

Board Meeting Minutes

Organization: Pride Academy Charter School Board Meeting
President: Mr. Mitchell
Time: 6:11pm
Place: Virtual Platform
Date: September 22, 2021
Minute Taker: Mrs. Wilson
Board Members Present: Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Spence

Others Present: Dr. Jones, Mrs. Thomas
Absent: Mr. Moore, Dr. Morgan-Black

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 6pm

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:11 pm and Roll Call was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLICATIONS: Newark NJ Star Ledger, NJ.com and published on school website: www.prideacs.org

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR THE BOARD MEETING:

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence - in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the agenda for September 22, 2021- Board Meeting- Attachment 1

Resolution to approve the minutes for August 25, 2021

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence - in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the Board Meeting Minutes for August 25, 2021- Attachment 2

Update from Dr. Jones:

-Dr. Jones has been working with the School Auditor- Phil T. to bring the year 2021 up to date.

-Currently, we are finalizing the grant and other reports with an upcoming deadline.

-There will be meetings with the Treasurer as well to review the treasury reports; and we will review them at future Board meetings.

-Audit will begin in early November and the deadline for completion is December 6, 2021

RESOLUTIONS

F1: Resolution to accept Payroll Expense for the current month(s) through August 2021- Attachment F1

Net Pay: \$136, 555.72

Agency Costs: \$75,441.39

Total Payroll amount: \$211, 997.11

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the Payroll Expense for the current month(s) through August 2021- Attachment F1

F2: Resolution to accept the Bills List for the current month(s) August 21, 2021 and September 17, 2021- Attachment F2

Includes standard monthly bills- rent, electric, health insurance, copy machine, copy supplies, pest control, maintenance costs, etc.

Total Amount- \$415, 476 (includes payroll)

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To accept the Bills List for the current month(s) August 21, 2021 and September 17, 2021- Attachment F2

F3: Resolution to approve the FICA Reimbursement Report through August 2021- Attachment F3

Social Security reimbursements from NJ

Last payment: \$6781.50 was received

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the FICA Reimbursement Report through August 2021- Attachment F3

F4: Resolution to approve Professional Services renewals for the 2021-2022 school year- Attachment F4

Paying back the state for FICA and SS payments on behalf of the grants received

Submitted every year in the spring

Amount for current term: \$71, 331.53

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve Professional Services renewals for the 2021-2022 school year- Attachment F4

F5: Resolution to approve new legal contract terms for School Attorney for the 2021-2022 school year- Attachment F5

School Attorney was on a retainer per month (\$800/month). However, we thought it would be wiser to have an hourly retainer fee of \$125/hour based on our need

Mrs. Taylor wanted to know about the existence of a clause in the event if something occurs that takes us to a cap or certain threshold if we need numerous hours of consultation. It was shared that there is not a clause at this time. We will follow up with the attorney to establish one.

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve new legal contract terms for School Attorney for the 2021-2022 school year- Attachment F5

F6: Resolution to approve the renewal of Dental Insurance for all Employees effective October 1, 2021- Attachment F6

Employee can have the DMO choice versus the PPO option only

Other research for dental providers was conducted; including Metlife and ASCA to compare and we chose to remain with the current provider

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the renewal of Dental Insurance for all Employees effective October 1, 2021- Attachment F6

F7: Resolution to approve to award the Bid for Bid for the Day Custodial and Maintenance Services to American Master Plumbing, with contract in the amount of \$130,500, effective October 1, 2021- September 30, 2022, with annual renewals through 2024. – Attachment F7

→ Mrs. Thomas was the witness at the Bid Opening.

→ Dr. Jones evaluated all the bids and the attorney reviewed them. The winner of the Bid was American Master Plumbing, and we have a contract for 1 year with three annual renewals.

→ Total contract: \$131,500 effective 10/1/21

→ Bid is for landscaping, cleaning, custodial and maintenance services.

*Emergencies such as plumbing/electrical issues are separate services not within the contract. However, they do give us good rates.

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve to award the Bid for Bid for the Day Custodial and Maintenance Services to American Master Plumbing, with contract in the amount of \$131,500, effective October 1, 2021- September 30, 2022, with annual renewals through 2024. – Attachment F7

F8: Board Secretary Financial Report

Pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A: 23A-16.1 (c)3, I certify that as of August 31, no major budgetary line item account expenditure exceeds the amount appropriated by the district Board of Education.

→ Dr. Jones reviewed each line item and amount

→ This is a draft of the Board Secretary's Report

→ Shows assets and resources for the year

→ Total resources and balance are in a healthy place.

→ All expenditures are allocated appropriately

→ Fund balances are separated by sources- state and local

→ Expenses are categorized by function (i.e. educational)

→ State Aid and District Aid was further broken down

→ Last page shows the original budget and any transfers made, purchase orders, available balance and expenditures for the current month. We also use this page to see if there are any adjustments to the budget needed. *This report was for the month of August.

→ Bank statement as of this month- \$433,745.03

→ No major line item or expense account exceeds the budget. *Dr. Jones will sign off on this.

