

**MEETING MINUTES  
OF  
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
November 2, 2021  
Held virtually Via Zoom**

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, Allison McCarthy, Thomas Walenchok, Carey Harris, George Childs, Bob Jones, Erin Stiling.

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Lisa Augustin (PPS), Malisha Scott, Carrie Potter-Murray, Alan Shuckrow (Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky), 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 October 5, 2021 meeting were reviewed. *Erin Stiling made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by George Childs and carried unanimously.*

**Financial Update.** Brian Smith reviewed the September financials. Overall, the school is in a good economic position. Enrollment reduced from 182 students to 176 students which is still above budget. Brian expects to have 115 days of cash on hand at the end of the year. The goal was to have at least 60 days of cash on hand at the end of the year. Brian noted the Allegheny Foundation Grant has positively impacted the school's cash flow. We have a few employment vacancies which has had a positive impact on the school's overall net position but we would like to get these positions filled.

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

**Board Trustee Nomination.** Rachel nominated Majestic Lane to fill the vacancy created by Carl's resignation. The Board reviewed Majestic's experience and desire to serve on Catalyst's Board. Majestic Lane has over 20 years of experience as a non-profit executive, municipal leader and social entrepreneur. Currently, Mr. Lane is the Chief Equity Officer for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. In this role, he leads the Conference's efforts to advance economic equity and inclusion for the ten-county region of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Prior to his leadership at the conference, Mr. Lane also served as Deputy Chief of Staff and the inaugural Chief Equity Officer in the office of Mayor William Peduto where he established the city of Pittsburgh's first Office of Equity and led the Peduto administration's focus on opportunity for all residents of the City of Pittsburgh in Education, Workforce Development, Safe & Healthy Communities and

Digital Inclusion. Rachel expressed excitement for Majestic Lane to join the board, which Carey echoed. *Tom Walenchok made a motion to appoint Majestic Lane to serve on the Catalyst Board of Trustees for a term of four years, seconded by George Childs and carried unanimously.* Alan Shuckrow reminded the board that Mr. Lane will need to fill out an Ethics Form and complete Act 55 Board Member training. Alan mentioned that the Charter Coalition is holding an Act 55 training session on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Academic Update: MAP Assessments.** Darren Gray discussed the MAP Data. It gives us a snapshot of where scholars are at the beginning of the year and their growth over time. Darren noted that scholars were presented with challenges last year due to COVID which makes it seem like there has not been much growth, but, as Carey pointed out, our scholars have made progress between last year and this year which is good. Rachel asked what the mechanisms are for assessing growth. Erin asked about Progress Monitoring Measures. Darren said we will aggregate data again in December. Darren is working on creating a dashboard to keep all of our data in one location so we can use it and compare different sets of data to determine scholar's overall progress. Carey asked if the attendance problem last year impacted our scholars' scores. Darren said that we haven't performed that analysis yet but that we will. Carey thinks it will encourage parents to get students to come to school. After a significant discussion, Brian presented academic goals for the year. Brian will meet with the Academic Committee this month and propose goals to the board next month for review. Rachel asked how the goals differ from last year. Darren answered that they are shooting for higher academic growth this year.

**PA Comprehensive Plan Update.** Brian is preparing a comprehensive plan that he will have for the board's review. The plan will need to be submitted to the state. He presented a list of persons that will serve on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. *Tom Walenchok made a motion to accept the Steering Committee members as presented, seconded by Carey Harris and carried unanimously.* A copy of the list of Steering Committee members will be attached to these minutes.

**Enrollment Update.** Our open enrollment period is from November 1<sup>st</sup> through January. We will have a lottery in March if necessary.

**Operations Update.** Brian will give an update on the second floor renovation at our next meeting.

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

Brian told the board that we have had an issue with our cleaning services. They have been short on staffing. We are considering bringing in an alternative cleaning services vendor if necessary.

Brian said we have made some investments in bathroom fixtures with automated toilets and faucets.

Brian indicated that parents have been frustrated with transportation issues. A bus has been dropping off students late at the end of the day but Brian said this situation is getting better.

We are having regular PTO meetings, with 15-20 parents in attendance. Brian learned that some parents have started a Catalyst parents Facebook page. Erin said she is excited that the family engagement piece is coming together. Erin mentioned the idea of creating a Family Teacher Organization instead of Parent Teacher Organization as a way to be more inclusive. Brian appreciated that concern and noted that some grandparents were at the last PTO meeting.

Brian presented a list of projects under consideration, including facility upgrades and campus upgrades. Many of these items will have to be coordinated with the landlord.

**COVID-19 Update.** Brian indicated we are three weeks into our COVID testing program and have had all negative pools but voluntary participation isn't as high as desired or anticipated. We are partnering with Children's Hospital to host a children's vaccination clinic. There will be adult vaccinations and boosters available at the clinic. The first clinic will be November 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Human Resources Update.** Brian reported we recently filled two inclusive learning associate positions. We had two teacher resignations, Music and STEM. We are actively trying to fill these positions. *Carey Harris made a motion to accept the list of hires and resignations, seconded by Erin Stiling and carried unanimously.*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.