

Minutes November 18, 2020

Present: Erik Bengtsen, Steve Foxley, Mary Glauser, Larry Hintze, Walker Kennedy, Nate Seim, Kelle Smart

Staff: Ram Prasad Boppana, Gareth Orr, Sonia Woodbury

Excused: Taylor Woodbury

Walker opened the meeting at 4:16 pm.

There was no public comment.

**Approval of Minutes:** The Board noted their appreciation of the legislature's intention to give teachers \$1,500. Steve made a motion to approve the June, July, and October minutes as presented, Mary seconded, and all were in favor.

**Financial Report:** Prasad reviewed the financial statements for October. Prasad noted that the FY21 budget will be adjusted after we receive finalized budgets from the state and updating for current situations such as a large difference in the budget due to City Academy not currently using the federal meals program.

**Conflict of Interest:** Prasad thanked those who had already done it and asked others to return their signed conflict of interest documents to him as soon as possible.

**Director's Update:** Sonia talked about improved culture of the school among teachers and students with being able to now see each other in virtual classes four days per week. Sonia reviewed data on the School Improvement Plan Goals made in service of improving graduation rate and each student's best strength of graduation. Our graduation rate for SY2020 will probably be around 80%, maybe slightly under due to there still being some students who once attended City Academy, left, and then never graduated from any school. Of students who started their senior year with City Academy there were two dropouts, all seniors took math during their senior year, and three students graduated with distinction. Sonia noted that the percentage of students passing all their core classes first quarter was lower this year than it was last year, and that this can be directly attributed to disruption caused by the pandemic and shifting between in-person and online teaching and learning during the quarter. The faculty expects student attainment to improve now that the situation is more stable.

**Approval of Consolidated Improvement Plan Budget:** Sonia reviewed the budgets for each of the federal and state funding sources and how they are set to be used to support the school improvement plan – Title IA, Title IIA, Title III, Title IV, Federal IDEA Part B, PQE grant, Accelerated Students Program, Enhancement for At-Risk Students Support, School LAND Trust Grant, and Teacher & Student Success Act Grant. Steve made a motion to approve the Consolidated Improvement Plan Budget as presented, Mary seconded, and all were in favor.

**Board Responsibilities for School LAND Trust:** Sonia reviewed the Board's responsibility to annually review and approve the Grant program and budget recommended by the City Academy Advisory Council (CAAC) who are acting as the school's LAND Trust Council. CAAC reviews the school improvement plan priorities and recommends a budget in support of those goals.

**Approval of LAND Trust Budget Amendment:** This month the CAAC reviewed and recommends to the Board an amendment to this year's budget that was approved last February before the pandemic began. The need for more chrome books that were in the budget for SY2021 became urgent in spring and summer 2020 to allow the school to supply students with technology to use at home. CARE Act funds were available and were used to purchase those chrome books. The amended budget shifts funds from technology purchase to additional technology support from our IT manager along with increasing funds to be used for teacher advising, the counselor and lead teacher for increased student support. Steve made a motion to approve the LAND Trust budget amendment as presented, Larry seconded, and all were in favor.

**Approval of suspending the policy for teacher school attendance bonus during remote teaching:** Sonia pointed out to the Board that the policy enacted last year for encouraging teachers to be at school would not apply during a time of teaching virtually from a remote site. Sonia requested suspension of the bonus plan during this time. Mary made a motion to approve suspending the teacher attendance bonus, Larry seconded, and all were in favor.

**Update to Fee Policy:** Sonia noted for the Board that the fee policy and structure for FY21 that they adopted last spring did not include the required cap on total student fees. Sonia reported that CAAC reviewed the proposed cap of \$1,000 per student and found it acceptable. The Board discussed the cap and are set to approve it on its second hearing at the next Board meeting in December.

**Enrollment, Attendance, & Attainment:** Gareth reported that during the school's first week of fully virtual classes in mid-October average attendance was 75%. That was a good improvement from what had happened with the hybrid schedule where many students only had about one contact with their teacher per week. Average attendance in the new virtual schedule dipped to about 70% during the following weeks and administration and teachers redoubled their efforts to get all students attending classes. This week so far, average attendance has been 84%. The difficulty for teachers is that it is not the same 84% each day and we are still focusing efforts on improving attendance.

Gareth thanked the Board for their decision in October to move classes online. The stability and consistency of this schedule has been a tremendous asset to teachers and students. Too many students were struggling first quarter and three weeks into second quarter we are still working with some of them. However, attainment should be better now that students work with their teachers four times per week. Board members noted they too appreciate that the issue of needed stability was brought to them in October so that they could make a choice for consistency rather than ping-ponging back and forth between in-person and online teaching and learning.

**Competency-based Education:** Sonia reminded the Board about the Competency-Based Education work that City Academy has begun participating in this year with recognition and a grant from the state. She is excited to have this support to focus so clearly on the original mission of the school to work with and then report each student's best learning progress in terms of competencies they are demonstrating academically, as well as civic and life-long competencies for engagement and personal success. Sonia noted that communicating this personalized approach to a quality, well-rounded education has been difficult to communicate and has not appeared to be a good recruiting tool. She welcomes the strategic planning the Board is undertaking to better communicate what City Academy offers

**Strategic Planning:** The Board looked at input from faculty concerning the question posed last month about what our value proposition is to parents and students. Sonia discussed working to get back to our mission of being city-centered, and of preparing students to be city-involved, knowledgeable citizens. She would like to see City Academy being a school of choice for students who want to challenge themselves to learn and grow, rather than so much a school of resort for students struggling in other schools. More work on school promotion to continue.

**Adjournment:** Kelle made a motion to close the meeting, Erik seconded, and all were in favor.  
Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

DATED the 18<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020 CITY ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By: Sonia Woodbury

APPROVED the 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021 CITY ACADEMY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

For audio file of meeting minutes click [here](#)