



# Charter School of Inquiry

## Regular Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

**January 5, 2021**

### 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 Mary Jo Pfeiffer, the presiding officer, a lawful quorum being present, on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 4:52 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference (Meeting ID 85907756585), in accordance with Executive Orders by the Governor of the State of New York,

Trustees Present:	Melvin “Trey” Bankhead III Peter Dow Nichelle Gray Latise Hairston Richard “Bruce” Haydon Anne Nguyen Henry Helene Kramer Janet Peters Mary Jo Pfeiffer
Excused:	Deborah Porter
CSI Staff:	John Sheffield, Head of School
Guest:	Valerie Nolan (prospective board member)

### 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 January 5, 2021 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 – December 1, 2020

A motion to approve minutes of the business meeting on December 1, 2020 was made by Peter Dow, seconded by Latise Hairston and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passed.

### 5. Announcements / Updates



- a. Happy Birthday, Trey Bankhead, January 11. The board wished Mr. Bankhead a happy birthday.
- b. Report on CSI-CSO Zoom Meeting – December 4, 2020. Ms. Pfeiffer gave a summary of the Zoom meeting held on December 4, 2020 with Susan Gibbons and Barbara Moscinski from NYSED’s Charter School Office, and John Sheffield, Helene Kramer, Mary Jo Pfeiffer and Peter Dow from CSI. Discussion included contracts and how we measure effectiveness, student attendance, student-led investigations, student academic assessments/performance/interventions, internal staff capacity, student enrollment, biggest challenges, relationship with families, participation in parent-teacher conferences, succession planning, renewal application.
- c. Responsive Classroom in-service with Dr. Andy Steck. Ms. Kramer reported that Dr. Steck has offered to conduct an interactive workshop on Responsive Classroom in much the same way he does for teachers. We will schedule in the future.

**6. Academic Committee Report – Mary Jo Pfeiffer (standing in for Peter Dow, Chair)**

- a. Strategic Planning: Mr. Sheffield reported on CSI’s strategic planning consultant Adam Aberman’s visit to CSI, and recounted Aberman’s notes: Teachers more positive, and were better prepared for remote learning. Better use of African-American experience being discussed and examined in class. Students were on task – no easy job with remote learning. He wants to return and take a closer look at student-led investigations.
- b. Professional Development: Aberman, committee discussed how to get more data regarding professional development. In-services and surveys were discussed.
- c. Weighted lottery: Susan Gibbons of NYSED CSO told CSI to create, within 48 hours, a weighted lottery that gives access to special ed and ELL students. CSI opted to include economically disadvantaged students to the lottery. Mr. Sheffield and committee created the lottery, and revised relevant policies to include the lottery. Gibbons’ only response was to ask why CSI included economically disadvantaged, but she accepted packet.
- d. Parent Engagement: Ms. Kramer discussed how to present student data in better format for parents to understand.
- e. Parent Survey: (See Head of School Report)
- f. Academic Dashboard. David Hetherly discussed (see Head of School Report)
- g. Writing Initiative: New writing program is being implemented in grades K and 1, and “Up the Ladder” program in higher grades.
- h. Academic Goals: Given impact of COVID-19, year-to-year comparison goals may not be possible for 2020-2021. Committee is investigating how to set goals.

**7. Parent Association Report: Nichelle Gray, Parent Representative.** Working on getting more responses to her inquiries. Hoping to have more information at next Board meeting.

**8. Board Professional Development:** Presentation: “The CSI Founders’ Story,” - Helene Kramer  
Ms. Kramer, a founder of the Charter School of Inquiry, presented on the founders’ inspiration and history of the School.

**9. Head of School Report – John Sheffield**

- a. Consolidated Dashboard Report – December. Mr. Sheffield presented report on student enrollment; staff retention; staff diversity and other matters.
- b. Parent Survey. A survey was sent to CSI families to assess number of students who would return to the school building for hybrid instruction (two days of in-person learning, one day of virtual learning, and two days of independent learning). Of those who responded, 52 percent said they would not return to the building, and 48 percent said they would. When asked whether they would keep their children on fully remote learning (out of the building), 52



- percent said they would, and 48 percent said they'd permit their children to return to the building. Survey remains open, and Mr. Sheffield will report final numbers to Academic Committee after the survey closes.
- c. Data Dashboard. Will be sent to Ms. Kramer for dissemination to Board of Trustees.
  - d. Strategic Plan – Status: CSI is on track with the timeline for the plan.

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

- a. Financial Statement & Narrative for period ending November 30, 2020.

A motion to accept the financial statements for period ending November 30, 2020 was made by Ms. Kramer, seconded by Mr. Haydon and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passes.

- b. Hire new Response to Intervention Specialist.

A motion to approve the hiring of a new RTI Specialist was made by Mr. Dow, seconded by Ms. Gray and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passes.

- c. Contract: Empire Charter Consultants.

A motion to approve a contract with Empire Charter Consultants to assist CSI in crafting school's charter-renewal documents made by Mr. Bankhead, seconded by Ms. Hairston, and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passes.

#### **11. Governance Committee – Jan Peters, Chair**

- a. Head of School Evaluation for 2020-2021: Mr. Sheffield and Dr. Andy Steck have been meeting to set up a schedule and goals.
- b. Board of Trustees Recruitment: Committee has conducted an interview with prospect Valerie Nolan (in attendance at meeting). Committee described her as “incredibly knowledgeable about charter schools and understands state (education).”
- c. Succession Planning: Committee has invited Shereen Williams of Education Board Partners to assist in updating board officer job descriptions.
- d. Administrative Assistant position: Original job description for 20 hours a month deemed not sufficient. Current discussion is on whether to change description to 20 hours per week. Committee will redraft job description and submit it to the Board.

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

- a. Despite a delay on Mr. Bankhead's part, the RFP has been sent to Ms. Monin. Mr. Sheffield notes that Ms. Monin “took some vacation time,” but is back and has received the RFP and is reviewing. New deadlines were sent in the submission because of the delay.

#### **13. Old Business.** None

#### **14. New Business.**

- a. Resolution to revise CSI's Admissions Policy to include a weighted lottery. Board members asked questions about economically challenged students and the nature of the common application.

A motion to approve resolution to revise CSI's Admissions Policy to include a weighted lottery was made by Mr. Haydon, seconded by Mr. Bankhead, and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passes.



**15. Other / Open Discussion.** None

**16. Next Meeting:** Tuesday, February 2, 2020, 4:45 pm

**17. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Bankhead, seconded by Mr. Dow, and approved unanimously by the trustees. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Melvin Bankhead III, Board Secretary

Date