

**Rockford Charter School Organization Board Meeting Minutes
December 19, 2024**

11:30 a.m.

**Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107
In-Person Meeting**

1. Call to Order – at 11:33 a.m.
 - a. Present: Tamir Bell, Carla Redd (virtual), Erika Hannah, La’Keshia Wingo, Jacob Bradt, Anisha Grimmertt (entered at 11:40 a.m.), Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn, Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer, Finance Director, Rick Aylward, elevatED Spaces, LLC Consultant, Shenita Johnson (virtual)
 - b. Not Present: William Cunningham
2. Approval of Agenda
 - a. A motion was made to amend the agenda by Jacob Bradt and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
 - b. A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended by Jacob Bradt and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
3. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2024.
 - a. A motion was made to Approve the Board Meeting Minutes for October 17, 2024, by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed.
4. Public Comment
 - a. Krista Williams spoke on behalf of staff and asked whether the school would be getting an HR representative. She stated that staff feel as if this is a necessity for both administration and staff. As for subbing, the staff feels as if there should be more compensation for those in a dual role. She explained that staff have expressed concern with the ceiling on the third floor and stated that it is a safety issue.
 - b. Valerie Black stated that there needs to be somewhere that parents and staff can find the event information policy.
 - c. James Durham stated that he wonders what can be done with the issues in the building. He asked if the Board would consider relocating the school. He also suggested that the Board consider looking into Jackson Charter becoming an arts-focused K-5 school.
 - d. Anisha Grimmertt entered the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

5. New Business

a. elevatED spaces, LLC Share Out

- i. elevatED spaces, LLC Consultant, Shenita Johnson, explained that Phase I of her work focused on a comprehensive review of the policies that were available, as well as focusing on attendance, discipline, and special education. She stated that elevatED spaces, LLC recommends that schools are fully transparent. This includes having all policies published on the website and having them minimally available upon request. She also stated that it is recommended that the few policies that were not accessible are developed and approved as the school moves into the renewal.
- ii. Consultant Shenita Johnson explained that the other part of Phase I focused on the fiscal review, which is still in progress. She stated that the overcorrection was noticed in the fiscal policy, so elevatED spaces, LLC, could tell that there was some tightening up. She stated however, that the changes on paper do not always translate to changes in practice, so Phase II will focus on execution of these practices and policies.
- iii. Consultant Shenita Johnson stated that elevatED spaces, LLC, has begun to look at the timeline for the charter renewal as the time comes to begin to plan for the renewal. This includes submission of the written application, as well as mocking what the interviews may look like.

b. Discuss/Approve Client Services Agreement with ProCare Therapy

- i. A motion to Approve Client Services Agreement with ProCare Therapy was made by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. Jacob Bradt – Aye.
 - c. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
 - d. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - e. Erika Hannah – Aye.
 - f. Carla Redd – Aye.
 2. All ayes. Motion passed.

c. Discuss/Approve MOU with the City of Rockford – Community Healing Center

- i. Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn explained that Chief Carla Redd connected the school with Community Healing Center. She stated that the MOU is for when the healing center is fully staffed, in which they will provide on-site trauma-informed support and services for students and restorative staff.
 1. A motion was made to Approve the MOU with the City of Rockford - Community Healing Center by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Anisha Grimmertt.
 - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - b. Motion passed.

d. Discuss/Approve Handle With Care MOU with the City of Rockford and RCSO

- i. Dr. Wrenn informed the Board that within Handle With Care, the school is notified by the Rockford Police Department when an officer visits the home of a student or

when officers are involved in a situation involving the family of a student. Carla Redd informed the Board that whenever a child in RPS is documented in a report, there is an automated notification system that notifies the school that a student was documented in a report involving a traumatic event.

1. A motion was made to Approve Handle With Care MOU with the City of Rockford and RCSO by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - a. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - b. Motion passed.
 - e. Discuss/Approve Sign On Bonus Policy for Teacher Recruitment
 - i. Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn, stated that she believes that a sign on bonus should be considered when hiring new staff if the individual is entering the school in the middle of the year or after the school year has begun. She stated that this sign on bonus policy could make the school more attractive when hiring and recruiting high-quality staff.
 - ii. Carla Redd stated that sign on bonuses were something big at one point, the law enforcement industry being one of the examples. She stated that the idea of these bonuses have seemingly faded to the wayside, so she is interested in seeing where school districts and charter schools are also doing sign on bonuses.
 - iii. Tamir Bell stated that he thinks this policy could help with recruitment for the next school year. Anisha Grimmer stated that it is important to pay talent what they are worth, but the Board also needs to be strategic with where the school puts money because the cashflow will not be as high as previous years with the ESSER funds leaving the budget.
 - f. Discuss upcoming schedule for Charter Renewal with RPS 205
 - i. Dr. Wrenn explained to the Board that she wanted to make sure everyone on the Board was aware of the schedule leading up to the Charter Renewal. She explained that work is already being done to prepare for the renewal. Dr. Wrenn stated that Attorney Roxanne Sosnowski has given her historical information regarding how Jackson Charter has navigated this process in past years. She also explained that elevatED spaces, LLC, Consultant Shenita Johnson, will play a pivotal role in helping prepare for the Charter Renewal.
6. Old Business
 - a. Discuss/Approve Jackson Charter Marketing Contract with Rockford Buzz for a 12-month period in the amount of \$1,750 per month retroactive to May 1, 2024.
 - i. Jacob Bradt exited the meeting at 12:13 p.m.
 - ii. A motion was made to Approve Jackson Charter Marketing Contract with Rockford Buzz for a 12-month period in the amount of \$1,750 per month retroactive to May 1, 2024, by Anisha Grimmer and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.
 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
 - c. Anisha Grimmer – Aye.
 - d. Erika Hannah – Aye.
 - e. Carla Redd – Aye.
 2. All ayes. Motion passed.

