

REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING
Charter School of Inquiry
404 Edison Street
Buffalo, New York 14215
Wednesday October 13, 2021 @ 4:45PM
Meeting Minutes prepared by Laquitta Reid

Trustees Present: Valerie Nolan, Chair
Melvin (“Trey”) Bankhead
Janet (“Jan”) Peters
Peter Dow
Mary Jo Pfeiffer
Anne Henry
Nichelle Gray
R. Bruce Haydon

CSI Staff: John Sheffield, Head of School
Joseph Peek, Associate Principal

Guest: Karen Burhans
Steven Polowitz

Excused: Latise Hairston

1. Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of the Charter School for the Inquiry (the “School”) was called to order by Valerie Nolan, the presiding officer, a lawful quorum being present on Wednesday October 13, 2021 @ 4:55 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom videoconferencing (Meeting ID #: 868 8959 2436), in accordance with temporary legislation adopted by the New York State Legislature.

2. Proof of Public Notice:

Public Notice was sent to all media outlets via electronic mail on/about October 6, 2021, and meeting announcement was posted on the door, for public display, at Charter School for Inquiry. A notarized affidavit stating such is available upon request.

3. Conflict of Interest:

Reminder: If anyone has a potential conflict of interest concerning a subject under discussion by the Board, he/she has an obligation to disclose the potential conflict and, if deemed a conflict, recuse him/herself and leave the room during any discussion and vote on the subject.

4. Approve Minutes:

- a. Minutes of Business – July 21, 2021 – Delayed
- b. Minutes of Business – August 11, 2021 – Delayed
- c. Minutes of Business Meeting – September 8, 2021 – Delayed

Committee Minutes (FYI):

- a. Academic Committee, August 20, 2021 – APPROVED
- *Motion made by Anne Henry, Seconded by Peter. Vote: Unanimous.*
- b. Finance/Audit Committee, September 28, 2021 – APPROVED
- *Motion made by Trey, Seconded by Valerie. Vote: Unanimous.*
- c. Governance Committee, September 21, 2021 – APPROVED
- *Motion made by Peter. Seconded by Anne. Vote: Unanimous.*

5. Announcements / Updates:

- a. New Position: Anne Henry, Director of Leadership, Professional Learning, and Diversity, Erie 2 BOCES – Congratulations to Anne on her new position. Additionally, Congratulations are, in order, to Steve Polowitz on his new position with the Lisa Coppola Law Firm.
- b. Temporary Respite from BOT: Latise Hairston – Will be taking a month off from her Board duties to care for a Family Member.
- c. Renewal Site Visit – October 13 & 14 – The visit went very smoothly. There was co-teaching going on in several classrooms. We had a request today to re-send some documents that had been previously submitted. Message from Susan Gibbons today read “today went smoothly thanks to your meticulous organization and the schedule.” Ms. Gibbons had specific questions about what we are doing about student achievement? Peter was able to talk changes to the curriculum, adding Open Court, Math Expressions, writing workshop for science, putting administrative staff in place, STAR Assessments, eDoctrina, Fountas & Pinnell. Peter, also, discussed school culture, inquiry, Africana Studies, and responsive classrooms all going towards increasing academic achievement. This is where Ms. Gibbons was really impressed. Overall, today went well.
- d. Board Focus Group Recap – The focus group seemed to be a success.
- e. Public Hearing: October 20, 2021 @ 4:00PM – We have 20-25 minutes to plead our case & 20-25 minutes of questions from the Board of Education. John will speak about the leadership team, quality-view & strategic planning, spending of ESSER funds –to keep kids safe & close the learning gap. Mr. Peek will speak about the Africana Task Force, and the Social Workers will talk about the socio-emotional supports at the school. Nichelle

agreed to talk about the Parent experience at the school. Additionally, we have a few community members that wish to advocate for the school.

6. Finance/Audit Committee Report – Karen Burhans, Treasurer & Chair

- a. Audit Results: *Action*: Accept Audit Findings – These are the results of the audit done by independent auditors, Lumsden & McCormick on June 30, 2021. The audit report gets dated when it is accepted. Either by the Audit/Finance Committee or The Board. The audit is due to the State Education Department (“SED”) by November 13, 2021.
 - The balance sheet comparative from June 30, 2020, vs. June 30, 2021. The balance sheet is “pretty healthy.”
 - The restricted cash increased from 75K to 100K.
 - The Paycheck Protection Program Loan (“PPP”) was forgiven.
 - A motion was made by Trey to accept the June 30, 2021 Audit Report. Seconded by Peter. Vote unanimous. June 30, 2021 Audit Report – APPROVED.

