

# CHARTER SCHOOL OF INQUIRY

Academic Committee Meeting Minutes  
 Meeting Date / Time: Friday, July 16, 2021, 1:00 p.m.  
 Minutes Recorded By: Peter Dow

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

<b>MEETING AGENDA, MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS</b>
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Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Item	Responsible Party	Due Date
<b>Summer Curriculum Work</b>	Marie Giancarlo reported that she is putting together a scope and sequence for the Lucy Calkins Writer’s Workshop that was adopted in the middle of last year as CSI’s writing curriculum. The plan will identify which units are being taught at each grade level and include essential questions for each unit, aligning them with the content areas in science and social studies and making sure that teachers are aware of what standards they are expected to cover in each unit. For social studies she is looking at the C3 inquiries for Engage New York, responding to what teachers liked and		<b>David Hetherly</b>	<b>Each Month</b>

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	<p>disliked, and ensuring that all standards are covered. She is also looking for areas to highlight Africana studies or other areas for multicultural infusion where they may not be explicit in the C3 inquiries. Where teachers have concerns about the C3 inquiries she wants to make sure that the State requirements are met in a way that also satisfies the teachers. Marie also wants to make sure that the teaching is aligned with our Open Court units. She is also looking for places where we can include field trip experiences and student-led investigations.</p> <p>Marguerite asked if we are going to include the assessments provided in the Lucy Calkins program. Marie responded that Julie LeRusso from BOCES is a trained Lucy Calkins professional developer and she is going to include the Writers Workshop pre and post assessments in her summer PD workshops. John asked Marie to email Andrea Berry Rogers to be sure to include this information in the charter renewal application. Both Mary Jo Pfeiffer and Marguerite Battaglia suggested that some of this assessment data be shared with the academic committee on a monthly basis so that our minutes show that we are reviewing assessment data and keeping track of student progress on grade level performance and proficiency. Peter asked about what problems the teachers were</p>			
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<b>Summer School Report</b>	<p>having with the C3 framework and Marie replied that in some cases the children did not have sufficient content background to handle the inquiries. This, she said, should be corrected with time. John suggested that we next move to David's Summer School Report before he is called away to meet other obligations.</p> <p>David Hetherly reported that the Summer School is going well. He described that day's fieldtrip to the Michigan Street Baptist Church where they saw the basement room where escaped slaves were hidden, and to the Nash House, the home of Reverend Nash who was the long-time pastor of the Church during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The children also visited the Freedom Wall where they learned about the many local and national heroes of the African American freedom movement that are celebrated on that wall. David raved about the good behavior of the students, how they were complimented by docents at each site, their engagement in the visit, and the many perceptive questions that they asked. He then described the previous day's trip to Explore and More, the children's museum in downtown Buffalo at Canalside, where the children are able to investigate four floors of interactive exhibits. The museum is designed to focus on Buffalo attractions such as the Erie</p>	<b>Action: Probably will not partner with the B&amp;G Clubs next year but run our own afternoon program</b>	<b>John Sheffield</b>	<b>Summer 2022</b>
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	<p>Canal, food production, mapping the city, etc. Mary Jo asked about chaperones. David explained that the kids all have their individually designed summer enrichment program t-shirts of different colors that identify them in groups of five, and there is a chaperone for each group.</p> <p>John pointed out that following the Freedom Wall visit the kids were asked to write about their experiences, and Marie reported that the two oldest groups were going to read a young woman's graphic novel called <i>Activist</i>. Here they will learn about what activism means in all its forms, including civil rights activism; they will also be encouraged to think about activism in their own lives. David noted that, when asked about what an "abolitionist" was by the guide at the Baptist Church, several kids put up their hands. Valerie asked what feedback Nichelle was getting from her own kids about these trips and she reported that they were extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of the summer school. Today her son was up early, got his sisters up, and said, "It's field trip day!" They are even enthusiastic about completing their schoolwork. During COVID, in contrast, she had trouble getting them out of bed.</p>			
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<b>Latest Benchmark Draft</b>	<p>Valerie asked how the collaboration with the Boys and Girls Clubs was going. John said it got off to a rocky start because the B&amp;G Clubs have never done a collaboration like this before, so it required a lot of diplomatic work by David to show them how we work collaboratively. John praised David for his diplomacy in handling this partnership.</p> <p>John reminded us that we needed to consider the page constraints of the application as we suggest additions. We also need to be sure that what we say here is aligned with what we say in our action plan. An example is Marguerite's suggestion that we include reference to the Writer's Workshop assessments. Peter pointed out the place in the midyear report where we were criticized for not showing the relationship between our academic interventions and student growth as reflected in their IEPs as called for in our Charter. Marie responded that, as we reintroduce EDoctrina, we will be requiring teachers to input their classroom assessment data into that program. In this way will have all of our student assessment data located in one place. John said that with all that was going on with COVID it was not possible to include EDoctrina last year, but this year it is being built into our professional development program. Mary</p>	<b>Academic Committee to Receive Monthly Data Reports on Student Progress.</b>	<b>David Hetherly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