- b. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Jacob Bradt as a Board of Directors Member.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Nay.
 - b. La’Keshia Wingo – Nay.
 - c. Anisha Grimmertt – Nay.
 - d. Erika Hannah – Nay.
 - e. Carla Redd – Nay.
 - 2. Item fails.
 - ii. A motion was made to reconsider the voted-down resolution of re-electing Jacob Bradt as a Board of Directors Member by Tamir Bell and seconded by Anisha Grimmertt.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
 - c. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - d. Erika Hannah – Aye.
 - e. Carla Redd – Nay.
 - 2. Motion passed.
 - iii. A motion was made by Tamir Bell and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo to amend the Resolution of the Board of Directors of Rockford Charter School Organization Re-Electing Jacob Bradt as a Board of Directors Member, with the membership term ending on December 20, 2024.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
 - c. Anisha Grimmertt – Aye.
 - d. Erika Hannah – Aye.
 - e. Carla Redd – Nay.
 - 2. Motion passed.
7. Marketing Committee Report
 - a. Jacob Bradt explained that the school has begun work on a storytelling campaign. He stated that it will be a 7-episode campaign chronicling the turnaround year. He explained that with the first episode being the intro and the last episode being the outro, episodes 2-6 will focus on different areas of the school between academics, behavior, culture, and community. He informed that Board that episodes will be dropped monthly. Jacob Bradt explained the campaign will primarily be used as a tool for fundraising and talent recruitment, but it will also be on the school’s website to serve as a way for parents to view all the hard work being done at the school.
 - b. Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn, stated that Jacob Bradt has helped with getting the school on LinkedIn for recruitment purposes, as well as getting missing items uploaded to the school website. Dr. Wrenn explained that the school also had the opportunity to make an appearance in the storytelling campaign for Lexia Learning Systems, which is who Jackson Charter uses for curriculum. Dr. Wrenn explained that there is an active, school-wide reset in process with Lexia, so it was a good opportunity to take up appearing in their

storytelling campaign as well.

8. Interim Principal Report

a. Jackson Charter School Summative Designation Report

- i. Interim Principal, Dr. Ebony Wrenn stated that enrollment is at 231 as of December 13, 2024. She stated that enrollment was at 240 as of the last meeting. Dr. Wrenn explained that she wants to get better data on why families are leaving.
- ii. Dr. Wrenn stated that there has been two members of staff that are no longer employed at the School. She stated that there is 1 general education classroom opening in 1st grade. She stated that there have been 2 new hires, with 2 pending interviews. Dr. Wrenn stated that current openings include OT, Vision Support, First Grade, and an SEL teaching position.
- iii. Dr. Wrenn stated that the school improvement planning has started, the leadership team was launched, there has been a professional development calendar launched, PowerSchool Behavior Support implementation is in process, and policies and procedures are actively being addressed.
- iv. Dr. Wrenn explained to the Board that the tornado drill is complete, and preparation is in progress for the school's fire inspection visit.
- v. As for the summative report, Dr. Wrenn explained that for the 2022-2023 school year, Jackson Charter School was a Targeted school on the Illinois State Report Card. She explained that the school's designation intensified last school year, in which the school went from Targeted to Comprehensive. Dr. Wrenn stated that the three core components of the intensification include attendance, lack of academic growth, and the absence of the climate and culture survey that was to be completed by the last Executive Director.
- vi. Dr. Wrenn stated that the designation change yields additional funding that will be allocated to the school to address the new School Improvement Plan. She explained that the school is actively working on a School Improvement Plan. Dr. Wrenn stated that \$55,000.00 will be allocated to the school, but \$40,000.00 goes towards American Institute of Research to come in and perform a needs analysis.
- vii. Dr. Wrenn stated that because the school did not have a STEM teacher, measures have been taken to re-integrate science into every classroom teacher's daily schedule, as science is a core component on the Illinois State Report Card. In addition, the school has begun micro-climate and culture surveys in order to gain continuous feedback from the staff. Dr. Wrenn stated that Mrs. Copeland and her team are working very hard on attendance initiatives as well.

