

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

<b>Committee Chair:</b> Peter Dow			
<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Excused</b>
	Mary Jo Pfeiffer	x	
	Marie Giancarlo	x	
	David Hetherly	x	
	Marguerite Battaglia	x	
	John Sheffield	x	
	Nichelle Gray		x
	Valerie Nolan Anne Henry Peter Dow	x x x	

### MEETING AGENDA, MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Item	Responsible Party	Due Date
<b>Reopening Report</b>	John Sheffield reported that about half of the kindergarten families elected to return to the building with half electing to remain in remote instruction. This means that the in-school children can come every day. The first grade can return on March 29 <sup>th</sup> and again about half of the families are electing to return so they too will be able to come every day. All grade levels will be back by the first week of May. Some teachers are still working remotely which may be problematic when children are back in the building. Until everyone is vaccinated in-school instruction will still present difficulties, making planning difficult. We			

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	will have to adjust to unanticipated situations and challenges as they arise.			
<p><b>Preparations for the Remote CSO Site Visit on April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p>Mary Jo led the discussion of this topic. John confirmed that Susan Gibbons indicated that there will be a focus group discussion with the board so the board and the staff should be conveying the same message with regard to the school's academic performance and the implementation of the benchmarks. Mary Jo referred to the State's recently distributed <b>Remote Monitoring and Oversight Plan</b> which spells out, particularly in its several appendices, what the State will be looking for, and what questions they will be asking. What it doesn't include is the Benchmark Assessment Worksheets that were distributed by the Office of Assessment and Performance that look at Strengths, Challenges, and Action Steps for each Benchmark. This committee will be responsible for responding in particular for Benchmarks 1,2, 3, 8 and 9. With each benchmark we will be asked to state whether we meet, approach, or fall far below the expected performance. Because we lack State assessment data, we are asked to use our Star assessments where proficiency is a Level Three. Mary Jo noted that the State is now asking for our interim Star data. Valerie said, where we fall far below proficiency, we will need to stress how we are moving towards proficiency.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Marie to write up responses to the State Questions on the five benchmarks we are responsible for.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Marie Giancarlo</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 9th</b></p>

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	<p>“How are we moving the needle?” She suggested that we started from “zero” and applied a variety of strategies to see what works under these unusual circumstances. Another strength is that we moved quickly to replace AIMS/Webb with an assessment that could be used remotely.</p> <p>Other challenges included losing a third of the year last year and how going to remote instruction demanded a very rapid learning curve for the teachers. The school moved quickly to provide computers for every child and internet hotspots for the families that needed them. John noted that <i>the biggest challenge to remote learning has been our inability to control the remote learning environment</i>. Marie reviewed the differences between Tier One and Tier Two instruction. Tier One is whole classroom instruction. Tier Two is smaller group instruction that meets three times a week in groups of 4 or 5 kids within the classroom. Star data allowed the school to identify specific skill needs for this group. Teachers now can break down instruction into focus groups of four or five children that target those skills, and student placement is very fluid – the change groups as soon as specific skills are mastered. Tier three is even more targeted. This group meets separately from the classroom. Children are provided Special Ed mandated</p>			
--	---	--	--	--

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	<p>services and given an IEP only after all of these research- based interventions have proven inadequate and they have been tested by the school psychologist and designated by the district’s Committee on Special Education. Unfortunately, Buffalo is at least a year behind on this psychological testing that is needed before establishing an IEP. This means we likely have more Special Education children than have been identified.</p> <p>Marie pointed out that the Star testing has also identified weaknesses in the Tier One instruction that the school has moved to correct. She, John, and David, together with the BOCES consultants, are looking at the overall standards to determine where Tier One instruction can be strengthened to ensure that all students are moving towards proficiency. They are looking at pre-recorded mini-lessons and other strategies that focus on specific standards that almost none of the students are presently understanding. Mary Jo noted that this is a key point to stress with the CSO, which has long maintained that part of the need for Tier Two and Tier Three instruction has been deficiencies in Tier One instruction. Marie is excited about how all of our instructional resources – teachers, TA’s, RTI specialists, and Special Ed instruction – can be coordinated to achieve</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	<p>this objective once all children are back in school.</p> <p>With respect to Benchmark Two strengths, we discussed the implementation of remote versions of the research-based programs Open Court and Math Expressions and the work with BOCES on teacher professional development. Additional strengths have been the establishment of Marie’s role as Director of Curriculum and Instruction and David’s role as Data Coordinator. This has led to the continuous use of data to critique and modify instruction and to organize professional development and teacher and staff collaboration around the implementation of distance learning. This has been a huge instructional challenge for everyone. As John said to his faculty, “You are all first year teachers, and I am a first year principal.” If there is any carryover into normal instruction, it will be primarily in the more sophisticated use of technology.</p> <p>As for benchmark Three, Mary Jo pointed out that we met it last time and we don’t need to dwell on it. [Subsequent to this meeting John Sheffield provided extensive documentation in support of this benchmark.] As for Benchmark Eight, we failed to meet last time. Mary Jo pointed out that “There is a clear disconnect“</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	<p>between what we claim to be doing and what the State saw. This year we have the three student projects using the inquiry. Next year we will focus on additional questioning strategies. Last year Marie took a course on question formulation techniques but did not have an opportunity to implement it because of COVID. This year several faculty members are taking a course with Marie on Thinking Routines and this will be helpful in creating a structure for inquiry. It will also be specifically referenced in the lesson plans so we can show evidence that it is taking place. John points out that teachers need to move away from the “sage on the stage” mindset that seems to be a product of their academic training. Anne Henry pointed out that, in focusing on inquiry we need to be quite specific about the kinds of questioning that applies to different disciplines. Marie agreed and said that questioning need to be broken down even further to address the goals of a particular lesson. We discussed how inquiry can be shown when the CSO visits on April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. We also discussed how we can show the state progress in the implementation of the African American infusion key design element, particularly the formation of the African American Infusion Task Force. With regard to Benchmark Nine, we discussed in particular the need for a plan to show the</p>			
--	---	--	--	--

## CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

Academic Committee Meeting Minutes  
 Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.  
 Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	state about how we intend to expand our ELL and SWD enrollment. For the latter, in particular, we need to show the State a recruitment plan.			
<b>Review of Marcus Watson's AA Infusion Proposal</b>	Unfortunately, Nichelle was not at the meeting as she had expressed concern that we had not issued an RFP for this project. Peter asked if we had a legal requirement for an RFP and John did not think so. Val suggested that the Watson proposal did not meet a financial threshold and Mary Jo pointed out the need for action given the CSO April visit. Anne suggested erring on the side of "caution," but the sense of the meeting was that we needed to move ahead with the understanding that it was a short term commitment and there would be plenty of opportunity to work with other groups as the project moved forward. Action: The committee recommended that John move ahead with the contract.	<b>Action:</b> Sign Contract with Marcus Watson	<b>John Sheffield</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
<b>Strategic Plan Review</b>	Unfortunately, John had to leave the meeting for an emergency so we were unable to get his reactions to Mary Jo's suggestions. The committee liked her suggestions and recommended that Mary Jo meet with John to discuss her suggested responses to the strategic plan.	<b>Action:</b> Mary Jo to meet with John.	<b>Mary Jo Pfeiffer</b>	<b>ASAP</b>

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

<b>Classroom Observations by Deana Stevenson</b>	This item was mainly to inform the committee that John had hired Deana Stevenson, an experienced evaluator of the Danielson Model, to participate with him in teacher evaluation. Anne asked how married the school was to the Danielson model or if the school had considered other models of teacher evaluation such as The Thoughtful Teacher. Mary Jo said that we had already committed to it for this year but the school could certainly consider another model for another year so long as the teachers were prepared for it. Val said it would probably involve a substantive change to our charter to use a different teacher evaluation model, but it is still worth considering. Peter asked Anne if she would be willing to present The Thoughtful Teacher model to the committee at a future meeting and she agreed to do so.	<b>Action:</b> Put Thoughtful Teacher Model on Future Agenda	<b>Peter Dow</b>	<b>Future</b>
<b>Assistant Principal Search</b>	Joan Graci met with the Governance Committee to talk about helping us find a search firm for the Assistant Principal Search. In the meeting she said that a large group of administrators were leaving New York City due to COVID, and she wondered if we would like to her conduct a New York State search first. This would reduce transfer costs and perhaps shorten the search. John is very comfortable working with Joan, so the committee decided to engage her in the search for an Assistant Principal. The Academic Committee was			

## CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

### Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

	happy with the decision.			
<b>Charter Renewal with Empire Charter Consultants</b>	<p>Mary Jo asked Marie to talk with John about whether ECC is familiar with the new renewal requirements for a Community Charter School. Mary Jo pointed out that we really need to look carefully at the language of the Charter Renewal to be sure that it reflects what we really intend to do, both with regard to the key design elements as well as how we are defining ourselves as a Community Charter School. Valerie suggested that we review the contract with ECC to see what the process is and to be sure the board is well informed about the content of the charter. She suggested, for example, that each section of the charter be submitted to the board for review before it is finalized. “It can’t be solely John’s responsibility, and the staff’s responsibility, to catch everything.” She noted that there are vast areas of the charter -- finance, governance, by-laws, etc. – that the board is directly responsible for and needs to understand. It is our school and we need to understand what we are proposing and have a plan for implementing it.</p>	<b>Action:</b> Marie to meet with John re ECC Charter Renewal	<b>Marie Giancarlo</b>	<b>ASAP</b>
	The meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.			

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

## Academic Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date / Time: Friday, March 19th, 2021, 2:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

--	--	--	--	--