

**MEETING MINUTES
OF
CATALYST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
December 1, 2020**

Held Virtually Via Zoom & In-Person at 7061 Lemington Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Trustee Attendees: Rachel Amankulor, Carey Harris, Erin Stiling, George Childs, Carl Cooper, Allison McCarthy, Gretchen Gennerett, Tom Walenchok

Other Attendees: Brian Smith, Darren Gray, Alan Shuckrow (Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky), Dr. Carrie Potter-Murray, Monica Cooper, Laura Lerand, MaLisha Scott, Lisa Augustin (PPS)

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

Public Comment--None

Approval of Minutes of November 2, 2020 regular meeting. Carey Harris *made a motion to approve the minutes for November 2, 2020, seconded by Carl Cooper and carried unanimously.*

Payments of Bills/to Vendors. Brian reviewed the bill list that the board had been presented. The most significant expense was a payment for furniture, this was the second of two payments for this. Brian reviewed some of the other higher expenses for the month, all of which were standard and in line with budget. *George Childs made a motion to approve the payments of bills, seconded by Gretchen Gennertt and carried unanimously.*

Internet Safety Policy. Brian presented a reapproval of our internet safety policy along with cyberbullying plan. This was approved previously, before we had official public meetings and due to our Federal grant they want us to now approve it at a public meeting. *George Childs made a motion to reapprove the internet safety policy, seconded by Tom Walenchok and carried unanimously.*

Finance Update. We are still projecting a shortfall from our budget due primarily to 1st grade enrollment being lower than we had anticipated. We do see our enrollment remaining stable for the rest of the year. We have cut back on some expenses as needed. We are forecasting a 14-day cash balance at the end of the fiscal year. Things are still about the same as last month. We will likely need to explore other liquidity during the Summer. Ed Ops puts together our financial reports. As to our rent, the expense for the year is \$350,000 of which \$100,000 was prepaid and \$175,000 was placed in escrow at the beginning of the year as a bank requirement.

COVID-19 Update. The State has indicated that Allegheny County is in a “substantial” transmission condition and so has recommended all virtual learning at this time. We made that decision for two weeks. We are in the middle of this two-week period. We are following our

plan which we had already developed. We are implementing distance learning in the best way possible. We have had high engagement for the students online. Darren explained how Catalyst is supporting the teachers to transition to virtual teaching and support families. We have offered significant professional development in best practices on online learning and scholar engagement. He also reviewed the online learning schedule with the Board. The day includes a common lunch break and office hours which offer the time to ask questions or receive additional support. All of the instruction blocks are synchronous learning.

Brian mentioned that if we were to move back to in person learning we would have to certify to the State that we are able to do so and follow all the guidelines. The Board engaged in a discussion about whether Catalyst should go back to in person learning and if so, when. Generally, the Board agreed that school should be in person as soon as we are confident of safety. We cannot operate out of fear. Safety is very important but getting back to in person is best as soon as it can happen. Brian agreed we want to get back as soon as possible but indicated that with the case rates being so high right now it is likely we would not go back to in person until early 2021. He agreed to keep the Board informed.

Equity-Based MTSS Process. Dr. Carrie Potter Murray and Monica Cooper initiated this discussion and presented a power point on this topic. MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Organizational framework, data and resources are the three components. Children of all levels deserve to have instruction aimed at their own levels and goals. There are three tiers in the process. All scholars get Tier 1; some scholars get Tier 2 and few scholars get Tier 3. They discussed the Catalyst referral system as well as the responsiveness to the pandemic. We have placed an emphasis on providing targeted support during remote learning. The leadership team is actively participating in the targeted support for students. However, even those that are not as in need of significant targeted support are also being supported. The Board expressed its thanks to the team for developing this proactive approach as a great foundation for Catalyst.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.