

**MEETING MINUTES  
OF  
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
October 5, 2021  
Held virtually Via Zoom**

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, Allison McCarthy, Erin Stiling, Thomas Walenchok, George Childs, Dr. Gretchen Generett.

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Lisa Augustin (PPS), Matt Morella (Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky), Darren Gray

Rachel Amankulor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment** – none.

**Approval of Minutes.** The minutes of the September 7, 2021 and September 10, 2021 meetings were reviewed. *George Childs made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Allison McCarthy and carried unanimously.*

**Financial Update.** Brian Smith reviewed the August financials. Catalyst was awarded a two-year grant in the amount of \$450,000 from the Allegheny Foundation which will be used for capital expenditures and general operating support. There are currently 182 students enrolled which is 18 higher than budgeted. Brian reviewed a financial projection showing the school's year ending cash balance at \$1.4M which is \$950,000 above budget. Brian discussed the need to invest in operations, staffing, curriculum, and capital as we move forward. This includes hiring food service support, support staff, an HR manager, professional development staff, and various capital expenditures.

**Approval of Bills and Payments to Vendors.** The list of bills and payments to vendors was reviewed. *Erin Stiling made a motion to approve the bills and payments to vendors, seconded by George Childs and carried unanimously.*

**Enrollment Update.** Brian stated, as mentioned earlier, that enrollment is stronger than projected at 182 students. Kindergarten and first grade are full which is a testament to the school's success. Brian expects transportation issues and driver shortages to have an impact on enrollment in the future.

Catalyst will be preparing its systems for the launch of its new applications which will be on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Brian is preparing a marketing plan which he will ask the Board to review in November.

**Human Resources Update.** Brian informed the board that the school filled the PE position. He also let the board know that a scholar support school culture associate resigned. There are several

vacant positions that Brian is seeking to fill. Alison congratulated Brian for filling the PE position, and she asked Brian about the status of filling the other open positions. Brian explained the challenges surrounding the effort but intends to fill these positions as soon as possible.

**COVID-19 Update.** Catalyst has avoided the need to shut down any classrooms or quarantine any students in light of the pandemic. Brian said Catalyst is moving forward with the state COVID-19 testing program through Concentric. Consent forms were sent out to parents today and pooled testing will begin as early as next week. He reported that all staff is fully vaccinated or is in the process of being fully vaccinated.

Darren Grey joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**Academic Update.** The Academic Committee met on September 27, 2021. The committee analyzed the 2020-2021 NWEA MAP data. Darren presented performance breakdowns for each grade. Catalyst sets growth goals for its scholars which are rigorous and monitored throughout the year. Overall, the scholars performed well but improvement is needed. Darren presented information about a new phonics and guided reading programs that were implemented. He showed the Board some videos that demonstrate how the programs work. The Committee will identify key focus areas and draft meeting agendas for the Committee for this school year. The board thanked Darren and Brian for their work.

Gretchen Generett left the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

**Public comment:** none

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m..