Ben Berger, Grant Gegwich, Pam Greenblatt, Marilyn Henkelman, Chris Klock, Judy Owen, Alice Turbiville, Judy Wertheimer, Chanel Young. Also in attendance were Don Delson (Member Emeritus), and Head of School/CEO Akosua Watts. Absent: Bill Cumby, Zach Oberfield

Members of public present: Tara Park, Strategic & Special Projects Manager, CCSA

Approval of Minutes

- The Board reviewed and adopted the minutes of August 19, 2025, meeting of the Chester Charter Scholars Academy Board of Trustees
 - Motion – Judy Wertheimer
 - Second – Judy Owen
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Mission Moment: Tara Park, Strategic & Special Projects Manager

- Started teaching career at Chester Charter School
 - School closed after 2 years when charter wasn't renewed
- Worked at K12 virtual charter school for 10 years
- Joined CCSA as middle school English/Social Studies teacher
 - Progressed to Director of Middle School
 - Currently Strategic & Special Projects Manager
- Current responsibilities:
 - Hiring and recruiting oversight
 - Assessment management
 - College and career readiness programming, including partnership with Delaware County Community College (DCCC)
 - Partnership development
 - IT support and teacher training

There was a brief discussion regarding the status of the dual enrollment program and relationship with DCCC:

- Teacher Education Program currently serves 2 seniors
 - Students transported daily to DCCC campus
 - Take college courses 2-3 days per week

- Graduate with 38 college credits toward education degree
- Program challenges:
 - Students must pass Accuplacer assessment as 10th graders
 - Some qualified candidates failed math/reading requirements
 - Only 2 students currently enrolled despite outreach efforts
 - No juniors joined this year despite presentations
- Working on redesigning dual enrollment model:
 - Training CCSA teachers as DCCC adjunct professors
 - Offering DCCC courses on campus within school schedule
 - Exploring more virtual options to reduce transportation time
 - Messaging to parents and families on importance and value of program

President's Report, Frances Hoover, President

- Board meeting format change: Starting with public session to avoid dead time if there are no executive session agenda items
- October 21 joint meeting planned with Foundation Board:
 - Review PSSA results in detail
 - Foundation to present development/fundraising plan

School Report, Akosua Watts, Head of School & CEO

- Enrollment Update
 - Current enrollment – 712 students
 - Enrolled heavy at year start to account for mid-year departures
 - Lost several students to out-of-state moves after school began
- Attendance Update
 - Daily/weekly data tracking shared with parents
 - Average 100 students arriving late daily (after 8:00 AM)
 - Leadership greeting late arrivals to address parent drop-off issues
 - Working to change family mindset about importance of punctuality
- Transportation Update
 - CUSD buses arriving 1-30+ minutes late daily, creating domino effect
 - Parents forced to switch to personal transportation unexpectedly
 - Students arriving behind schedule
 - Routes poorly optimized due to last-minute planning
 - Sharing buses with other schools in tiered system
 - Meeting held with transportation director to redesign routes
- School Events
 - Updated list shared in drive
 - Back to School Night (K-4) on September 17 is a great opportunity for board members to experience school life
- PSSA Test Results & Assessment Changes
 - Math performance exceeded goal: 19% proficient/advanced (target was 15%)
 - Four years implementing Envision 2.0 curriculum
 - Math intervention program showing results
 - ELA performance declined: moved backwards 1 point from 35% goal

- Science scores unavailable due to major assessment overhaul
 - Transitioned to Next Generation Science standards
 - Changed from 4th to 5th grade testing
 - Paper/pencil to online-only format
 - State only provided percentiles, no proficiency breakdowns
- Transitioning to all online assessments this year (state requirement)
- Curriculum evaluation underway to determine if staying with Envision
- Comprehensive Staffing Plan
 - Many daily operations now delegated
 - New high school director creating significant capacity relief
 - Key considerations for additional leadership role:
 - Create capacity-driven job description based on current needs
 - Review internal talent (two new teachers with principal experience)
 - Timeline for hiring to align with spring budget cycle
 - Potential focus areas identified:
 - Student support services expansion
 - Director of student support overseeing special ed and interventions
 - Position could be Assistant Head of School or similar high-level role
 - Hiring timeline: April-May interviews for natural education field transitions
- Human Resources Framework
 - School Operations Coordinator handles:
 - Initial onboarding and benefits enrollment
 - First point of contact for staff
 - Benefits provider liaison
 - Leadership team and mentors provide:
 - New staff preparation and training
 - Continuous guidance through directors
 - Instructional coaching provided by Shannon D'Amico (math) and Lindsay Kern (ELA)
 - Evaluation conducted by appropriate directors
 - Two-person protocol for all termination conversations
 - Grievance process includes external pathway through school operations coordinator to board president for CEO-related issues
 - Legal counsel (Joshua Pollock, McKenna Schneider) reviews handbook and policy changes (Mrs. Watts will place current copy of the staff handbook in the board drive)

Committee Reports

Nom/Gov Committee, Judy Owen, Committee Chair

- Committee charter approvals:
 - Finance
 - Nom/Gov
 - Facilities & Safety

- Risk Management
- New Audit Committee and charter

Ms. Hoover called for a motion to approve the new committee charters:

- Motion – Grant Gegwich
- Second – Ben Berger
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Ms. Hoover called for a motion to approve the new audit committee and its charter (members TBD):

- Motion – Grant Gegwich
- Second – Alice Turbiville
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

- Board Evaluation Survey
 - Survey summary is in the board drive
- Board Composition
 - Maximum to increase from 15 to 16 members
 - Parent representation to increase from 1 to 2 members
 - Changes require amendment to by-laws

Ms. Hoover called for a motion to amend the by-laws to reflect maximum membership to 16:

- Motion – Ben Berger
- Second – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

Ms. Hoover called for a motion to amend the by-laws to reflect minimum parent membership to 2:

- Motion – Marilyn Henkelman
- Second – Grant Gegwich
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

- Nominations
 - Actively seeking to add members with following expertise
 - Finance
 - Medical field
 - Law
 - Communications
 - High School education experience

There was a brief discussion regarding the inclusion of CCSA alumni member(s) to the board:

- Consensus is minimum 4 years post-graduation
- Two-years at post-secondary educational institute a desired requirement
- No mandatory requirement if suitable candidate unavailable

- Alternative: advisory role or education committee participation first
- Pipeline identification needed – potentially work with CCSA Foundation on alumni network
- Nom/Gov Committee will discuss these points further at their next meeting

Finance Committee, Alice Turbiville, Committee Chair

- Budget Revisions
 - Special education reimbursement rate decrease: \$243,000 loss
 - Leadership stipends addition: \$34,500 increase to compensation budget
 - Reduction in health premiums
 - \$250,000 strategic planning reserve established
 - Funds available for consulting or one-time initiatives
 - Could support permanent capacity additions
 - Resulting net budget impact: \$168,000
- Change in Fund Balance
 - Budgeted surplus remains strong: \$1.666 million

Ms. Hoover called for a motion to approve the budget revisions:

- Motion – Alice Turbiville
- Second – Marilyn Henkelman
 - Ayes: 10 Nays: 0 Absent: 2

- Budget Impasse
 - August reimbursement still unpaid by district; filing monthly redirections with state
 - Cash position provides buffer during state budget impasse
 - Board consensus regarding continuing to file for redirection on a month-to-month basis

Strategic Planning Committee, Judy Wertheimer, Committee Chair

- Strategic Plan Review
 - Four quarterly dates determined: September 16, 2025, December 16, 2025, March 17 2026, and June 16 2026.

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

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