



Charter School of Inquiry (CSI)

Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

February 7, 2017

- 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 Peter Dow, the presiding officer, on **February 7, 2017 at 4:51 pm** at the Charter School of Inquiry, 404 Edison Street, Buffalo, New York 14215.

Trustees present: Helene Kramer (via Skype), Peter Dow, Betty Evans, Melissa Stadler, Jackie Roberson, Jr.

Prospective Trustees present: Patrick Miner, Pamela Nicastro, Chuck Woelfel

Excused: Deborah Porter

Absent: Luke Collard

CSI Staff: Robert Fetter, Head of School

- 2. Proof of Public Notice**

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Law, Peter Dow shared a notarized affidavit listing the places where the Notice of Meeting for **February 7, 2017** were posted and a list of media outlets asked to publicize the meeting on their community calendars or in their print notices. This notarized affidavit will be kept on file.

- 3. Approve Minutes**

A motion to approve minutes of the **January 10, 2017** regular monthly business meeting was made by Betty Evans, seconded by Melissa Stadler and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- 4. Announcements / Updates**

- Mr. Fetter informed us that there will be a multimedia performance of African American history and culture for parents on March 8, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. The performances will highlight the talents of CSI children in music, dance, drumming, visual art, and spoken art.
- Open Houses are tentatively scheduled for February 22nd and March 16th. Mr. Fetter or Ms. Kramer will send out an email to the Board confirming the dates and times.

5. Instruction / School Operations Report – Robert Fetter, Head of School

- a. Current Student Enrollment. Current enrollment is 149 students. Two additional students started Monday. Starting to get requests for 2017-18 school year.
- b. Student Recruitment. Chuck Woelfel, prospective board member with marketing/market research/evaluation expertise, shared preliminary findings of a focus group he held with 7 CSI parents on Wednesday, February 1. The purpose was to determine the factors that motivated parents to choose CSI as the school of choice for their children. He reported:
 - Inquiry and the extended day program were found to be the biggest motivators. Inquiry - have to be clear about what inquiry means, i.e., active, involved children who get hands-on experiences. Extended day demonstrates that CSI understands the needs of parents. Board discussed the importance of the infusion of African and African-American history and culture as a motivator. Discussion followed.
 - Parents in the focus groups were satisfied with CSI because CSI “is what they said they would be.” CSI has delivered to their expectations and they are happy they came here.
 - The importance of word of mouth and trust were discussed.
 - Testimonials on Facebook and the CSI website would be helpful recruiting tools, with a diversity of opinions to show negatives and positives for credibility.
 - A PR/Social Media strategy will be developed through Charlie Clark, who does direct media/marketing. First wave will be emails/direct mail targeting in the district and second wave will be in person visits.
 - Town Meetings are important as venues where the CSI Board and/or staff are available to talk directly and in person with prospective parents.
- c. Academics.
 - i. Results of literacy and math assessments. Mr. Fetter reported that he received the data on Friday and has not been able to analyze them yet. Will table until March meeting.
 - ii. African & African-American History and Culture Curriculum.
 - o Teachers have been preparing material for Black History Month, as well as working on the upcoming multicultural event planned for March 8.
 - o Working with Joanne Sadler from Daemen College to identify a set of books focusing on African and African American people and topics for teachers to use as resources in classrooms.
 - iii. Inquiry Implementation. The Inquiry Institute for teacher professional development was held on Saturday. Two teachers attended. Mr. Fetter is hoping to encourage more teachers to attend in the March session.

- d. Classroom Management. Mr. Fetter reported that proposed revisions to the progressive discipline policy are nearing completion. The Student Support Team (SST) is reviewing feedback from Dr. Andy Steck, CSI's Responsive Classroom (RC) trainer to determine how to better align the policy with the RC model.
- e. Absenteeism/Suspensions. Mr. Fetter said that data is not accurate because it includes some students attending a different school. Mr. Fetter will email Ms. Kramer about this and she will get the information to the Board.
- f. Staffing. Mr. Fetter reported that he is recruiting two new Teaching Assistants. He is conducting interviews.
- g. Contracts. None.
- h. Policies: Extended Day Program. The Parent Association reviewed the policy. Mr. Fetter and Mr. Roberson made revisions based on parent input. The policy will be discussed during the New Business section of the agenda.
- i. Other Issues. None.

