

Charter School of Inquiry

Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2020

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, a lawful quorum being present, on Tuesday, October 6 at 4:50 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference (meeting id 4302549703), in accordance with Executive Orders by the Governor of the State of New York,

Trustees Present: Melvin (Trey) Bankhead III
Peter Dow
Richard (Bruce) Haydon
Helene Kramer
Janet Peters
Mary Jo Pfeiffer
Deborah Porter

Excused: Latise Hairston

Proposed Trustee: Nichelle Gray, Parent Representative

CSI Staff: John Sheffield, Head of School

Board Counsel: 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 6, 2020, were posted and a list of media outlets which 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. **Conflict of Interest.** Ms. Kramer reminded board members that anyone with a potential conflict of interest concerning a subject under discussion by the Board has an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse themselves and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject. No such declarations were made at this time.

4. Approve Minutes:

- a. Minutes of Business Meeting – September 1, 2020

A motion to approve minutes of the business meeting on September 1, 2020 was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Melvin Bankhead III and approved unanimously by the trustees.

Committee Meeting Minutes – Governance, Academic and Finance. Ms. Kramer noted that meeting minutes of the Human Resources, Academic and Finance Committees were included with the Board packet and will be posted on the CSI website along with regular meeting minutes.

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5. Announcements / Updates

- a. NYS Board of Regents COVID-19 Parent Survey. Ms. Kramer briefed the Board on NYSED's retrospective survey of 12 parents (from March 16 to school-year end 2020).
- b. CSI COVID-19 Parent Survey: John Sheffield reports that CSI did its own survey with 70 respondents. He summarized results.
- c. CSO Progress Report – Zoom Meeting September 28: Ms. Pfeiffer briefed the Board on a meeting she attended with Helene Kramer, Peter Dow, John Sheffield and Charter School Office staff. In the conversation, David Frank, Executive Director of the Charter School Office, said that questions about funding for schools likely will not be resolved until after the Nov. 3 election. There is still uncertainty about whether there will be any state educational testing this school year.

6. Academic Committee Report – Peter Dow, Chair

- a. Benchmark assessments for ELA and Math. Peter Dow reported that David Hetherly, CSI's Response to Intervention / Data Coordinator has completed the STAR benchmark assessments for ELA and Math in all grades. This means that we have a baseline for every student and know their strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the instructional staff can work with individual students on improving their skills and do more focused groupings of students based on their identified needs.
- b. New music teacher. Mary Gray, new music teacher was hired this year.

7. Parent Association Report: Nichelle Gray, prospective parent representative

Ms. Gray briefed the Board on her experience, and the difficulties involved, of being a working parent while children are remote learning. She is attempting to get more feedback from other CSI parents. She reported that she thinks teachers are doing well given the circumstances and the school is doing better compared to other schools.

Ms. Gray sent a flyer to parents inviting them to a virtual Parent Association meeting and is attempting to establish a CSI Girl Scouts troop.

8. Board Professional Development: None.

9. Head of School Report – John Sheffield

- a. Consolidated Dashboard Report. Mr. Sheffield reviewed the Consolidated Dashboard Report, including data related to student enrollment, new staff, and staff resignations, staff diversity, the number of SPED and ENL students, student attendance, and professional development conducted in the month of September. He also reviewed results of a distance learning survey of parents with 27 respondents.
 - Enrollment was under budget, primarily due to low enrollment in Kindergarten. There are wait lists for grades 1, 2, 3 and 4.
 - ENL and Special Education (SPED) student populations are stable. SPED referrals to BPS Committee on Special Ed have been delayed because no BPS staff was working due to COVID. Once they start meeting again, we may have an increase in children designated as special ed.
 - Average daily attendance in September 2020 was 91%, down from 93% in 2019. Attendance considered good considering all students are in the remote learning model.
- b. Reopening Status. Going well. Using many resources from BOCES.

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- c. Virtual Learning Schedule. A schedule of each classroom in every grade was shared to inform the Board about the typical topics covered in the virtual classrooms.
- d. Professional Development Schedule. A professional development schedule for August and September 2020 was shared to demonstrate the comprehensive training offered to staff.
- e. Strategic Plan – Status. Mr. Sheffield reported significant progress on the strategic plan with almost everything either on track or ahead of schedule. He mentioned that he is mulling changing the Family Support Team reporting tree to include Ms. Courtney Eaton, CSI’s Family Support Coordinator, so that she can determine if there are family issues with getting resources before an issue escalates up the chain.
- f. Safety Plan with COVID 19: Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to officially ratify the Safety Plan with COVID 19, which was previously approved unanimously through an email vote to ensure the plan could be submitted to NYSED by the deadline,

A motion to ratify the Safety Plan with COVID 19 was made by Melvin Bankhead III, seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

10. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Bruce Haydon, Treasurer

- a. Financial Statements for period ending August 31, 2020:

A motion to accept the financial statements for period ending August 31, 2020 was made by Bruce Haydon, seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- b. Independent Audit – Fiscal Year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Peter J. DeSablo and Thomas M. Burns, accountants with Lumsden McCormick, independent auditors, presented a report of the 2019-20 fiscal year audit. “The financial reports report fairly, in all material respects, the financial position as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, and the changes in net assets and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.” CSI total revenues for 2020 increased nearly \$1 million from 2019. Expenses were up, but not as high as expected. There was a strong balance sheet. There were no material weaknesses.

A motion to approve the auditors’ report was made by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, seconded by Bruce Haydon and passed unanimously by the trustees.

11. Governance Committee – Jan Peters, Chair

- a. HOS Evaluations – 2019-20 and 2020-21. The Governance Committee received all of Mr. Sheffield self-evaluation documents from 2019-20 and is compiling a summary board evaluation with input from all members of the BOT. The development of the 2020-21 evaluation instrument is in process.
- b. Prospective Board candidate recommendation -Anne Nguyen Henry. Ms. Henry, a former administrator with Buffalo Public Schools and a specialist in education for English-language Learners, has been invited to submit the paperwork required by NYSED to become a member of the CSI Board.

12. Ad hoc committee – Media and Community Engagement – Melvin Bankhead III, Chair

- a. Discussion regarding web content and priorities. The Committee will put together a draft Request for Proposals. John Sheffield suggest that committee draft the RFP and choose what

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Web designers to invite. Then, per Helene Kramer's suggestion, the bidders can come to the school to get a feel for its culture, and present what they can offer to CSI administration and/or the Board.

13. Old Business. None

14. New Business

- a. Resolution to Accept Nichelle Gray as Final Trustee Candidate.

A motion to select Nichelle Gray as a final trustee candidate, pending NYSED approval, was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Deborah Porter, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

- b. Confidential Legal Matter – EXECUTIVE SESSION. Ms. Kramer asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss a confidential legal matter.

A motion to go into executive session, with John Sheffield and Legal Counsel, to discuss a confidential legal matter was made by Bruce Haydon, seconded by Peter Dow and approved unanimously by the trustees.

Ms. Kramer announced that the trustees discussed a confidential legal matter in executive session and asked for a motion to move out of executive session.

A motion to exit executive session was made by Deborah Porter, seconded by Bruce Haydon and passed unanimously by the trustees.

15. Policy Review. No report.

16. Other / Open Discussion. None

17. Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 5:00 pm

18. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Mary Jo Pfeiffer, and approved unanimously by the trustees.

Respectfully submitted by:



Melvin Bankhead III, Board Secretary



Date