- b. Draft Financial Statement & narrative for period ending July 31, 2021:
 - Ms. Burhans ran through the July 31st & August 30, 2021, Financial Statements.
 - Total Assets \$4.8 million dollars.
 - Total net assets about \$3.4 million dollars.
 - There are significant delays in checks coming from Buffalo.
 - ESSER 1 & ESSER 2 budgets have been submitted to the SED.
 - ESSER 3 will distributed over the next few school years.
 - The budget for ESSER 3 is due September 30, 2021.
 - Motion brought by Bruce to accept Financial Statements for July & August 2021. Seconded by Trey. Vote unanimous. Financial Statements for July 31, 2021 & August 30, 2021 – APPROVED

7. Head of School (“HOS”) Report – John Sheffield

- a. Consolidated Dashboard Report –
 - Enrollment is still “not cut in stone.” The reason for that is that we are having a terrible time with bussing for suburban districts and some inner-city districts.
 - Enrollment is currently at 294 pupils.
 - We hired 4 new Teacher’s Assistants (“TA’s”) in August.
 - We lost one teacher citing “TRS” as the reason for her departure.
 - We hired a Board Administrative Assistant.
 - We still need to hire one (1) SPED & one (1) RTI Teacher.
 - Staff diversity is still up with the addition of the new hires.

- b. Vaccine Policy Discussion – COVID in September, we had no cases. October has hit us like a “freight train.” This month we have had to quarantine students from three different classrooms, 3 different staff members were quarantined and almost a whole kindergarten class had to be quarantined this month.
- We have several unvaccinated staff members. They are not required by law to be vaccinated. Unvaccinated Staff members are required to get a weekly PCR lab test.
 - Some weeks we are short on staff because they cannot return to work on Monday without a negative PCR lab test and there is a backlog, most weeks, that delay the results.
 - Per Steve, we can mandate vaccinations, subject to religious medical and disability exemptions.
 - John fears if we mandate vaccinations for Staff, we will lose Teachers/Staff.
 - The school has a virtual learning plan in place for quarantined students.
 - Steve suggested a Special Board Meeting to discuss a Vaccine Mandate Policy for Staff/Students. That meeting was set *tentatively* for Monday, October 25, 2021.
- c. Board PD: Benchmark Assessment, STAR Assessment –
- There are four (4) Renaissance STAR Assessments that we use here at CSI Charter School: Early Literacy, STAR Reading, STAR Math and Curriculum-based Measurement (“CBM”).
 - We also use an ancillary product called FRECKLE, which we used this summer for summer school, both virtually and in-person.
 - CBM’s are adaptive test. They assess the building blocks of reading and math that are crucial for development of growth and set the stage for future achievement.
 - In kindergarten, CBM’s are given. Then, in 1st grade, we start off with early literacy for reading & CBM’s for Math.
 - Benchmarking Progress Monitoring – We do this monitoring in tiers. ALL students are monitored in November and March.
 - Those students that needed some intervention, we’re doing every week.
 - Benchmarking is done for all students. This data is used to determine our baseline goals.
 - We set goals using the September baseline data and adjust the goals in January, if necessary.

- Parents are alerted if their child is in Tier II or Tier III Intervention, what that intervention is going to look like, and who their intervention teacher is.

8. Academic Committee Report – Peter Dow, Chair – This committee is focused on Goal Setting and how we measure it. The key points (see John’s Dashboard Report), we are becoming a school very dedicated to looking at the data, learning from the data, and modifying what we do based upon that data.

9. Parent Association Report – Nichelle Gray, Parent Representative – *Discussion tabled until next meeting.*

10. Governance Committee – Jan Peters, Chair – John, Steve & Mr. Peek were excused. A motion was brought by Peter. Seconded by Jan. Vote Unanimous. Executive Session – ACCEPTED. During Executive Session, it was determined that we will give Board Members, who have not yet completed their HOS evaluations, until October 31, 2021, to submit them to Mary Jo. The assessment will then be sent to the new Board Administrative Assistant – Laquitta Reid, to be compiled.

11. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 4:45PM

12. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn brought by Peter. Seconded by Bruce. Vote Unanimous. Motion to adjourn – ACCEPTED @ 6:40PM.

Meeting Minutes Approved:



Peter Dow, Secretary

Date: January 26, 2022