

**Rockford Charter School Organization  
Board Meeting Minutes  
December 16, 2021  
Meeting Held In Person at:  
Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107**

1. Call to Order – 11:31 a.m.
  - a. Present: Kenneth Cunningham, Antonio Turner, Jacob Bradt, Principal Shavina Baker, Emily Wallen, Rick Aylward, Raymond Krouse from Sikich, and Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski.
2. Approval of Agenda
  - a. A motion to approve the Agenda was made by Antonio Turner and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
    - i. All aye. Motion passed.
3. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2021
  - a. A motion to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2021 was made by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Antonio Turner.
    - i. All Aye. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment – None.
5. New Business
  - a. Audit Report – Sikich
    - i. Raymond Krouse presented the Audit Report to members of the Board. The opinion issued by Sikich regarding the audit is that the financial statements present fairly, in all materials respects. This is the highest opinion. Revenues were slightly down, but expenses were reduced so there ended up being a positive income for the year. Discussion took place regarding the finding that the Fiscal Manager has the ability to sign checks and post journal entries and complete bank reconciliations, this creates a segregation of duties concern due to the authorization of disbursement and recording within the fiscal system can cause the organization to be vulnerable to unauthorized transactions. Sikich recommended that the organization review the internal control structure to segregate duties to ensure that no one person has the ability to authorize and post activity. Rick Aylward stated that Kenneth Cunningham and Anisha Grimmett are the main check signers, and he is a back-up signer should it be needed. Raymond Krouse stated that there was a second finding relating to the fact that there are smart boards that are under lease and how the audit works is they have to depreciate over the shorter of the length of the lease to be used as an asset. Sikich recommended a review of the fixed asset and lease acquisition procedures to ensure that the appropriate lives of the leases are assigned to assets based on the type of acquisition. Raymond Krouse then summarized the required communications that need to be provided to the Board of Directors. Mr. Krouse stated that there were no difficulties in the audit process. Raymond Krouse left the meeting at 11:50 a.m.
    - ii. Discussion continued regarding the check signing recommendation from Sikich.

Kenneth Cunningham explained the Board's thought process when Jackson added Rick Aylward as an authorized check signer, stating it was done because there was a challenge to get checks signed in a timely fashion and not being behind and incurring late fees. Principal Baker stated the policy was still needed because there are individuals that checks are issued for, such as Dr. Mallott, where the check is her pay check. If Jackson cannot get checks signed in a timely manner, then Dr. Mallott ends up waiting to be paid. Principal Baker stated that this does not happen too often, maybe 5-10 percent of the time, but Principal Baker would like to make sure that Jackson has a safety net. Rick Aylward stated that the couple of times that he has signed checks, he has gotten permission from Kenneth Cunningham to sign them. Principal Baker stated that she has to approve the bills and things that checks are being printed for. Kenneth Cunningham inquired from the Board what kind of language would Jackson want in the response portion of the audit. Attorney Sosnowski stated that she can send some form language and she thinks it has come up in the past before. Attorney Sosnowski stated that smaller local governments in the state of Illinois receive this comment because they are similarly situated. They have a small number of people, and there is only a certain number of people that you have that can sign checks.

b. Discussion on potential new Board Members

- i. Principal Baker stated that she has spoken with one potential candidate that she is hoping to be able to present in February, Danielle Potter with Rockford Park District. Principal Baker stated that she attended the state of education luncheon for networking opportunities, and she spoke with Ms. Potter very briefly, and she has a meeting with her over the break. She also has a meeting with Anthony Wilson, who is a guidance counselor and coach at East High School. He would like to make sure that RPS 205 would not have an objection to him serving as a Board Member. Attorney Sosnowski advised that there are six board members currently and the organization is authorized to have nine board members. Kenneth Cunningham stated that their goal is to have seven board members. Principal Baker stated that she would like to get someone with a fiscal background on the Board because it is important to re-establish finance committee meetings and talk about what all of the grant funding that has been received looks like into the next school year and to plan for what it looks like. Principal Baker requested that for the February Board Meeting she would like for everyone to come with at least one person in mind for a board member position.

