

**MEETING MINUTES
OF
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
October 4, 2022**

Held in Person at Catalyst Academy Charter School and virtually Via Zoom

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, Thomas Walenchok, Carey Harris, Majestic Lane

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Dr. Carrie Potter-Murray, Courtney Taylor, Alan Shuckrow and Gilda Arroyo (SMGG)

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

Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the September 7, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Carey Harris *made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Majestic Lane and carried unanimously.*

Financial Update. Brian Smith gave an update in that the districts have not yet paid this fiscal year but this is expected soon. The cash position will improve when PPS and other districts pay. Catalyst has two grants for a total of \$140,000 that it is eligible for and applications have been submitted to the State. There are some requirements of the State that we are working through.

Mr. Smith is projecting 77 days of cash on hand at the end of the fiscal year. Last year we had a number of grants that increased our cash on hand at the end of the fiscal year. Minimally, Catalyst would have at least 60 days of cash on hand at the end of the fiscal year but would prefer to have 90. We will continue to monitor.

The rent expense about to go up because the landlord has completed the second phase of the renovations. This is budgeted for in this fiscal year.

Payment of Vendors. Brian Smith reviewed the monthly vendor payments. Everything is standard. There are no unexpected out of budget items. He did note that Catalyst switched cleaning suppliers. *Majestic Lane, made a motion to approve the payments to vendors and all outstanding bills, seconded by Carey Harris and carried unanimously.*

Special Education Collaborative Initiative. Brian Smith indicated that PPS conducts an annual audit of charter schools. At the end of the PPS audit, PPS asked if there was a way to work more collaboratively between PPS and Catalyst. Special education is an area that we are exploring. He then turned it over to Dr. Potter-Murray. Low incidence needs in least restrictive environment. PPS looking to work with Catalyst to remedy a lack of collaboration between special education departments and to pilot a new process that helps families advocate for what services they are entitled to. We are happy to be working with PPS and looking to help each other expand the capacity of both the district and Catalyst. We may ultimately have an MOU with PPS that would

be a model that other charter schools in the City could sign onto. Dr. Potter-Murray provided some examples of what we may do, without giving any names or personally identifying information.

Lisa Augustine of PPS has set up a meeting in November with charter leaders to discuss special education issues.

Human Resources Report/Update. There is one new hire, a new teacher. But, unfortunately, there are several resignations of teachers. *Carey Harris made a motion to approve the Human Resources report, seconded by Majestic Lane and carried unanimously.*

Staffing Challenges. There are teaching shortages locally and nationally. The challenges of losing five (5) general education teachers since the start of school has challenged the organization. Our four (4) Deans have been pressed into duty as teachers in the short term. We are looking for new teachers. There is no slack in the system right now. If anyone is out sick or on leave there are gaps that are difficult to cover. We are aggressively trying to hire teachers and full-time substitutes. Because the deans are teaching, the mentoring and coaching of teachers has not been able to occur as normally designed. Courtney Taylor then provided additional context of the challenges and complimented the dedication of the existing team/staff. Our school day is longer than the traditional district school day which can be seen as a negative to attract talent. The Board offered its support and encouragement. A number of ideas on both recruitment and retention were discussed. This is among the top priorities at Catalyst now, to fill the teaching positions with qualified candidates.

Review of Academic Goals/Progress. Ms. Taylor shared results from the 2021-2022 school year in terms of meeting academic goals as well as the initial MAP scores from the beginning of this year. The staff will be analyzing the data further. Staffing is again a challenge in terms of being able to offer the correct amount of additional support instruction.

Ms. Taylor also explained to the Board a “joy pop-up” program designed to reward scholars who engage and participate in certain challenges (for ex.: wear blue or green) (make good choices). This is a way to keep incentivizing good decisions and to bring joy. They are looking at a screening of a movie as an upcoming program.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28.