



# Charter School of Inquiry (CSI)

## Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

**November 1, 2016**

- 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 **November 1, 2016 at 4:50 pm** at the Charter School of Inquiry, 404 Edison Street, Buffalo, New York 14215.

Trustees present: Helene Kramer, Peter Dow, Deborah Porter,  
Betty Evans, Jackie Roberson, Jr.  
Excused: Melissa Stadler  
Absent: Luke Collard  
CSI Staff: Robert Fetter, Head of School

- 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 for the meeting held on **November 1, 2016** 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 **October 4, 2016** regular monthly business meeting was made by Deborah Porter, seconded by Peter Dow and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- 4. Announcements / Updates**

- Holly Nowak Resignation. Holly Nowak’s resignation from the Board was announced. The Board thanked her for her service over the past two years and wished her well in developing her new business.
- Patrick Miner as new trustee. Patrick Miner, an accountant, will formally become a new CSI voting trustee, pending NYSED approval.
- Board Training. Board training will begin at the December 6 trustee meeting.
- Recruit additional board members. Additional board members are being recruited with expertise in (1) human resources/personnel (to replace Holly Nowak), (2) marketing/market research, and (3) fund development/grant writing.

- e. State Controllers Audit. The Office of the State Controller recently informed CSI that they would conduct an audit. This is an audit which is routinely performed for district and charter schools to evaluate “School operations with the goal of promoting efficiency and protecting School assets.” The entrance meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 7. The audit is expected to take 4-6 weeks.

## **5. Instruction / School Operations Report – Robert Fetter**

- a. Beginning of Year Assessments. Mr. Fetter presented the baseline assessments in literacy for grades K-3. He reported that Math assessments will be shared with the board at the December meeting. Discussed intervention strategies and notification to parents of children who are significantly behind grade level.
- b. Student Enrollment. Current enrollment is 156 students.
- c. Classroom Management. Strategies to improve classroom management include:  
(1) *Responsive Classroom*. Dr. Andy Steck, CSI’s Responsive Classroom trainer, visited CSI in October to follow up on summer PD. He reported that implementation of RC going well and continuing to progress. Dr. Steck will visit the school again in January. (2) *Behavior Support Room* established to teach social skills. Board asked questions and discussed. (3) *Head of School* in classrooms to observe and make suggestions to teachers.
- d. Staffing Issues. Recruiting a Kindergarten classroom teacher, a teaching assistant, an extended day coordinator and substitute teachers.
- e. African & African-American History and Culture Curriculum. Needs to be more visible. Confirmed partnership with Daemen College to help develop more robust curriculum; meeting with Daemen scheduled Monday, November 7. Holiday concert will feature children singing African folk songs. Field trip to Underground Railroad or Colored Musicians Club discussed and will follow up.
- f. Inquiry Implementation. Using Foss kits for science instruction. Foss donated 2-1/2 additional days for teacher professional development in addition to the one full day that was part of original contract.
- g. Other. BOCES is scheduled to conduct professional development for teachers in math.

## **6. Personnel Committee Report – Helene Kramer Reporting**

- a. Head of School Evaluation. Ms. Kramer reviewed the Charter School Performance Framework (CSPF-Nov. 2015) adopted by the NYS Board of Regents. She explained that the CSPF is used to determine whether or not a charter school will be renewed.

NYSED reviews charter school performance under 3 categories: (1) educational soundness (major focus is student performance), (2) organizational soundness (financial and governance) and (3) faithfulness to charter and law (meets design

commitments, student enrollment/recruitment). Under those three categories are ten (10) benchmarks which denote the specific areas the charter review team examines and the markers of evidence they will use to document their findings

Ms. Kramer explained that the evaluation instrument for the CSI Head of School is patterned after the CSPF to ensure that there is alignment and accountability with NYSED's requirements for renewal. Trustees will be given updates on student performance after each full assessment of student performance during the school year. A separate board meeting at the end of the school year will be scheduled to conduct the evaluation.

A motion to approve the Head of School evaluation instrument and process was made by Jackie Roberson, Jr., seconded by Deborah Porter and approved unanimously by the trustees.

b. NYSUT Negotiations Status.

Motion for Executive Session. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss union negotiations. Peter Dow moved, Betty Evans seconded and the motion was approved unanimously by the trustees. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:00 pm.

Motion to Adjourn Executive Session. A motion to adjourn Executive Session was made by Deborah Porter, seconded by Betty Evans and approved unanimously by the Board. The Board moved out of Executive Session at 7:14 pm.

Executive Session Report:

The Board Chair reported that the board discussed the status of NYSUT union negotiations.

**7. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Luke Collard, Chair & Treasurer**

Due to Mr. Collard's absence, Ms. Kramer presented the financial reports.