6. Principal's Report

- a. Principal Baker presented the Principal's report. Current enrollment is at 209. Principal Baker stated that they will be replacing their art teacher, and they do have an individual that substituted for them last year during Covid during the lock down and will be rejoining now that she has finished student teaching for her master's degree in January. Principal Baker stated that they have had three reported cases of Covid since the beginning of the school year. Principal Baker stated that she anticipates that these numbers will go up when they come back from break. Staff absences have been due to unvaccinated staff, and she would like to revisit the vaccination policy for the upcoming school year. Principal Baker stated that the new coaches have had evaluator training, and the school has a total staff of five that can now evaluate teachers and are certified to do so. ISBE does not want teachers to be evaluated by uncertified staff.
- b. Principal Baker stated that the next round of MAP testing is in January, and she will be able to report the progress during the February meeting. Principal Baker stated that

the Illinois Report Card has waived academic accountability for this year so it keeps our designation in place, but 2021-2022 will be considered for our designation for whatever the turnout is for IAR testing.

- c. Principal Baker stated that they had manual clocks installed in the school since the school does not use a bell system. Principal Baker is going to obtain at least three quotes to look into replacing the digital clocks over the summer and get the cost down from the \$30,000.00 replacement cost that she was quoted previously. Principal Baker stated that they need to replace some ceiling tiles in three classrooms and they are currently pricing the cost of those. The building is so old that the tile that is on the second floor of those classrooms isn't even made anymore.
- d. Principal Baker stated that for student transportation they are up to three incidents and accidents. The buses are arriving to school on time. They were having some issues with the buses being late both coming to the school and picking kids up.
- e. Principal Baker stated that she is going to continue to conduct tours during the school day to drive enrollment. She is still working towards the 225 enrollment goal. She believes that there will be some movement over the Christmas break.
- f. Principal Baker stated that the site visit with School Works went very well. They received some great feedback regarding instruction and climate of the school. Travis Wolfe sent Principal Baker a thank you letter saying that he was very impressed, and it was one of the best site visits that the school has ever had. Principal Baker stated that she should have a report from School Works in the next couple of weeks and should be able to present that at the February board meeting. There will be another site visit in October, and it will be a more intensive visit and last for two days, where they will look at data, lesson plans, and interview kids again.
- g. Principal Baker stated that she invited Kamrin Muhammad, the new RPS 205 Board Member, to visit the school. She visited on November 30<sup>th</sup> for a tour of the school. This gave Principal Baker the opportunity to discuss some of the initiatives like the African American studies course as well as the STEM class. Principal Baker stated that Dr. Jarrett will visit the school on January 27<sup>th</sup> to speak with the staff and to tour the building.
- h. Kenneth Cunningham inquired about creating a vaccination policy for the next school year and if it can be proposed for the next board meeting for discussion. Attorney Sosnowski stated that last year at the end of the school year a required vaccination policy was brought before the Board, which required all staff to be vaccinated unless they met the federal requirements for a religious or medical exemption. Attorney Sosnowski stated that they can bring back that same policy in the spring and summer for discussion, but that is something that was proposed and under federal law the school has to provide for reasonable accommodations if they deem that one is necessary. Kenneth Cunningham inquired if it was passed and Attorney Sosnowski stated that it was not. Jacob Bradt inquired what the current policy was. Attorney Sosnowski and Principal Baker stated that there is not one. Attorney Sosnowski stated that employees are not required to be vaccinated. Principal Baker advised that employees are required to submit to weekly testing if they are not vaccinated. Antonio Turner stated that he would think an alternative would be how UIC does it, where they require a test submission every other day. What has happened is the teachers get tired of having too many tests, and they get vaccinated. Principal Baker stated that the additional testing would not be an inconvenience for them. Kenneth Cunningham stated that he does not want this to be a last minute thing, he would like to know where the Board stands and part of that discussion he would like for Principal Baker to share

