

**Rockford Charter School Organization
Board Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2020**

Meeting Held VIA Cisco Webex Pursuant to COVID-19 Executive Order No. 16

1. Call to Order – 11:32 a.m.

Present: Kenneth Cunningham, Scott Anderson, Executive Director Mike Williams, Anisha Grimmitt, Principal Shavina Baker, Rebecca Francis, Rick Aylward and Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski

Not Present: Carla Redd and Nathan Bryant

2. Public Comment – None

3. New Business

a. Resolution to authorize Board President to execute the Charter Renewal Agreement (Action Item)

- i. Kenneth Cunningham made a Motion to approve a Resolution to authorize the Board President to Execute the Charter Agreement. Seconded by Anisha Grimmitt.
- ii. Attorney Sosnowski advised that this was a two year Charter Agreement that would commence on July 1, 2020 and end on June 30, 2022. There were some changes with regard to reporting and sharing of information. There were also some changes to the agreement through the Board process that provides certain specific educational benchmarks that the District will be looking for the Charter School to meet in order to qualify for renewal in the future. The maximum enrollment was left at 1500. If RCSO does not hit these minimum benchmarks that have been outlined for achievement, the Charter School will potentially be looking at a non-renewal.
- iii. Attorney Sosnowski stated that for the school year of 2020-2021, results must reflect at least ten percent of Charter School students being proficient in the English Language Arts and five percent being proficient in Math. The IAR results must reflect a student growth percentile of fifty or above in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. Anisha Grimmitt inquired as to where the Charter School is now. Principal Baker stated that currently the school is at forty-eight percent for growth for both Language Arts and Math and this last year the school was at six percent for ELA and one percent for Math in IAR assessment.
- iv. Anisha Grimmitt inquired if the plans that have been implemented could get the school to reach the five percent for Math and the ten percent for ELA. Principal Baker stated yes and noted that the District has actually set forth metrics that are

lower than RCSO's school improvement plan with ISBE. The school improvement plan that takes through them through the next three years is higher than what has been set forth by RPS.

- v. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the financial piece of the contract will remain the same in terms of allocation. The way that the funding will be provided in terms of the timing of installments was revised just to match how RCSO is currently receiving funding, but RCSO is still to receive 100% of the School District's per capital tuition.
- vi. A roll call vote took place:
 - 1. Anisha Grimmitt voted yes.
 - 2. Kenneth Cunningham voted yes.
 - 3. Scott Anderson voted yes.
- vii. Motion passes.
- b. Virtual Learning Update (Discussion)
 - i. Principal Baker reported that all of the teachers are engaged with online learning Monday through Friday. This includes one hour of instruction for both Math and Reading from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. every day and then teachers are open for office hours, small group, and one on one instruction for students from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. every day. Even students who have IEP's are scheduled time for resource and both the interventionist and SPED Team are sitting in on classroom instruction for those students that have IEP Minutes as well as adding an additional level of support and intervention for the lowest performing students. Students are given weekly assignments via Class Dojo.
 - ii. Principal Baker stated that they recognize that not every student can get online at 9:00 a.m. so every single teacher has been posting their lessons to Class Dojo. Principal Baker demonstrated Class Dojo with the Board and showed them how it works.
 - iii. Anisha Grimmitt inquired if the students are learning new material or if they are learning the same material that they had previously learned in class. Principal Baker stated that they are still following their pacing guide that goes through material that they should go through with students before the end of the year. The teachers are meeting with each other to help with learning deficits and move forward to the next grade.
 - iv. Principal Baker stated that prior to COVID-19, Jackson students were already familiar with online learning as they had previously had set times within their 90 minute block of uninterrupted math and reading where they had individual programing that was geared toward their ability and their grade level, but also stretching them toward their next one. They are using two programs specifically, Lexia and Zearn and S.T. Math. All of the programs are collecting data daily that lets the school know how much work has been completed within the program,