- a. and b. Financial Statements, periods ending August 31 and September 30. Reports were reviewed. Motion to accept both reports made by Peter Dow, seconded by Betty Evans and approved unanimously by the trustees.
- b. Audit Report. The external audit of CSI was conducted by Lumsden McCormick in October. They found no significant audit findings; it was a clean report. The auditors made several recommendations related to documentation of student records. Staff will address these recommendations. A motion to accept the audit report was made by Deborah Porter, seconded by Peter Dow and approved unanimously by the trustees.

**8. Parent Association Report – Jackie Roberson, Jr.**

- Mr. Roberson reported that a Parent Association meeting was held on November 20. Eleven parents attended. Officers were elected. Several issues surfaced:
  - i. Zero tolerance bullying policy. Mr. Fetter is working on.
  - ii. Visitors and Volunteer Policies. Parents asked for clarification from the Board about the Visitors and Volunteer policies. The board discussed both policies and clarified that (1) there is a Board-approved Visitors Policy that requires parents to sign in at the front desk, although no appointment is necessary if a parent wants to *observe* his/her child in their classroom, (2) confirmed that a background check is required for volunteers who are at the school regularly and who interact with or are working around the children. Casual volunteers (come in occasionally to assist with something under the guidance of a CSI employee) do not need a background check. These policies, as adopted by the Board for the 2015-16 Parent Handbook, remain unchanged.
  - iii. Field Trips and Parent Participation. Mr. Fetter addressed a question about parent participation on the recent field trip.

**9. Old Business.** None.

**10. New Business**

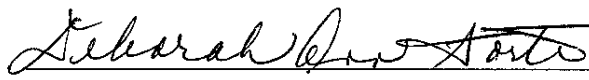
- Speakers Policy. Ms. Kramer suggested that the Board adopt a Speakers Policy for parents or other guests who want to address the board prior to the regular business meeting. She offered to draft the policy for board review at the December 2016 meeting.

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

**12. Next Meeting.** December 6, 2016 at 4:45 pm.

**13. Adjournment.** Peter Dow moved to adjourn the meeting, Betty Evans seconded and the Board approved the motion unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
Secretary  
Deborah Porter

12/4/16 Date



***New Requirements for Applicant Groups Seeking to Establish a Charter School Authorized by the Board of Regents***

1. The term “Lead Applicants” will be replaced by the term “Applicant Group.” The Applicant Group includes all members of the application planning group, all members of the proposed board of trustees, and any proposed school employees identified in the charter school application materials.
2. In addition to the current requirements in the Letter of Intent (LOI), all Applicant Groups must submit the following information (most of which was previously required at the full application stage) for each member of the Applicant Group:
  - Applicant Background Information and Statement of Assurance
  - Statement of Intent– personal statements from each member of the Applicant Group describing: the length of time on the planning group; their relevant experience and skills; and, their current and prospective role, responsibilities, and commitment in relation to development of the application and to the operation of the proposed charter school
  - Resumé or Curriculum Vitae
  - Transcript from Highest Degree Granting Institution (new)
  - Minimum of Three References from individuals not in the Applicant Group (new)
3. Prior to receiving an invitation from the Department to the Capacity Interview stage, *each member of the Applicant Group* will be required to undergo criminal background checks via a fingerprint scan. The Department will contact the members of the Applicant Group to schedule an appointment for the required fingerprint scan.

If, at any time, the information provided for a member of the Applicant Group contains material misstatements or material omissions of fact, this shall constitute misconduct. Providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval of a member of the Applicant Group, nullifying that member’s appointment to the board of trustees. The Department may also reject or withdraw the entire charter school application from further consideration during the applicable round. Each member of the Applicant Group must immediately disclose the discovery of any misstatements or material omissions of fact related to them, or any other member of the Applicant Group.

***New Requirements for Appointing New Board of Trustee Members to an Existing Regents-Authorized Charter School***

As per the charter agreement and current authorizer practice, the Department’s consent is required before a prospective candidate may serve on or be seated to a charter school’s board of trustees. Prior to a request to the Department for approval, all charter schools are required to comply with the new requirements outlined in paragraph 2 above. *Additionally, charter schools must conduct and provide for the cost of a background check via fingerprint scan for any prospective candidate to its board of trustees.*

If, at any time, the information provided for a prospective candidate to a board of trustees contains material misstatements or material omissions of fact, this shall constitute misconduct. Providing false, misleading, and/or incomplete information may lead to a withdrawal of the Department’s approval of a prospective candidate, nullifying that candidate’s appointment to the board of trustees. Each member of the board of trustees must immediately disclose the discovery of any misstatements or material omissions of fact related to the prospective candidate.