

**Rockford Charter School Organization
Emergency Board Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2021**

Meeting Held VIA Microsoft Teams Pursuant to COVID-19 Executive Order No. 16

1. Call to Order – 11:36 a.m.

Present: Anisha Grimmertt, Kenneth Cunningham, Antonio Turner, Carla Redd, Principal Shavina Baker, and Attorney James Kane

Not Present: Scott Anderson and Jay Ware

2. Approval of Agenda

- a. Motion to Approve Agenda made by Anisha Grimmertt and seconded by Antonio Turner
- b. Roll Call Vote:
 - i. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - ii. Kenneth Cunningham – Aye.
 - iii. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.

3. Public Comment - None

4. Discuss Amendment to the Second Restatement and Extension of Charter School Agreement

- a. Dr. Cunningham advised that at the last RCSO Board meeting, the Board questioned whether or not an extension of the Charter School agreement would be a good path for RCSO considering the effects on students' performance due to the pandemic and decided to put forth to RPS 205 for consideration in addition to the extension of the Charter Agreement that there be adjustments made to the metrics. Dr. Cunningham advised that he sent a letter to RPS 205 and there was a meeting on May 19, 2021 with representatives from RPS 205 and members of their Board to discuss RCSO's request. RPS 205 declined the request to discuss other terms of the Charter Agreement and would only discuss a one year extension of the Agreement. In RPS 205's words, they proposed the extension to address the effects of the pandemic on learning loss.
- b. Anisha Grimmertt inquired that if RCSO were to not accept the extension what would RCSO's option be. Principal Baker shared that the inference presented during the meeting was that RCSO was fortunate to get renewed as RPS 205 could have chosen not to renew the Charter during the last Charter Renewal. Principal Baker stated that there are a lot of steps that have to be taken in order to revoke a

charter prior to a discussion of a revocation of a Charter and then there is an appeals process. Principal Baker stated that no representatives from RPS 205 have been to RCSO since the charter renewal and she has invited RPS 205 officials to visit the school to provide insight into the progress, academics, climate and culture of RCSO. Principal Baker stated that even if RPS 205 did not intend to renew RCSO's charter, there are steps that RPS 205 would have to take in notifying RCSO of their intent, with a score card and notifications that are needed so that RCSO is able to respond appropriately. Principal Baker stated that, to date, none of those things have occurred. Principal Baker stated that she is fine with the extension as it gives RCSO a pathway forward.

- c. Anisha Grimmert stated that even if RCSO meets the metrics by 2023 it appears the relationship with RPS 205 needs improvement. Principal Baker stated that RPS 205 is the current authorizer of the charter so, contractually speaking, they must continue to work with RPS 205. Principal Baker stated that she believes that one of the steps that RCSO can take to improve the relationship is to be very intentional about the curriculum and programs that are offered by RCSO. Principal Baker stated that if they continue to make academic gains and if they are successful in the establishment of the academy, RPS 205 will take particular notice of their partnership. Principal Baker stated that, in her eyes, the best way to move forward would be to make sure that RCSO is doing their own self promotion with marketing and enrollment. Principal Baker stated that there are roughly 12 State ran Charter Schools right now. Principal Baker stated that should there be a revocation of RCSO's charter, they could appeal to become a State run Charter, which would place them in a position to govern themselves and receive money directly from the State.
- d. Anisha Grimmert inquired as to if RCSO signs the extension agreement, if a separation from RPS 205 is required, what would the process look like. Anisha Grimmert asked if the other State run Charters had demographics similar to RCSO. Principal Baker stated the 12 other schools that are State ran are similar in demographics to RCSO. Attorney Kane stated that a revocation and appeal process could take significant period of time to complete and it would not happen overnight. Attorney Kane stated that should the Board decide to not move forward with the extension agreement, then the charter renewal process would begin this summer because the current agreement runs through the end of the 2021-2022 school year.
- e. Antonio Turner stated that he is in favor of moving forward with the charter extension, but to begin laying the groundwork for RCSO's success. Mr. Turner stated that this extension gives the RCSO the opportunity to build the program and get RCSO to where it wants to be, with an opportunity to show increases in grades and to showcase what RCSO has to offer. Mr. Turner stated that the extension would provide RCSO with the ability to build leverage and support for the program within the next year versus going through the Charter Renewal process now.
- f. Attorney Kane stated that, from the perspective of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the one-year extension could be considered as an opportunity to meet some of the metrics that are outlined in the current agreement. Attorney Kane further stated that if RCSO were to decide not to move forward with the extension, it is possible that ISBE would not look upon that decision favorably if there were

to be an appeals process.

- g. Carla Redd stated that she has had some conversations over the last few years regarding some of the charter renewal criteria by which RCSO is authorized. Ms. Redd indicated that she has looked at charter schools across the country and it is often a competition to get in and quite often there is a lottery system. Ms. Redd stated that she has no problem with agreeing with the extension and it is the best move that RCSO can make.
 - h. Dr. Cunningham stated that he agrees that accepting the extension is the best path and puts RCSO in the best position moving forward.
 - i. A motion was made for RCSO agree to accept the Charter Extension Agreement with RPS 205 by Carla Redd and was seconded by Anisha Grimmiett.
 - i. Roll Call Vote:
 - 1. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
 - 2. Kenneth Cunningham – Aye.
 - 3. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - 4. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
5. Adjournment
- a. A motion to adjourn was made by Antonio Turner and seconded by Carla Redd.
 - b. Roll call vote:
 - i. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
 - ii. Kenneth Cunningham – Aye.
 - iii. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - iv. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - c. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Next Board Meeting: June 17, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. (meeting will be held virtually if allowed under Executive Order)