

**Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2023
4:00 p.m.
Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107
In-Person Meeting**

1. Call to Order – at 4:09 p.m.
 - a. Present: Carla Redd, Tamir Bell, Ricardo Montoya Picazo, Jacob Bradt, Antonio Turner (4:50 p.m.) Executive Director Emily Wallen, Chief Financial Officer Rick Aylward, Angie Smelter, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski
 - b. Not Present: William Cunningham, Anisha Grimmett, and Antonio Turner
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Roll Call Vote:
 1. Carla Redd – Aye.
 2. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 3. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 4. Ricardo Montoya Picazo – Aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
3. Public Comment – None.
4. Old Business
 - a. Discuss/Approve SIP Plan.
 - i. A motion to discuss the SIP Plan was made by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 1. Executive Director Wallen went through the SIP Plan and provided a summary of the revised goals. Executive Director Wallen advised that one goal was revised to 70% of the student population total meeting or exceeding the NWEA Map Writ as well as math. Previously the policy was ten points of growth per student. Executive Director Wallen advised that she added the strategies that Jackson is using for the different areas to achieve the set goals.
 2. Tamir Bell inquired as to how behavior and parent engagement has been. Executive Director Wallen advised that parent engagement has improved. Executive Director Wallen stated that they had a 5 Essentials Survey sent out to the parents and they have reached their threshold in parental responses which is more than they have ever had before. Executive Director Wallen advised that Ms. Copeland has had more interactions with parents than there have been.
 - ii. Roll Call Vote to approve SIP Plan:
 1. Carla Redd – Aye.

2. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 3. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 4. Ricardo Montoya Picazo – Aye.
- iii. Motion passed.
- b. Discuss/Approve Review of Bullying Policy
- i. A motion was made by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 1. Executive Director Wallen advised that she revised this policy back in November and attempted to submit it to ISBE, however, ISBE advised that the policy had to be approved by the Board separately from the Student Handbook.
 2. Executive Director Wallen advised that the revisions that were made were mainly typos and if there was something that was not congruent with Jackson’s policy then it was revised to reflect that. Executive Director Wallen advised that she added a Bullying Reporting Form to the Appendix of the policy that would be used to report any instances of bullying by staff.
 3. Carla Redd inquired as to who would be reporting the violations. Executive Director Wallen advised that it could be a teacher, staff member, a parent, and anyone that is in the school community that could report.
 4. Ricardo Montoya Picazo inquired as to how it would be reported if a student reports it. Executive Director Wallen advised that if a student reports it, it is documented in a document saved on Jackson’s Google docs, but the form can be used to document that as well.
 5. Carla Redd inquired as to how someone would report that wanted to remain anonymous. Executive Director Wallen advised she has had this happen twice and those people usually call to report the incident from an unknown phone number.
 6. Jacob Bradt inquired as to how it is usually documented when anonymous reports are received. Executive Director Wallen advised they have a bullying drive document that they would record the information to and then when staff finds bullying behavior they then turn to the bullying document to determine if it is a repeated behavior and falls under the bullying definition.
 7. Carla Redd suggested adding a box that states that they wish to remain anonymous.
 8. Ricardo Montoya Picazo inquired as to when a report is made who is overseeing the investigation. Executive Director Wallen stated that Jackson Administration would be overseeing the investigation into whether the incident would be considered bullying.
 9. Carla Redd inquired as to what Jackson Charter School has done with the individuals that have been identified as bullies. Executive Director Wallen stated that in some cases they have figured out where the bullying is occurring, if it is happening only in the classroom then the children are moved away from each other in the room. Executive Director Wallen stated that she has had to go as far as moving a student into another classroom. Executive Director Wallen stated that they

minimize the contact and then do some restorative measures in order to work with the students and foster a relationship with them.

10. Carla Redd inquired if there were any antibullying programs that Jackson sent the student to. Executive Director Wallen stated that when the school comes back from break they have the Ned Shows coming to the school to do fun things with the kids to teach them about bullying. In the meantime if the Ned Show is not coming then the students would meet with the school psychologist to work on a plan for them.