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	<p>Jo suggested that teachers also keep data notebooks in the classroom so that State representatives can see them during their classroom visits without having to download it from EDoctrina. She also said that DOE is particularly concerned about differentiation. They want to be shown that teachers understand differentiation, so this needs to be reflected in the lesson plans. They also want to know how the teachers are responding when students fail to understand the lesson, and how this is reflected in lesson plan revisions. The teachers, in other words, need to explain their thinking. They need to show how they are distinguishing in their teaching between the students who have understood the lesson and those that are still struggling to understand. Mary Jo said she drilled her teachers on this point because “I had to teach the teachers to think this way.” Valerie reiterated that this is the kind of evidence that that State is looking for and we need to “cover our bases.” John pointed out that it is difficult to predict what the State is looking for because they don’t always tell you. “It is a bit like an oral examination where you don’t know the question that will be asked.” Mary Jo responded, “You have to prepare the teacher for that.”</p>			
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	<p>Mary Jo said that the other thing the State caught us on for two years in a row is the term “rigor.” They are looking for how “rigor” is reflected in our instruction, and they want to see examples of it. John said he welcomes the opportunity to point out where he sees “rigor” when he is given the opportunity to do so. Mary Jo suggest that John be proactive with the site visitors and, knowing that they want to see rigor, take them to see it. John said that the teachers pointed out examples of rigor in the focus groups, but Marie responded that she was not sure that they actually used that term. John agreed that perhaps we have to be more explicit with the teachers about how to respond to what the site visitors are looking for.</p> <p>Peter expressed a concern about how we address the issue of rigor in the charter application. It is one thing to handle it in the site visit and it is another thing to describe it in a written document. “How do we do that in a way that convinces the State that we are engaging children in rigorous instruction?” John replied that rigor is imbedded in the focus on inquiry: that when we ask children to investigate questions, we are engaging them in rigorous instruction. He pointed out that when children are investigating questions, they are developing higher order thinking</p>			
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	<p>skills as reflected in Bloom’s taxonomy. Mary Jo responded that the state is not interested in individual examples; they want to know about the “system of instruction.” Peter replied that using Bloom’s taxonomy is a “system” of instruction that involves recognizing a ladder of abstraction. Inquiry is not so much a transmission of content as it is teaching kids “how to use their minds well.” He suggested that we describe this to the State in writing just as John has described it to us, drawing on the rubrics that have been developed for the inquiry program.</p> <p>Marie commented that we are actually involved in both the transmission of content through the math and language arts programming and the development of thinking skills through the use of inquiry. What is exciting is that some students who struggle in the content areas excel in the inquiry lessons. This suggests that there is more than one kind of intelligence that we are developing and that the State needs to understand this. Valerie and Mary Jo commented that this is fine, but the CSO will continue this focus on rigorous instruction “until your reading and math scores are at the top of the scale.” Marguerite pointed out that Open Court reading is a rigorous program and it does provide for higher order thinking skills. We</p>			
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<p><b>Action Plan Template</b></p>	<p>should show the results of that program to the Academic Committee so the committee can see the results when it is used with fidelity. Action: Share evaluation results monthly with the Academic Committee.</p> <p>We discussed the template for the Action Plan that John sent us prior to the meeting. Mary Jo said that this document should be stated in the form of smart goals. "What we are creating for them is the measuring stick, and then they are going to measure us." Peter asked how we are going to respond to this, and Valerie suggested that John and the staff develop a draft and then we can comment but we need to set some dates because the document is due at the end of the month. Action: We agreed that John and the staff would prepare a draft and submit it next week for our comments. Whether those will just be written comments or we have a brief Zoom meeting to consider it will be determined at that time. Action: John to share Action Plan draft with the Committee.</p>	<p><b>Action: John to share Action Plan draft with the Committee</b></p>	<p><b>John Sheffield</b></p>	<p><b>ASAP</b></p>
<p><b>Enrollment Update</b></p>	<p>John reported that confirmed registrations are 223 with 53 new students. We have 170 students returning, 19 that are not returning, and 70 that have not turned in their registration packets yet. John said that we are actually in a little better position than we were last year at this time. Many</p>			

