



Charter School of Inquiry (CSI)

Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

October 3, 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 Helene Kramer, the presiding officer, on October 3, 2017 at 4:48 pm at the Charter School of Inquiry, 404 Edison Street, Buffalo, New York 14215.

Trustees Present: Peter Dow, Betty Evans, Helene Kramer, Patrick Miner, Pamela Nicasastro, Deborah Porter, Jackie Roberson, Jr., Melissa Stadler

Prospective Trustee: Morgan Williams-Bryant

CSI Staff: Robert Fetter, Head of School

Board Attorney: Steven Polowitz

- 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 October 3, 2017 were posted and a list of media outlets who were 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. Regular Business Meeting, September 5, 2017. A motion to approve was made by Deborah Porter, seconded by Peter Dow and approved unanimously by the Board.

- 4. Announcements**

- a. Morgan Williams-Bryant, Prospective Board Member. Ms. Kramer introduced and welcomed Ms. Williams-Bryant as a prospective board member. She is completing the paperwork to be forwarded to NYSED for approval as a voting trustee.
- b. Replacement of Common Core Standards. Mr. Fetter reviewed the recent announcement from NYSED about the replacement of Common Core Standards with Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS). The Curriculum Committee is working to incorporate NGLS into CSI’s curriculum.

5. Parent Association – Jackie Roberson, Jr., President

- a. Complimented the Just for Kids extended day program. Noted that it was more orderly, and children were getting more academic help than in the past two years when we staffed the program internally.
- b. Reported that 13 parents signed up for the Parent Association at Meet the Teachers Night on September 20.
- c. The Parent Association met on Thursday, September 28. Topics included:
 - i. Classroom management. Parents at the meeting were concerned about the number of children being sent to the office. The Board discussed concerns about classroom management at length. Mr. Fetter reported that there was an uptick in the number of students whose behavior warranted removal from the classroom, primarily when there is a potential safety issue with physical hitting and kicking. Most of the incidents involve children in grade 3 and 4. When a child is sent to the office, Mr. Fetter quickly schedules a meeting with the parents. Parents are informed about the behaviors and are asked for their support in curbing them.

There was much discussion about causes, including children coming to CSI after being expelled from other schools, teacher turnover at CSI, some teachers' inability to relate to the children, need for more teacher training in classroom management, instruction that needs to be more engaging, restricting children's sugar intake and a greater understanding by teachers of the culture of poverty.

Suggested strategies to address the issues going forward include: early contact with parents when children exhibit inappropriate behavior, continued implementation of the Responsive Classroom model, more modeling for teachers on classroom management, teachers building closer relationships with parents and children to demonstrate mutual caring and respect, situational leadership training on families living in poverty offered by the United Way, more administrative support and more Board member involvement in visiting classrooms.

- ii. Box Tops for Education. The Parent Association is embarking on a fundraising initiative to collect Box Tops, which can be used to earn cash for the school.

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

- a. Dashboard Reports. Mr. Fetter reviewed the following dashboard reports: student enrollment-general, extended day program enrollment, number of special education students, student recruitment, student attendance, student discipline, instruction, staffing, and staff diversity. There were no contracts to approve.

- b. **School Safety Plan - Status.** Conducted a number of activities during School Safety Week, including 5 fire drills. More will follow during school year. Room numbers have been posted on interior classroom doors and exterior windows. School Messenger is ready for use but waiting for BOCES training.
- c. **Other Issues.** None.