11. Tamir Bell inquired if there was a cost to having the Ned Show come to the school. Executive Director Wallen advised that there was only a cost if they were to cancel an event and then it would cost \$200.00.

ii. Roll Call Vote to approve policy:

1. Carla Redd – Aye.

2. Tamir Bell – Aye.

3. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

4. Ricardo Montoya Picazo – Aye.

iii. Motion passed.

5. Executive Director's Report

- a. Executive Director Wallen advised that enrollment has increased to 227. Intent to Return forms were sent out for next school year and forms are due back the week after spring break.
- b. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that the School Nurse resigned.
- c. Executive Director Wallen advised the Board that they have hired a new nurse, Patricia Myer who is an RN. Angie Smelter advised that Ms. Myer was not at a school previously but had over 20 years of nursing experience.
- d. Executive Director Wallen advised that she recently spoke at an RPS 205 Board meeting in support of Jackson Charter School.
- e. Attorney Sosnowski read to the Board an email from Dr. Travis Woulfe from RPS 205 regarding next steps in the Charter Renewal Process that was sent on Monday. The email stated that there were two options for Charter School Renewals (1) a two year renewal with an increase in ELA and Math proficiency by five percentage points for the 2022 IAR reports or (2) collaborate with the District on selecting a CMO to provide support VIA the selected network with a five year renewal contract. The email requested that a choice be made to signal a path by Thursday at 12:00 p.m.
- f. Attorney Sosnowski advised that Executive Director Wallen responded to Dr. Woulfe's email advising that the Board has not made a decision on this matter and inquired as to whether RPS 205 would be sharing in the expense of the CMO given that the cost is usually a percentage of per pupil funds. Executive Director Wallen further asked if the RPS 205 Purchasing Department is handling the RFP process for selecting a CMO if they would be awarding the contract to the CMO, if this is the case then it appears that the CMO would be in contract with RPS 205 and not RCSO.
- g. Attorney Sosnowski advised that Executive Director Wallen received a response from Dr. Woulfe to her email and read the response to the Board advising that Dr. Woulfe stated that it is not his role to negotiate a contract VIA email he would like to provide the general parameters which they would need to operate under to meet Dr. Jarrett's conceptual framework. The selection of a CMO is intended to be collaborative, if there is to be a co-contract then RPS 205 would need to use the RFP process as the

district is bound to it.

- h. Attorney Sosnowski stated that RPS 205 is going to start assessing fees for services they feel they have provided to Jackson Charter School.
- i. Attorney Sosnowski stated that a CMO would be a go between for RPS 205 and Jackson Charter School by handling financial issues, managing the PCTC making sure that Jackson is paid appropriately, ensuring that all of the reporting is done for the state of Illinois.
- j. Carla Redd inquired as to whether Executive Director Wallen has had any contact with the other Charter Schools as to which way they are going. Executive Director Wallen advised that neither of the other two charter schools are going to go with the CMO.
- k. Ricardo Montoya Picazo inquired as to how much it costs Jackson Charter School for bus services. Executive Director Wallen advised that it is approximately \$70,000.00. Mr. Montoya Picazo also asked for an idea on what the other charges would be that RPS 205 is planning on charging for. Attorney Sosnowski went over the additional charges that were outlined in the email from Dr. Woulfe.
- l. Antonio Turner Joined the meeting at 4:50 p.m.
- m. Executive Director Wallen advised that they can charge Medicaid for special education services and that funding could be used towards speech services. Antonio Turner stated that Jackson would need someone in the building that was qualified to do that type of billing and inquired as to whether Jackson had someone that could do that now. Rick Aylward stated that the only thing that they pay RPS 205 for is Transportation and RPS 205 bills RCSO for those services.
- n. Antonio Turner inquired as to why RCSO is not getting someone that can bill Medicaid without going through RPS 205. Executive Director Wallen advised that this was brought to the Board 4-5 years ago and it did not pass.
- o. Carla Redd inquired if any agreements have been presented from RPS 205. Executive Director Wallen and Attorney Sosnowski advised that no agreements have been presented yet.
- p. Jacob Bradt inquired what the staff opinion was on whether RCSO should move forward with getting a CMO. Angie Smelter advised that they would like to have the autonomy that they have now, and her biggest reservation is will RCSO get to have a say in who they choose and how that affects the day-to-day operations of the school. The appealing part is that it takes things off of Executive Director Wallen's plate in some of the state reporting and things like that, but that doesn't mean that they couldn't hire someone part time to take over those duties.
- q. Tamir Bell inquired if they could say that due to the time constraints they would like to go with a two year agreement without the CMO and put it back on RPS 205 to extend the time frame. Attorney Sosnowski stated that the Board could.
- r. Antonio Turner requested that Attorney Sosnowski draft a response to Dr. Woulfe stating that all of the agreements have had language that RCSO is to be getting 100% of PCTC and they have only been getting 97%.
- s. Carla Redd advised that she thinks the Board should respond to Dr. Woulfe's email not with a hard no, but with a list of concerns that the Board has with RPS 205.
- t. The consensus of the Board was to prepare a response to Dr. Woulfe that states considering the short period of time and the lack of details RCSO cannot move forward with a CMO at this point. The Board consensus was to not rule it out for the future and it is something that they would like to continue to have an open dialogue with the

