

# Patterson Park Public Charter School, Inc.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2021

7 pm Meeting held by Zoom

**Members Attending:** Sarah Sandoval-Mohapatra (presiding), Jenna Adams (SAL-PPPCS), Ankit Aggarwal, Astrid Bharath-Pierce (PAL-PPPCS), Candace Caraco (recording), Raven Cooper (SAL-CHPCS), Kim Francois, Pat Irish, Tasha Johnson, Natasha Perry (SAL-PPPCS), Paul Rishar, Anais Roman (SAL-CHPCS), Lauren Stutzman, Julie Neale Taylor (PAL-PPPCS), Lazette Wells; *ex officio*: Jane Lindenfelser

**Absent:** Charles Conner, Charletta McLean, Chris Scott

**Staff and Guests:** Chad Kramer, principal of Patterson Park Public Charter School (PPPCS); Emily Augustin, principal of Clay Hill Public Charter School (CHPCS); Evodir Ngoy, Development & Marketing Associate, PPPCS Inc.

*\*Unless otherwise noted, an asterisk indicates there is a presentation or document archived online in the Google Drive linked to the meeting agenda. These are effectively part of the minutes.*

#### I. Opening Items

- A. The board was placed in small groups for conversation at 7 pm. Board president Sarah Sandoval-Mohapatra called the meeting to order at 7:11 pm. She read the draft mission.
- B. Record Attendance and Guests (see above) – the roll was taken and noted
- C. Public Comment\* - The board president read a comment received; it was also distributed to the board prior to the meeting. The email noted that there has been more litter in Patterson Park in the area where the children have been eating lunch outside and requested more care. The principal and executive director already met with the neighbor. Dr. Kramer described how they were addressing the matter, noting the educational guidance the students receive, how litter is managed, and the difficulty of small items being blown out of the trash. Short-term there have been attempts to rent a lawn vacuum from Parks & Rec but another source is needed; longer term, lunch is being moved to the courtyard as a tent is added.
- D. The consent agenda\* was approved; it includes the Development report and the October minutes. Board members were asked to set up a development conversation and to do their pledge forms.
- E. The board president noted that since the start of the pandemic, the Board of Directors has met virtually and currently plans to continue to meet virtually. The Executive Committee has discussed the need and desire to prioritize the health and safety of our students, school leadership, staff and parents. The goal we all share is to have our schools open for in-person learning for our students. By meeting virtually, we are able to avoid a large, indoor and in-person gathering of parents, staff, board members and guests, thereby eliminating the risk that our board meeting could potentially spread COVID within our school community. Additionally, we

believe that the work of the board can continue to be successfully conducted virtually. Minimizing the risk of COVID spread within our school community is critical to ensuring our teachers and students can, as safely as possible, continue in-person education. The Executive Committee will revisit this practice in the New Year. If anyone has any questions or concerns, the board president asked they contact her directly.

## **II. Staff-at-Large Report\***

- A. PPPCS – Miss Perry provided the ES report: There was a data and literacy night for families; to incentivize attendance, students with superior attendance can have a uniform-free day. Miss Adams provided the MS report: middle school students are doing a food drive for Thanksgiving; the Pollyanna DEI curriculum is being implemented. Glows: happy for an extension to complete student learning outcome reports and to have an additional 1.5 days off for Thanksgiving. Grows: It's getting cold for outdoor lunch; some additional communication on health matters would be helpful as the weather changes (should windows be opened?).
- B. CHPCS –Miss Cooper and Miss Roman provided the staff report. Miss Roman described activities and cultural learning around Hispanic Heritage Month, land stewardship instruction, as well as historical learning about the Piscataway, and professional development through a cultural proficiency conference. Miss Cooper noted the mobile dentist visited the school to serve children. She presented questions from staff: what funding is available for DEI work? How can we incorporate self-care into our systems? (for staff and students) And would it be possible to have a board day with students? The board president will follow up with staff on the board day.

## **III. Parents/Guardians-at-Large Report**

Julie Neale Taylor and Astrid Bharath Pierce were present to deliver the report. The School Family Council is working on ways to connect families to the school during the pandemic. The HOPPP calendar is now merged to the School Family Council meeting. For now, there are no distinct HOPPP meetings. Mis Raices, Hekima Table, and HOPPP have representatives on the School Family Council.

