

**MEETING MINUTES  
OF  
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
August 1, 2023**

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

Trustee Attendees: Majestic Lane, Erin Stiling, Thomas Walenchok, Allison McCarthy

Other Attendees: Brian Smith and Alan Shuckrow(SMGG)

Vice Chair Majestic Lane called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment:** None

**Approval of Minutes.** The Board considered the approval of the June 6, 2023 minutes.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the June 6, 2023 minutes; seconded by Erin Stiling, and it carried unanimously.*

**Financial Update.** Brian Smith noted that there would not be a financial report this evening because they are transitioning between financial system vendors and the reporting is not yet ready. There is no financial distress or problems that require the Board's attention at this time.

**Approval of Bills and Vendor Payments.** Brian Smith presented the June bills and vendor payments. All is in order.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the bills and payments to vendors; seconded by Erin Stiling, and it carried unanimously.*

**AIU Agreement for General Special Education Services.** Mr. Smith requested Board action to approve a services agreement with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) for various special education services. The agreement is the standard AIU agreement and does not bind Catalyst to use any particular services—just that if Catalyst chooses to do so the agreement provides the terms. Historically, Catalyst has used the AIU for school psychologist services. The agreement has been reviewed by the Solicitor.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the AIU Agreement; seconded by Tom Walenchok and it carried unanimously.*

**AIU Special Education Supervision Services.** Mr. Smith explained that this is a second agreement with the AIU for a certified special education supervisor to work two days per week with Catalyst because Catalyst does not currently have this expertise on staff. The amount is up to \$54,285/year. This is important for compliance purposes. Catalyst has PDE special education monitoring during this coming year and so it is important to secure this expertise.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the AIU Special Education Supervision Agreement; seconded by Erin Stiling and it carried unanimously.*

**Homewood Children’s Village (HCV) MOU.** Mr. Smith stated that HCV is applying for a grant focused on community schools and that Catalyst would like to be included. If HCV is successful in receiving the grant, Catalyst would follow the Communities Schools model and would receive technical assistance with a focus on mental health services.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the HCV MOU; seconded by Allison McCarthy and it carried unanimously.*

**Human Resources Report.** Mr. Smith presented a list of 14 new hires and 12 non returners as well as position changes. The report also contained a list of open positions. Mr. Smith described for the Board the ongoing efforts to fill those positions. The Board engaged in discussion about the market for educators. Mr. Smith said Catalyst is looking to work with Duquesne on a teaching pipeline. The group also discussed compensation for teachers.

*Majestic Lane moved to approve the Human Resources report; seconded by Allison McCarthy and it carried unanimously.*

**Strategic Priorities for 2023-2024.** Mr. Smith outlined four (4) major priorities for the year: (1) enrollment; (2) building of the team; (3) student attendance; and (4) student achievement.

Under each of these priorities the administration has identified goals.

For enrollment, the main goal is to fill the Kindergarten which is currently at 48 with 68 spots total are available. Retention of 95% is also a goal. Although the total school enrollment currently sits at 285 which is what was budgeted, that is because the upper grades are higher than anticipated and it is still important to fill the Kindergarten.

For recruiting and team building, the key is to fill the open positions. The Board had already discussed this topic under the Human Resources report.

For attendance, last school year there was a problem with chronic absenteeism which means greater than 10% of school days missed. Mr. Smith produced a comprehensive attendance/truancy plan which included hiring staff focused on attendance issues. With the pandemic being over it is hopeful that attendance will improve.

For student achievement, the Board reviewed specific goals to raise proficiency in math and English language arts as well as science. Schoolwide, the goals are for ELA for 100% of scholars to grow 4 steps/year (2 steps/semester) and for Math that 2/3 scholars meet their Math MAP goal. Mr. Smith shared 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA goals for proficiency as well.

Finally, Mr. Smith shared with the Board the extensive “training camp” schedule for over the next few weeks with staff. This is a rigorous professional development plan. He also noted that the addition of Meghan Lawrence as Principal has been very positive.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30.