where she stands with the teachers and if this policy were accepted, how many teachers would be anticipated leaving Jackson Charter School. Principal Baker stated that there would probably be about four teachers. Kenneth Cunningham inquired if this were something that would motivate people to get vaccinated. Principal Baker stated that the individuals that are currently being tested have hard objections to why they are not because they are in a school with kids, and they still don't want to be vaccinated, and so they are deep rooted in how they feel about it. Attorney Sosnowski then summarized the law on religious exemptions and medical exemptions. Principal Baker stated that she would like for the policy to be clear that it would affect everyone as an organization. Principal Baker stated that the biggest struggle for Jackson is that unvaccinated staff and the need to quarantine for 10 days is also putting a strain on our staffing. Jacob Bradt inquired what an alternative would be other than a forced vaccination policy. Attorney Sosnowski stated that in the event that an employee is not vaccinated, it is state law through an executive order in the state of Illinois that they be tested weekly. Antonio Turner suggested testing unvaccinated staff members on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Attorney Sosnowski stated that there is nothing prohibiting Jackson from testing people more frequently, but it's going to be highly contingent upon Jackson's testing supplies. Principal Baker stated that the Winnebago County Health Department is currently furnishing Binax tests to the school. Jacob Bradt inquired if they decided to test more than the mandate if the bill would be passed on to the school. Principal Baker stated that it would be passed on to the school, and Jackson would finance anything outside of the supply that the Health Department is giving Jackson for free. Principal Baker stated that she is not willing to invest money for that. Emily Wallen inquired as to how many staff they have had to quarantine. Principal Baker stated four of the sixteen have had to quarantine. Antonio Turner inquired if the employee decides not to work for Jackson due to the policy does that make Jackson liable for their unemployment. Principal Baker stated that she believed that would show that they have voluntarily left.

7. Finance Committee Report

- a. Rick Aylward presented the Finance Committee Report to the Board.
- b. Rick Aylward stated that the cash for the end of November was \$1,431,000.00.
- c. YTD Budget to Actuals
  - i. Rick Aylward stated that for revenue they are \$53,000.00 ahead of budget, however, they are in a deficit with tuition by about \$50,000.00, but that is made up by overages in Title 1 and CARES Act funds that they have received so far ahead of what they had budgeted. There should be more of the CARES Act funds coming in in January. Rick Aylward stated that he did submit the teacher salaries did not hear anything back other than that they were submitting them so hopefully that will turn into a plus for Jackson. Rick Aylward stated that for expenditures they are about \$180,000.00 ahead of budget and for bottom line they are at \$235,000.00 and actual revenue income is \$252,000.00 and the budget was only going to be at \$17,000.00. Antonio Turner inquired as to how Title 1 funds are distributed. Principal Baker stated that Title 1 and any grant funding that Jackson received is reimbursable. Jackson has to submit what it has spent or what it is spending in any line item, whether it be supplies, teachers, instructional coaches, Jackson then submits what that cost is and then the District reimburses Jackson. Jackson has to spend that money before Jackson can get that money back.

d. YTD Cashflow Update

8. Update on Required Board Member Training

- a. Attorney Sosnowski stated that Jackson needs the Board Members to get their training hours in. There are online options for training. Attorney Sosnowski stated that she does not know that she has received any documents from any of the other Board Members that they have ever received training. Attorney Sosnowski stated that maybe on one of the off months, where Jackson does not have a Board meeting, would it be possible to have someone from INCS come in, or another service, which is certified by the State to provide the training and have this be one additional board meeting for the year where Board Members could come and knock out half of the required training hours. Attorney Sosnowski requested Board Members think about what their calendar looks like in the off months (March, May, July) if there is a date in one of those three months that would work to provide the training. Jacob Bradt stated that he is thinking that in May and July there might be some vacations that would hinder that. Attorney Sosnowski stated that they would look for dates in May.

9. Executive Session – Personnel - None

10. Adjournment

- a. A motion to adjourn was made by Antonio Turner and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
  - i. All aye. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting: February 17, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)**