9. Director of Climate and Culture Report

- a. Director of Climate and Culture, Starla Copeland, stated that she believes that one of the things that will really boost academic proficiency is attendance. Mrs. Copeland stated that her number one goal is maintaining and getting attendance up. She stated that the school is currently activating initiatives to pursue the attendance increase. Mrs. Copeland stated that it is important to educate the families regarding the attendance and tardies in order to make sure they understand the repercussions of the students being absent from school.
- b. Mrs. Copeland explained that another one of her goals is to lower the student referrals. She informed the Board that in October, there were 17 physical aggression referrals, while in November, there were only 6. She stated that bus referrals in October were at 28, and in November there were 12. Referrals for walking out without permission in October were 7, while in November there were 3. She informed the Board that fighting referrals were at 7 for both October and November. Mrs. Copeland explained that there were 61 referrals in

November 2023, and there were 36 referrals in November 2024. She explained that restorative practices are working to help decrease the referrals.

- c. Carla Redd exited the meeting at 1:22 p.m.

10. Director of Data and Instruction Report

- a. Director of Data and Instruction, Angie Smeltzer, explained that the disconnect between the NWEA scores and achievement on the IAR benchmark needs to be addressed. She stated that the school is looking at the data between the two benchmarks in order to address the learning gaps for 3rd-5th graders. Mrs. Smeltzer explained that this data is being used to create an ability-grouped class structure for students during P 50, or Power Hour. She stated that students will be divided into 11 groups based on the current benchmark data using a new curriculum, ThinkCERCA, in which there will be regular progress monitoring, as well as benchmark assessments that will give teachers feedback as to student performance. This new model, P 50, starts in January 2025, and will commence daily.

11. Finance Committee Report/Finance Manager Report

- a. YTD Budget Actuals
 - i. Finance Director, Rick Aylward, explained that the school is \$208,230.67 ahead of budget in terms of revenue through November. He explained that expenditures are \$131,083.15 below the budget. Finance Director Aylward stated that the school is \$339,313.82 ahead of the budget.
- b. YTD Cashflow Update
 - i. Finance Director Aylward stated that the bank account is currently at \$3,263,327.98. He stated that the notes payable on the building is at \$942,143.98, which is scheduled to be paid off in about 4.5 years.
- c. Capital Projects
 - i. Finance Director Aylward stated that with the cost of the capital projects, some may be upcoming, and some may go into the budget for next year. He stated that the Visitor Management System and concrete repair have been approved and taken care of.
 - ii. Anisha Grimmitt explained to the Board that at the last Finance Committee meeting, there were talks of putting together a capital fund or maintenance and facilities committee in order for there to be someone to look at what needs to be done at the school on a regular basis, as well as prioritizing these needs and bringing it to the Board.
- d. Plan to Prepare for FY26 Budget
 - i. Finance Director Aylward stated that with the ESSER funds being gone, there needs to be a more critical frame for the budget. He explained that preparing the FY26 budget will need to be started earlier to take a look at where things are and where things need to be in terms of funds.
- e. Discuss/Approve Raptor Technologies 12 Month Subscription for Visitor Management System totaling \$4,137.00.
 - i. A motion was made to Approve Raptor Technologies 12 Month Subscription for Visitor Management System totaling \$4,137.00 by Anisha Grimmitt and seconded by Jacob Bradt.
 - 1. Roll Call Vote:
 - a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
 - b. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.

- c. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
- d. Erika Hannah – Aye.
- e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

2. Motion passed.

f. Discuss/Approve LT Construction proposal for concrete repair totaling \$8,700.00.

- i. A motion was made to Approve LT Construction proposal for concrete repair totaling \$8,700.00 by Anisha Grimmiett and seconded by La’Keshia Wingo.

1. Roll Call Vote:

- a. Tamir Bell – Aye.
- b. La’Keshia Wingo – Aye.
- c. Anisha Grimmiett – Aye.
- d. Erika Hannah – Aye.
- e. Jacob Bradt – Aye.

2. Motion passed.

12. 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.

- i. A motion was made to enter executive session by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Anisha Grimmiett.

1. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.

2. Motion passed. Entered executive session at 1:37 p.m.

- ii. There was no motion to return to open session.

1. Roll Call:

- a. Tamir Bell
- b. Jacob Bradt
- c. La’Keshia Wingo
- d. Anisha Grimmiett
- e. Erika Hannah

2. Returned to open session at 2:07 p.m.

13. Discuss/Approve Staff Management, Inc. Proposal for Human Resource Management Services

- a. A motion was made to lay over the Discussion/Approval of Staff Management, Inc. Proposal for Human Resource Management Services by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Jacob Bradt.

i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.

ii. Motion passed.

14. Discuss/Approve the Morrissey Family Business Proposal for Payroll Services

- a. A motion was made to lay over the Discussion/Approval of the Morrissey Family Business

Proposal for Payroll Services by La’Keshia Wingo and seconded by Jacob Bradt.

- i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
- ii. Motion passed.

15. Adjournment

- a. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Jacob Bradt and seconded by Tamir Bell.
 - i. Voice Vote: All members voting aye.
 - ii. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: February 20, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. (Meeting will be held in-person at Jackson Charter School, 315 Summit Street, Rockford, IL 61107)