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: The Board Secretary Financial Report was approved.
Attachment- F8

F9: Budget Transfers

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-13.1 et seq., whenever the school district desires to transfer amounts among line items and program categories, the transfers shall be by resolution of the Board approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the authorized membership of the Board. Therefore, listed in this resolution attachment is the exact amount of the transfers and from the application accounts or fund balance.

→ Budget from previous SBA was drafted with amounts on different lines and there are transfers that need to be made. Ex: we must cover the costs of pods and therefore, we need to transfer an amount from another maintenance line in the budget.

→ We are not adding/deleting funds - we are transferring existing funds between applicable line items

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: The Budget Transfers Report was approved. Attachment- F9

Facilities Report by Dr. Jones

- There is a lot going on in the building.
- Summer cleaning- some adjustments were needed to ensure we ready for the teachers- getting on site storage. The first pod resulted in damage to the building. The driver of the pods was in a rush and Dr. Jones is in the midst of getting quotes for the Pods Company to take care of the repairs. They want 2 quotes.
- Pods will be kept through May or June 2022 (storing furniture and teacher items)
- Painting of 6 rooms, buffering the floors, replace lights and fixtures
- Some small repairs to the roof on the older part of the building
- Cleaning the boiler and preventative maintenance
- Restored some blinds in the classrooms
- Internet- WiFi issues addressed; Dean has been supporting us with network issues and will submit a proposal for services. Dean will also reconfigure the Internet closet (labeling, organizing, etc).
- Power issues- not enough amps and needing to adjust. American Master Plumbing is supporting with this matter. We purchased backup power supplies.
- We have a termite issue, and we had an expert come in and provide the treatment which lasts for many years. This was an unexpected cost.
- New AC units in 6 classrooms

- Desks shields
- Some damage on the front steps- loose railing
- New water fountains were installed
- Building is up to code with building inspections
- Waiting on funding for additional computers and hot spots for scholars to be able to take home for virtual learning to take place.
- Electronic sign- needs repair and as a result of vendor change, we need to have someone that can provide consistent service
- Environmental Study- we need this analysis to communicate with Fulton Bank to obtain a loan to reduce our monthly mortgage rate *Ms. Dumenigo has a previous Lead Test analysis that she will provide to Dr. Jones for submittal to the County so the waiver is documented.
- Many of our maintenance costs and supplies' expenditures are covered through the ESSER grant

Principal Report- Mrs. Thomas

- Back to School Night- one grade level per night- 4 nights total, virtually for about an hour
- 1st Link It interims in Math and ELA, tested 300 students at once and it went smoothly- thank you to Mr. Harris, Business Office, Mr. Ofstad and teachers who supported the testing.
- 1st Covid Exposure: timely response, reached out to parties identified- School Nurse and the District. There were days from when the scholar was in school and the diagnosis, emergency Covid testing at school on Friday evening, team(scholars) instructed to remain remote, and teachers taught from the classroom
- We began weekly Covid testing for scholars. Those who are pre-registered by their families, will come out of gym class to get tested. About 125 families preregistered which is which is a good number, and the hope is that with the recent COVID exposure, more families will register their kids to get tested.
- Weekly Covid testing is continuing for staff- one of the most proactive measures that we can take to ensure safety as much as possible.
- Reopening Plan Need- needs to be submitted by the end of October and it is a plan in case we need to return to Remote Learning. This plan will be posted on the website. We have a strong model from last year that can be used.
- Another area in the basement to add more places for teachers to use- Thanks to Mr. Harris and Mr. Ginsun, we will be able to open the Computer Lab area for teachers to work.
- Ms. Dumenigo added that it was quite unpredictable how the year would play out- we did not know what the response would be from kids coming back to school after being secluded for a year and a half and how the kids would act when they're in the same classroom all day as opposed to traveling from class to class. Kids different when they haven't really been having to deal with different people- for example, when you're isolated and you don't have to deal with people who are annoying you, your patience is lower, and your tolerance level is not as high. It's been really interesting to observe, and it has not even been two weeks since we returned, and it feels like we're months in because it's been very emotionally challenging. Mrs.

Thomas is doing an amazing job- she has everybody's safety on her shoulders and we're trying to support her as much as we can. It's a different kind of year and she is grateful that we're together. She is waiting to hit that stride where we have a routine and can roll with it.

- Ms. Dumenigo wanted the Board to know the challenges and thank the Board for always caring about what we're going through and what our kids are going through and what our teachers are going through. We absolutely appreciate it and this year is really unique and it's really unfortunate that it's also a charter renewal because that's another thing that is hanging over our heads- we are trying to reinvent what school is like and we're going to be measured on what our school is and we are literally trying to reinvent that every day.
- Mr. Mitchell expressed his gratitude for the work of the Leadership Team and reaffirmed his belief in us to lead our community and get through this time together.