- where the deficits are for re-teach and intervention as well as grade level reading levels and where they are in math.
- v. Anisha Grimmitt inquired if the administration knew how many students that had not been reached. Principal Baker stated that they have a list of students that they know for a fact that they are coming back and there are eight of those individual families that they have not been able to contact. With utilization of the online programs, they have about 85 percent of their student population engaged. They are following up with that 15 percent weekly to find out why for whatever reason they have not been engaged and why they have not been able to contact them. Principal Baker stated that they have distributed technology such as laptops or hotspots. This plan can take them through the summer because they already have the devices. Principal Baker is looking for online learning over the summer and possibly offering a stipend to one or two teachers for one on one instruction that may be needed. They will continue with this format so that they can continue to collect the data and be placed in classrooms based on student ability.
 - vi. Kenneth Cunningham inquired if the administration has been thinking about how Jackson is going to plan for the next school year and if there has been any thought process on how it will work being back in the building with a different environment and if the administration has started looking at planning and strategizing for that approach? Principal Baker stated absolutely. Executive Director Williams stated that their insurance carrier has had online webinars to discuss the procedure for gearing back up and opening the school. In addition, Executive Director Williams has assigned staff members to be responsible for implementation of specific aspects of the Charter Renewal document so that everyone is moving in the right direction.
 - vii. Anisha Grimmitt inquired about the stipend for teachers over the summer that Principal Baker had previously mentioned and whether that was in the budget to pay for and where that money is coming from? Principal Baker stated that the school can apply for funds through the CARES Act, but she was planning to use whatever overage that had been dedicated for Title One and there are things that they cannot use those funds for because they are not in the building like supplies, professional development and shift the overage over to tutoring.
 - viii. Scott Anderson inquired as to where the administration was at with financials on this in terms of how it would fit. Rick Aylward stated the proposed budget for the upcoming year needs to be finalized with Executive Director Williams and Principal Baker and then schedule a finance committee meeting to go over those items before they are presented to the Board. The stipends for the teachers and tutoring over the summer need to be discussed and added to the budget.
 - ix. Anisha Grimmitt inquired as to how recruiting looks in this pandemic and what are the goals. Rebecca Francis stated that she has sat through webinars and done research and found that people are going for the more emotional and compassionate

side of marketing. The school is doing really well in their efforts for e-learning and there is a difference between RPS and RCSO. The approach that RCSO is moving forward with now is offering to have a student's friend to be there to check out the e-learning and see what Jackson is doing especially with the summer learning program that they will be launching in conjunction with that. They have been using Facebook ads and Instagram ads to boost education online at night. They also do front end marketing tactics with billboard. They have recently had commercials that appeared on BET, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network some of those areas where children are watching are being targeted. Fox News always runs their ads and gave them an extra 30-50 slots for COVID-19. Rebecca Francis stated that she would send everyone the current marketing plan. They still want to be careful with their approach because this is still a sensitive topic for people and the last thing we want to do is overwhelm them with another task but rather make their load easier. They are also doing direct mailing and pushing out a half day kinder approach as well.

4. Old Business –

- a. Attorney Sosnowski stated that with regard to the Charter Agreement there are certain benchmarks that need to be met with regard to the addition of board members to the Board. As well as, Board Member training. The additional Board Members is a benchmark that need to be focused on in the next couple of months. Attorney Sosnowski inquired if there was anyone that that they could bring forth for discussion at the next board meeting.
- b. Executive Director Williams stated that the Board needs to meet in June to address the budget for the next fiscal year because the next fiscal year begins in July.
- c. Scott Anderson stated that he will work on getting a finance committee meeting done either next week or the week after to be ready for the June 18th Board Meeting.
- d. Scott Anderson stated that he has had conversations with three candidates and they were able to meet with two of them, they were scheduled to meet with the third when the lock down occurred. He will schedule a meeting once they go into Phase 3 for the first week of June to be ready for discussion at the June 18th meeting.
- e. Attorney Sosnowski inquired with Principal Baker regarding the status of finding a parent board member. Principal Baker stated that two of the three candidates she had are not returning to the school due to a move and the other one has a child moving on to middle school. The candidate that she does have left, Principal Baker was sending her for a background check before everything happened and she has not been able to get in to do that. The candidate is a small business owner and her business right now is closed due to COVID-19. Principal Baker would like to recommend this candidate and will have conversations with the candidate about what the next steps are. Scott Anderson inquired if Principal Baker would like to recommend the candidate on June 18th, has she provided the candidate with a letter of interest and background check information that she could share with the board at this point in preparation for the June 18th meeting. Principal Baker stated that the candidate's name is April Nelson and she is an owner of a tattoo shop in Rockford.

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Her daughter started with RCSO in Kindergarten and from the very beginning she has been very hands on, attended every single event that the school has had, has great participation in parent teacher conferences, and has given a lot of great feedback for the teacher and the school. Scott Anderson asked that before the June meeting that Principal Baker get a letter of interest from Ms. Nelson.

5. Next Board Meeting Date and Location – June 18, 2020 at 11:30 a.m., Swedish American Hospital or virtually if still allowed under Illinois law.
6. Adjournment: Motion by Scott Anderson and seconded by Anisha Grimmertt.
 - a. Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

