



Charter School of Inquiry (CSI)

Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2018

1. **Call to Order.** The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Charter School of Inquiry (the “School”) was called to order by Helene Kramer, the presiding officer, on February 6, 2018 at 4:55 pm at the Charter School of Inquiry, 404 Edison Street, Buffalo, New York 14215.

Trustees Present: Peter Dow, Betty Evans, Helene Kramer, Patrick Miner, Melissa Stadler

Trustees Excused: Pamela Nicastro, Jackie Roberson, Jr., Deborah Porter, Morgan Williams-Bryant

CSI Staff: Robert Fetter, Head of School

Board Attorney: Steven Polowitz

Prospective New Trustee: Stephanie Adams

2. Proof of Public Notice

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Law, Helene Kramer shared a notarized affidavit listing the places where the Notice of Meeting held on February 6 were posted and a list of media outlets who were asked to publicize the meeting on their community calendars, in their print notices or broadcasts. This notarized affidavit will be kept on file.

3. Approve Minutes

- a. Regular Business Meeting, January 9, 2018. A motion to approve minutes was made by Melissa Stadler, seconded by Patrick Miner and approved unanimously by the Board.
- b. Special Meeting – January 24, 2018. A motion to approve minutes was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Betty Evans and approved unanimously by the Board.

4. Announcements / Updates

- a. Daemen College Press Release. Mr. Fetter shared a press release announcing the partnership between the College and CSI. He reported that this collaboration will offer learning experiences for Daemen’s teacher candidates, and will give CSI access to Daemen faculty’s classroom practices and innovative techniques.

- b. NYSED – CSO Site Visit. Mr. Fetter reviewed the purpose of the NYSED Charter School Office mid-term site visit on February 15 and 16. He presented an overview of their protocol and expected activities, including classroom observation and focus groups with the leadership team, teachers and the Board of Trustees. The board focus group is scheduled Friday, February 16 at 9:00 am.

5. Parent Association – Jackie Roberson, Jr., President – no report

6. Instruction/School Operations Report - Robert Fetter, Head of School

- a. Dashboard Reports. Reviewed highlights of the dashboard reports, with focus on student attendance, special education, and status of the student behavior plan.
- b. ELA and Math-Mid-year Assessment. Reviewed results of the mid-year AIMSweb assessment for all grades. Presented a comprehensive plan for preparing children for the the May NYS assessments. The plan includes strategies for a stronger alignment between curriculum and assessment, implementation of a new writing program (Step Up to Writing), teaching children test-taking strategies, onboarding new staff. Local assessments identify children in Tiers 1, 2 or 3 and instruction is individualized based on the children’s needs for remediation. Skills charts for Kindergarten and 1st Grade were distributed to parents; student goals and supporting strategies were included. Mr. Fetter is also working with Just for Kids, CSI’s extended day program provider, to align their tutoring program with children who need extra help.
- c. School Safety Plan. An update on the status of the school safety plan was reviewed. Outstanding items are partnering with another charter school to provide multi-hazard training, and arranging meeting with officials from Faith Bible Tabernacle, across the street from the school, to share plan and coordinate evacuation procedures.
- d. Other Issues. None.

7. Financial/Audit Committee Report – Patrick Miner, Board Treasurer

- a. Financial Statement for period ending December 31, 2017. Mr. Miner reviewed the financial statements, including a newly-developed fiscal dashboard. He explained unfavorable line-item variances, reported that net assets had increased, and that our current ratio is favorable. Overall, the financials are solid. Upcoming expenses include increases in salaries for instructional staff, and the establishment of a \$50,000 Capital Reserve Fund (discussed below). The Finance Committee is working on securing a Line of Credit.
- b. Long-term Financial Planning Sub-Committee, including facility planning. Tabled.
- c. Capital Reserve Fund Policy. Mr. Miner informed the Board that, while routine maintenance and repairs are funded through a line item in the operating budget, the capital reserve fund is being established to fund major items such as unexpected repairs (above \$10,000), to replace building systems that have exceeded their useful life, or for renovations to the School building, or purchasing the existing building or a new

building. He also discussed the formula for funding the reserve fund, the procedure for authorizing use of the funds, planning for replenishment and reporting and monitoring the use of the funds. There were some questions and discussion. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to approve the policy. Peter Dow moved, Betty Evans seconded and the board voted unanimously to approve the policy.

- d. Board Resolution to Create Capital Reserve Fund. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to approve the resolution. Betty Evans moved, Melissa Stadler seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously by the trustees.

8. Human Resources / Personnel Committee – Pamela Nicaastro, Chair

- a. New Hires. Motion to approve 3 new hires included in the budget – two Response to Intervention Specialists, and a 3rd grade classroom teacher – was made by Melissa Stadler, seconded by Patrick Miner and approved unanimously by the trustees.
- b. NYSUT Union Negotiations. Ms. Kramer shared results of the last negotiations meeting on January 29. Unfortunately, after many hours and multiple meetings, the Union and the CSI team could not come to agreement on salaries. CSI's labor attorney, Emina Poricanin, declared an impasse. NYSUT subsequently filed a charge against CSI with the National Labor Relations Board. Ms. Poricanin will submit a written response to the NLRB and will inform the board about further developments. Our commitment is to continue bargaining in good faith on salaries and all other open issues. In the meantime, we are permitted to use our last best offer to the CSI union to increase the base pay for union members. A letter to that effect was distributed to union members on February 6, announcing the increases in base pay were only for 2017-18 retroactive to the beginning of the school year, or if hired later in the school year, to date of hire.
- c. Confidential Legal Issue (Executive Session)

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Ms. Kramer requested a motion to go into executive session to discuss a confidential legal matter. Patrick Miner moved, Melissa Stadler seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to go into executive session at 7:25 pm.

A motion to end executive session was made by Patrick Miner, seconded by Betty Evans and approved by the Board unanimously at 7:40 pm.

Ms. Kramer announced in Open Session that the Board discussed a confidential legal matter.

- d. Contract - APA Solutions for Professional Development with Head of School. A motion to approve a continuation professional development (coaching/mentoring) proposal from APA Solutions was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Melissa Stadler and approved unanimously by the trustees.

9. New Business

- a. Revised Attendance Policy (Resolution #2018-020618-9a). A revised attendance policy was presented to the Board. The original attendance policy was approved on August 18, 2015. The revised policy reflects the addition of an attendance monitoring team, including the newly-created position of Student Support Coordinator, analysis of attendance data, earlier intervention strategies, and elimination of attendance incentives because they are not consistent with Responsive Classroom. A motion to approve the revised attendance policy was made by Patrick Miner, seconded by Pamela Nicastro and approved unanimously by the trustees.

10. Old Business

- a. Strategic Planning Implementation – Status. Ms. Kramer reported that a Student Recruitment plan was developed and is being implemented. The Curriculum Committee was expanded to include Peter Dow and Helene Kramer from the CSI Board; Sam Alessi, retired Director of Curriculum for Buffalo Public Schools; Joanne Sadler, an expert in African and African-American History; David Hartney, Executive Director of First Hand Learning, and CSI teachers and teaching assistants.

11. Next meeting(s):

- a. Regular monthly business meeting – Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 4:45 pm

12. Adjournment:

- a. Motion to adjourn the monthly board meeting made by Melissa Stadler, seconded by Betty Evans and approved unanimously by trustees at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:



Helene H. Kramer, Chair

3/6/2018 Date

DEBORAH PORTER, SECRETARY