R1: Approval to Submit 2022 Renewal Plan

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: To approve the submission of the 2022 renewal plan

R2: Board Member Term Dates- see proposed schedule of New Term Dates for voting

Dr. Jones reviewed all of the voted on proposed term dates for each Board member

→ Dr. Morgan-Black: term ends June 30, 2022

→ Mr. Mitchell: term ends June 30, 2023

→ Mr. Moore: terms ends June 30, 2022

→ Mrs. Taylor: term ends June 30, 2023

→ Mrs. Spence: term ends June 30, 2024

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

BOARD VOTED: The Board Member Term Dates that were proposed and voted on schedule was approved. Attachment- R2

NEW BUSINESS:

Grievance Matter:

- Mrs. Thomas shared that the Social Worker indicated that she was resigning, effective August 11, 2021 and has expressed a grievance around several issues: demand for a document (Pass the TRASH Law) which had to be submitted by a certain time limit. We were within the time frame to submit this document. She unfortunately contracted COVID, and there had been mention that she would support our school with the transition. Once she was well enough, that offer was no longer available. Once the Social Worker was well enough to return to the school to drop off school items, communication via email became quite an assertive exchange and the Board President was shared on this email. Her requests and the time in which the Social Worker was available did not match Dr. Jones and Mrs. Thomas' availability. The tone and level of assertiveness in the emails escalated and when she came to the school, Mrs. Thomas met with her outside. During the exchange, the Social Worker demanded for this document followed by demands for a memo stipulating that she returned the school items. Mrs. Thomas was not able to produce such a memo in the moment, as she (Mrs. Thomas) was not aware of exactly what the Social Worker was returning and that she wanted such a document. The Social Worker's version of events has been provided and it is not exactly the experience that Mrs. Thomas shared. At this time, the document that the district requested has been shared.
- Mr. Mitchell asked if we received all school items, including the stipend. Mrs. Thomas acknowledged that all things were returned.
- Mr. Mitchell also asked if there was anything in that grievance letter that had merit. On its surface he didn't read anything that warranted that response.
- Mrs. Thomas expressed that we did not have the opportunity to carry out the requests the Social Worker was making because of how prompt her resignation was- exit interviews and access to information.
- We have been fortunate to be able to hire a Social Worker who is going to be incredible and is already proving to be so we were very fortunate to be able to make a hire and with a person who is just jumping in so many different ways and very graciously. The other part to this was that our second social worker is currently on paternity leave so this was really this unexpected exit.
- The Social Worker expressed to Mrs. Thomas that she was lucky she's telling her now which was a week before we were about to open our school because I could have told you on the 7th of September which is the first day of school. This was the beginning of sort of the exit process.
- Dr. Jones mentioned that she did reach to reach out to her and had waited for her a couple times to come up to the school. (Dr. Jones shared the timeline of availability that was shared and not followed through by the Social Worker).
- Mr. Mitchell inquired if we were obligated to respond to this grievance and Dr. Jones shared that she will submit additional details for the timeline of

events and email communications. Dr. Jones will also review our grievance policy.

- Ms. Dumenigo shared that there was a lack of courtesy on the Social Worker's part for availability to meet with Mrs. Thomas and Dr. Jones.
- Mr. Mitchell suggested that the attorney respond to the grievance. Dr. Jones shared that our School Attorney is aware of the situation. Mr. Mitchell will draft a response and send it to Dr. Jones and Mrs. Thomas for review and then send to the Social Worker.

Start Strong Assessment:

Baseline assessment in October to measure present academic levels for scholars.

Charter Renewal:

- Board members to submit application parts as soon as possible.
- Ms. Dumenigo emphasized the need to review our mission and beliefs prior to the visit.

Upcoming Events:

→ October is respect month and 1st week is Respect Week (Sprinkle Kindness). We required by law to observe this time with special events and assemblies. Wednesday, October 6th Ms. Brower and Ms. Dumenigo will lead an Ubuntu meeting via Zoom – Movie Night. They will show clips

Other Activities:

1. Kids can write notes to each other- Sprinkle Kindness Gram thing and say something nice to someone else in the community.
2. The other thing is that the kids will give a gift of Donuts to one another so the 8th graders will give the fifth graders donuts and say welcome to our school then our fifth graders are going to give it to our eighth graders and say "this is high school placement time. Good luck with your high school choices." The 7th graders will give donuts to our 6th graders and vice versa.
3. LOL (League of Leaders) is going to start meeting soon and they will probably come up with a Dress Down Day during the month
4. Hispanic Heritage: working with Ms. Gendreau to showcase scholar latin dance performances and readings.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Charter Renewal Discussion- November 3rd
- Regular Board Meeting Dates 2021-2022- see monthly schedule attached *June meeting will need to be changed in June as it is on graduation day
- Board Member Training- transcripts and course: Governance IV mandatory training- Dr. Jones will provide links for course
- Mr. Mitchell- reminder to members to complete Board survey

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

- NONE

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59PM

Motion to approve: Mrs. Spence

Seconded: Mrs. Taylor

Vote:

Mr. Mitchell- in favor

Mrs. Taylor – in favor

Mrs. Spence- in favor

Motion Carried

Motion Carried: Meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM

Next Board meeting on October 27, 2021