

**Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes**

**October 19, 2023**

**11:30 a.m.**

**Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107**

**In-Person Meeting**

1. Call to Order – at 11:34 a.m.
  - a. Present: William Cunningham, Jacob Bradt, Tamir Bell, Ricardo Montoya Picazo, Anisha Grimmett, Antonio Turner (arrived at 12:00p.m.), Executive Director Emily Wallen, Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski
  - b. Not Present: Carla Redd
2. Approval of Agenda
  - a. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Ricardo Montoya Picazo and seconded by Anisha Grimmett.
    - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2023.
  - a. A motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2023, was made by Ricardo Montoya and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
    - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - ii. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment – No Public Comment.
5. New Business
  - a. Discuss/Approve performance-based bonus policy for administrators.
    - i. Discussion/Approval of performance related assessments for school management was laid over to the meeting on December 21, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.
      1. A motion to approve the layover of the Discussion/Approval of performance related assessments for school management was made by Ricardo Montoya Picazo and seconded by Tamir Bell.
        - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
        - b. Motion passed.
6. Executive Director’s Report
  - a. Executive Director Emily Wallen informed the Board that as of the day of the meeting, current enrollment is at 247 students, with some still pending. She explained that there is now a waiting list for Kindergarten, and the highest number of students by grade level is 5<sup>th</sup> grade with 50 students total.
  - b. Executive Director Wallen stated that as of September 13, 2023, the charter paperwork was finalized by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in which the charter school certificate and charter school certification letter were received.

- c. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that the school is fully staffed. She explained that the school did not proceed with hiring a social worker through a staffing agency. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that the school was able to hire a social worker outright as opposed to hiring through an agency.
- d. Executive Director Wallen stated that the classroom walkthroughs and informal observations have begun. She explained that the school has instituted an open-door policy so that staff or students are not shocked by administrator presence. She explained that research indicates that this can benefit teachers and administrators by creating a more open and genuine dialogue.
- e. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that Fall NWEA testing was completed. She highlighted that in Kindergarten, 21 students met the norm or higher on the ELA assessment, and 18 met the norm or higher on the math assessment. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 14 students met the norm or higher on the ELA assessment, and 13 students met the norm or higher on the math assessment. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 11 students met the norm or higher on the ELA assessment, and 8 students met the norm or higher on the math assessment. She explained that mathematics continues to be an area of growth for the school. In addition, ELA has not been as big of an area of concern, but there is always room for growth in this area.
- f. Anisha Grimmertt expressed her concern considering the number of students in the grades, not half of them are meeting the math and ELA assessment norm. She inquired about what the school does to correct or improve scores with the data given from the assessment results.
- g. Executive Director Wallen explained that there are weekly data meetings with the teachers where they look at the NWEA data as well as performance-based data in the classrooms. She explained that goals are set to fill the gaps while still maintaining the rigor of the standard.
- h. Ricardo Montoya Picazo asked what administration is doing for those students who are failing to meet the levels required after being assessed. Executive Director Wallen explained that there are MTSS meetings every month where the teachers present data on students they are concerned about, whether the students are not showing growth or are stagnating. This is where interventions are put in place whether it is tutoring or extra one-on-one learning with the student.
- i. Antonio Turner entered the meeting at 12:00 p.m.
- j. Executive Director Wallen explained that walls in various locations in the school have been freshened up by new coats of paint as needed. She informed the Board that the facilities had a walkthrough conducted by the Regional Office of Education and the Rockford Fire Department and only minor issues were discovered. The school was complimented on how well it is put together considering the age of the building.
- k. Executive Director Wallen stated that Rockford Buzz continues to do a great job with marketing for the school. The social media presence has grown substantially, and enrollment is around 250 due to marketing efforts and community engagement.
- l. Executive Director Wallen informed the Board that the school has the Harvest Fest on October 19, 2023, from 5:00-7:00 p.m., as well as the Turkey Bingo on November 16, 2023, from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

## 7. Marketing Committee Report

- a. Jacob Bradt explained that the school had their first guest, Whitney Martin, come in and speak to the whole school in an assembly. In addition, he informed the Board that the whole school year is booked out to have a monthly visitor come in and talk to the students about leadership, as well as their jobs in order to expose the students to leaders within the

- community.
- b. Jacob Bradt explained that as far as messaging and the theme goes, learning goes beyond the three “r’s” where leadership doesn’t just happen in courtrooms and oval offices. It happens in the home, the classroom, and the community.
  - c. Tamir Bell stated that there is an interactive lesson planned for the students through Thermo Fisher Scientific.
  - d. Jacob Bradt informed the Board that there is a Leader of the Week that is posted on social media as well as the board in the main hallway of the school. He explained that it ties into the leadership theme throughout the building, as well as being able to broadcast the climate and culture as a means of attracting future teachers, staff, and talent. Executive Director Wallen explained that those leaders are voted by Jackson staff.
  - e. Jacob Bradt explained that an enrollment campaign was run on social media in which they spent \$600 and are at 250 students.
8. Finance Committee Report
- a. YTD Budget to Actuals
    - i. Finance Director Rick Aylward explained that so far, the school is ahead in revenue by about \$250,000. He stated that part of that is tuition, considering that 220 students was the number used for the budgeted amount for enrollment. He stated that the other component is the ESSER funds, which are about \$150,000 ahead of budget.
  - b. YTD Cashflow Update
9. Executive Session – No Executive Session 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.
10. Adjournment
- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Tamir Bell and seconded by Antonio Turner.
    - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
    - ii. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

**Next Board Meeting: December 21, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)**