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<p><b>Other Business</b></p>	<p>of the non-returning students are moving out of the area. Others are moving to middle schools or schools where their siblings are. Peter asked about John's projections for total enrollment and he said it looks like about 320.</p> <p>Parent Update: Nicki reported that she plans a Parent Roundtable next month before the school year starts to find out from them what they are looking for, and to talk about what the school needs from the parents. She still has to narrow down the date. John said that if parents have questions about the new speed bumps in the driveway, they were necessary because too many drivers were going through the driveway to avoid the stop sign. "We had to do that for the safety of the kids." Action: Nikki to establish date for Parent Roundtable.</p> <p>John shared with us that Joe Peek has just published a book called <b>Conversations with Uncle Joe</b>. Joe explained to us that as a kid he always wanted someone he could go to ask questions without any judgment and in the book that person is Uncle Joe. Valerie suggested we should have a launch party and she mentioned how impressed our kids were when they learned that Regent Catherine Collins had published several</p>	<p><b>Action: Nikki to establish a date for a parent Roundtable and she and John will consider a presentation to parents by Max Donatelli</b></p>	<p><b>Nichelle Gray and John Sheffield</b></p>	<p><b>Fall 2021</b></p>
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	<p>books and they had a chance to meet the author.</p> <p>We also talked about doing something to recognize Helene, like naming a room in the school, or possibly a reading nook in the library. We will plan an event in the fall when the kids are back.</p> <p>Nichelle asked what we are planning to do for the kids who have fallen behind and may not have attended summer school when they come back in the fall. She also suggested that we might want to form our own book group with parents like the Buffalo summer reading group. Marie responded that, unlike most years, under the new co-teaching model a major assessment will be done in the early fall to determine the skill development levels of each individual student and to group them according to their needs. Also, Lou Mattiuzzo will be taking on the RTI responsibilities this fall, and he and the literacy coach, Tracy Herlan, will be working with the teachers on skill development. John said that the third grade has already made a significant comeback in reading but the challenge is still with math. Nichelle also wanted to know what testing was being done in the summer school. Marie said they are currently using the Freckle</p>			
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	<p>program, but the benchmark testing will be done in September.</p> <p>Nichelle said that she had received a huge runaround from the BPS regarding getting her child tested and assessed for special education services, and while she had finally received a letter in response to her request, she did not want other parents to go through what she had had to go through, and she wondered what could be done about this. Lou Mattiuzzo has already been a great advocate with the BPS for our students but apparently more work is needed. Valerie pointed out that this is a system in which parents often don't know how to access services in behalf of their children. Marie noted that some parents view special education as a stigma. Mary Jo said that Parent Network is a wonderful parent advocate organization and suggested that they could assist Nichelle in presenting to parents. Max Donatelli is the founder. Marie agreed that he would be helpful. Action: Explore possible presentation to parents by Max Donatelli.</p> <p>The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.</p>			
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