6. Parent Association (PA) Report – Jackie Roberson, Jr., President

Mr. Roberson reported that the Parent Association met on January 19 with 8-10 parents in attendance. They discussed the Extended Day policy. They also discussed (a) the possibility of bringing gym clothing for physical education classes because many students are damaging their clothing due to not being able to change for gym; (b) adding a second language (Spanish, Swahili) to the school's curriculum; (c) cursive writing being implemented at CSI because it is not taught at Buffalo Public Schools and they are afraid the children will not know how to sign their names; (d) possibility of CSI implementing a Student Council; (e) the possibility of a Science Fair in March. Mr. Roberson will revisit these issues to see if the Parent Association is interested enough to bring a formal proposal to the Board.

Ms. Kramer asked if the Parent Association discussed adding 7th and 8th grades to the school charter. Mr. Roberson reported that parents wanted more details.

Mr. Roberson reported that Aisha Oliver was elected Treasurer of the Parent Association.

7. Personnel Committee Report –Robert Fetter Reporting

a. New Hires. This topic was discussed in Executive Session as noted below.

b. NYSUT Negotiations Status. Last meeting was cancelled. Nothing to report.

Motion for Executive Session. Mr. Dow asked for a motion to go into Executive Session with both voting trustees and prospective trustees to discuss a new hire. Melissa Stadler moved, Helene Kramer seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees.

Motion to Adjourn Executive Session. A motion to adjourn Executive Session was made by Betty Evans, seconded by Melissa Stadler and approved unanimously by the trustees.

Executive Session Report: Mr. Dow reported that the board discussed one new hire, a Response to Intervention Specialist, and asked for a motion to approve the new hire. Helene Kramer moved, Melissa Stadler seconded and the board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

8. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Luke Collard, Chair & Treasurer (Helene Kramer and Peter Dow acting on behalf).

- a. Financial Statements, period ending December 31, 2016. Reports were reviewed. Mr. Miner stated the statements look “solid” and discussed favorable vs. unfavorable variances. Motion to accept the December 31, 2016 Financial Statements was made by Mr. Roberson, second by Ms. Evans and the Board unanimously approved.
- b. State Controllers Audit. Ms. Kramer reported that the State auditors were no longer at the school; they are working at Kirisits & Associates and will be conferencing the case with Mr. Fetter on Thursday to let us know the status of what they found/didn’t find. Mr. Miner asked if a report would be provided. Mr. Fetter said that there will be a series of recommendations that will focus on progress/fixing errors/concerns.
- c. Budget 2017-18. Dr. Dow asked about the 2017-18 budget. Ms. Kramer will schedule a meeting with Mr. Fetter, Ms. Monin, Mr. Miner and herself to begin developing next year’s budget.

9. Old Business. None

10. New Business

- a. Extended Day Policy. Mr. Dow raised several questions about the policy. Discussion followed. Mr. Roberson said that he would take the questions back to the Parent Association for clarification. Therefore, the vote on approving the policy was tabled until we receive further clarification from the Parent Association.
- b. Cullen Foundation Grant Opportunity. Mr. Dow reported that The Cullen Foundation accepted our Letter of Intent (LOI) for a grant and invited us to submit a full proposal. The project we are proposing is to enhance our curriculum with resources beyond the classroom by collaborating with some of the community’s cultural institutions. Mr. Dow, Mr. Fetter and Ms. Kramer will meet to discuss development of the proposal, which is due on February 24.
- c. Benchmark Teacher Perception Survey results. Dr. Peter Loehr, a professor in the Educational Leadership program at Buffalo State College with expertise in this area, created the survey after conducting multiple focus groups with CSI teachers. The survey was administered in December. Mr. Fetter reviewed the results with the Board. There was discussion about how to address the results most effectively. After considerable discussion, Mr. Fetter agreed to discuss the issue of follow up with Mr. Loehr. Mr. Woelfel, offered his services to facilitate the follow up if necessary.

11. Other / Open Discussion. None

12. Next Meetings. The next regular business meeting is scheduled on March 7, 2017, 4:45 pm.

13. Adjournment. Melissa Stadler moved to adjourn the meeting, Helene Kramer seconded and the Board approved the motion unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Sheharul Q. Path

Secretary

2/9/17 Date