District on. But at this time without more information the Board cannot agree to move forward with engaging a CMO.

u. Antonio Turner advised that even a few months from now, he is still going to be a no.

6. Finance Committee Report

a. Rick Aylward presented the finance report to the Board. He advised that the revenue is \$217,000+ which is mainly per capita tuition. The budget was based on \$190,000 for revenue. Rick Aylward stated that there are items that are below budget on the budget and this is based on a timing issue as the payments came in later than they anticipated. Expenditures were \$33,000 over budget due to the original conservative budgeted numbers based off of \$190,000 in revenue and because enrollment is higher there are additional expenditures for teachers and labor and such. RCSO is \$187,000 ahead of the budget.

b. Jacob Bradt stepped out of the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

7. Discuss/Approve Selection of a Contractor to Provide Marketing/Website Support Services for Jackson Charter School

a. A motion to discuss was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.

i. Tamir Bell inquired if they could lay the decision over because he has looked at the budget since it was in front of him and the marketing bid that he recommended. The marketing budget is \$22,000.00. Rick Aylward stated that this is through February and so it would be higher for the year which would be a ballpark of \$32,000.00. Tamir Bell stated that the proposal is \$30,000 and he feels that is cutting it close because there would only be \$2,000 left over and from a marketing standpoint spending \$2,000 on ads will not cover what RCSO needs it to cover.

ii. Rick Aylward stated that in addressing the marketing number if the agreement goes into effect then next year they will want to have a higher marketing number in the budget. In the past they had Astute Web Group doing a lot of the marketing and they had very low services and very low dollars, but they used to have an operations manager that would handle a lot of the marketing items.

iii. Tamir Bell inquired if the Board should ask for a lower amount or keep the same amount and increase their budget based on the proposal. Tamir Bell stated that he does think that RCSO needs these services.

iv. Tamir Bell advised the Board that at the last meeting he recommended Rockford Buzz. However, what RCSO has budgeted, Rockford Buzz's proposal exceeds that amount.

v. Antonio Turner advised that because they are over halfway through the year he doesn't think that they can use up what they have, but moving forward they can adjust their budget to cover these services. Antonio Turner suggested going with KMK on the network side because he believes they have bigger resources. Antonio Turner stated that he likes what Rockford Buzz does and he's seen a lot of things that they are doing, but he is looking at everything that is coming in, everything has to be strategic.

vi. Tamir Bell requested that this item be laid over for the next meeting.

vii. Ricardo Montoya Picazo left the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

1. Roll Call Vote to lay over to next meeting:

a. Carla Redd – Aye.

- b. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - c. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - 2. Motion passed.
 - 8. Jacob Bradt returned to the meeting at 5:02 p.m.
 - 9. Executive Session – (if needed)
 - a. Personnel - Go into Closed Session to Review Closed Session Minutes and to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.
 - b. Litigation – Go into Closed Session to discuss Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting.
 - i. Entered Executive Session at 5:14 p.m.
 - ii. A motion to exit Executive Session was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - b. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - c. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - d. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - iii. Exited Executive Session at 6:05 p.m.
- 10. Adjournment
 - a. A motion to adjourn was made by Carla Redd and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Roll Call Vote:
 - 1. Carla Redd – Aye.
 - 2. Jacob Bradt
 - 3. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - 4. Antonio Turner – Aye.
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: April 20, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)