7. Financial/Audit Committee Report – Patrick Miner, Board Treasurer (Helene Kramer reporting)

- a. Year-end Financial Statement for period ending June 30, 2017.
- b. Financial Statement for period ending July 31, 2017.
- c. Financial Statement for period ending August 31, 2017.
Mr. Miner reviewed the end of year fiscal report, as well as the financial statements for periods ending July 31 and August 31 and reported that, although there were some line items over budget, everything was in order. He also reported that we received the September State Aid payment based on the 180 students budgeted. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to accept the financial reports. Deborah Porter moved to accept, Melissa Stadler seconded and the board approved the motion unanimously.
- d. Lumsden McCormick Audit for 2016-17 Fiscal Year. Lumsden McCormick is under contract to conduct the 2016-17 fiscal year audit, which is in process. Since the audit is due to NYSED by November 1 (before CSI's next board meeting on November 7). Ms. Kramer asked for a resolution to accept the audit, pending approval by the Finance Committee at its October 31 meeting, with ratification by the full board at its regular business meeting on November 7. Deborah Porter moved to accept the resolution, Betty Evans seconded and the board approved it unanimously.
- e. Open Issues: Capital Reserve Fund, Line of Credit, Performance Metrics.
Mr. Miner discussed upcoming agenda items for the Finance Committee, including establishing a Capital Reserve Fund and Line of Credit to have available in the event of large, unexpected building maintenance or repair expenses. Also, the Finance Committee is requesting that Kirisits & Associates begin reporting the financial performance metrics as required by the Charter School Performance Framework.

8. Human Resources / Personnel Committee – Pamela Nicastro, Chair (Helene Kramer reporting)

- a. NYSUT Negotiations. Discussed in executive session.
- b. Confidential Personnel Issue. None.
- c. New Positions (reviewed by Head of School during dashboard report)
Mr. Fetter requested two new positions to be added to the 2017-18 budget: (1) Director of Student Services (new title and job description), and (2) a second Special Education Teacher to service additional children with special needs enrolled this year. Mr. Fetter distributed the job description for the Director of Student Support Services and discussed the rationale and pay range for the position. He also provided detail to support the addition of a second Special Education teacher.

Deborah Porter moved to approve the Director of Student Services job description and to amend the budget to add the two new positions. Melissa Stadler seconded the motion and the board approved it unanimously.

AmeriCorps members. Mr. Fetter reported that he is in discussion with AmeriCorps to add two AmeriCorps members to CSI staff.

General Staffing. Mr. Fetter reported that all Teaching Assistant positions were filled but that he was conducting a search for a 3rd grade teacher to replace a teacher who decided to leave CSI.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Ms. Kramer requested a motion to go into executive session to discuss the status of confidential NYSUT negotiations. Jackie Roberson, Jr. moved, Pamela Nicasastro seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to go into executive session at 7:25 pm.

A motion to end executive session was made by Jackie Roberson, seconded by Deborah Porter and approved by the Board unanimously at 7:40 pm.

Ms. Kramer announced in Open Session that the Board discussed the status of confidential negotiations with NYSUT.

9. New Business

- a. Accept Prospective Board of Trustees Candidate - Morgan Williams-Bryant. The Board accepted Morgan Williams-Bryant as a prospective new trustee and approved of going forward with her through the application and approval process required by the NYSED Charter School Office.

10. Old Business

- a. Strategic Plan. Meetings delayed while CSI sought NYSUT approval to pay hourly stipends to staff involved in several of the strategic planning committees that need to meet after regular school hours. Ms. Nicasastro spoke to the union representative about the issue and he approves the plan, pending a written MOU which Ms. Nicasastro is working to develop.

Mr. Fetter announced that meetings would be scheduled as follows:

Student Recruitment	2 nd Thursday of the month from 3:45 pm to 4:30 pm
Parent Engagement	3 rd Thursday of the month following the Parent Association meeting

Teacher Staff Development 4th Tuesday of the month, 3:30 pm
Student Behavior November 29, 3:30 pm

Organizational Development Committee. Melissa Stadler reached out to Leadership Buffalo to recruit new board candidates. Three people responded. One was Ms. Williams-Bryant who is going through the application process; the other two were deemed to be good people but not the best fit for the skills sets we need on the Board. Recruitment is ongoing. Ms. Kramer reported that she is working on a plan with Diane Bessel for how the board can best oversee and operationalize the strategic plan. She will report on this at the November board meeting.

11. **Other/Open Discussion:** None


12. **Next meeting(s):**

a. Regular monthly business meeting – Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 4:45 pm

13. **Adjournment:**

a. Motion to adjourn the monthly board meeting made by Pamela Nicastro, seconded by Deborah Porter and approved unanimously by trustees at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:


Deborah Porter

Secretary

10/3/2017 Date