## **IV. School and Growth Update\***

- A. Jane Lindenfelser gave the Executive Director's report. She thanked Dr. Obara and others for their work to secure an MSDE 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Grant, which supports after-school programming. The cultural framework with the mission statement language needs to be shared again with the caretakers/family community before going further with it. She provided an update on COVID and health and safety and noted PPPCS is up for renewal this year, with a report due in April. Last time PPPCS obtained a 5-year renewal, the maximum; 8-year renewals are now possible.
- B. Ms. Augustine, CHPCS principal, presented the school report for CHPCS. She was able to preserve the team despite falling short of the budget's enrollment goal. Also, one was able to be transitioned into an ESOL position, and she was able to make some progress on advocacy with the district around some kindergarten special education cases. On the grow side, there was a change of school psychologist, the school social worker resigned, and a school nurse still has to be assigned to the school by BCPSS. Attendance is up to 91% and can be higher if health positions are assigned by BCPSS.
- C. Dr. Kramer presented the PPPCS school report. Dr. Kramer applauded the staff work at the school. He noted the school performance plan, required for Title I funds, has to be done now, and the challenge is to define what makes PPPCS special apart from the required elements to be

submitted in the plan, which tend to focus on more narrow metrics. The school is hiring now for special education, especially for expertise with visual impairment, as well as for paraprofessionals and food service work. He asked those present to spread the word. Attendance is over 93% and will go up after quarantined students return. He provided an update on COVID cases and on behavior. There have been no suspensions this year. There were 26 incidents this quarter as compared to 174 in AY19-20 first quarter. Changes in approach to behavior appear to be helping.

#### **V. Executive Committee – Vaccine Policy**

Since the last meeting at which the nonprofit staff vaccine requirement policy was introduced, the Health and Safety Committee met to review information on keeping students and staff safe, the Executive Committee met with counsel to review the legal issues around the nonprofit instituting the policy, and administrative staff worked with counsel to prepare documents needed to introduce and implement such a policy. Then, six days ago, BCPSS met with charter operators and said that BCPSS would now require its policy for their employees to be extended to operators. At the School Stat meeting earlier on this day, BCPSS provided an overview of the policy for operators. Because this will be the policy required, there will be no vote on the policy introduced at the last board meeting. There was a question if we could have a rider in case our policy would be more restrictive than that of City Schools. Thus far, the policies seem to be about the same.

#### **VI. Academic Excellence Committee**

Pat Irish, chair, presented the report. The committee presented 5 goals for the year, which the board voted to approve. The goals are to add parent/caretaker community member to the committee; to support school leadership in addressing staff demands; to review intervention data to determine what works; to support responses to the curriculum audit findings, soliciting input from teachers and families to ensure the curriculum is always helpful and never harmful and working with the school to determine what professional development is needed; and to ensure board membership understanding of data through the dashboard.

#### **VII. Finance\***

Paul Rishar, chair and board treasurer, presented the committee's four goals for the year, which the board approved: grow the finance team for the two schools; conduct a performance review of the auditor (a standard practice); kick off CHPCS phase 2 renovation planning; and update the internal controls manual to reflect organizational growth.

Jane Lindenfelser, executive director, provided the enrollment and budget adjustment information. She reviewed the "enrollment adjustment" process with BCPSS, during which schools find out what the annual per pupil allocation is and after which have to submit adjusted balanced budgets within a week or two. The official enrollment at Sept. 30 determines how much per pupil funding the school will receive for the year. Staffing can be impacted by this process. On advice from the BCPSS Office of New Initiatives, the budget for CHPCS was set with a low enrollment target (lower than what was submitted last year as a target) as new schools often struggle in the first years with enrollment. She noted the school budget committees develop upturn/downturn plans for funds so that in the short turnaround time, the budgets can be adjusted quickly. Because PPPCS had a \$300,000 surplus, that schools' budget committee was reconvened. Because of conservative budget planning, there was a manageable CHPCS

deficit, which grants helped cover. The PPPCS surplus will help cover the disability services deficit, books for the library, outdoor dining costs, and team and culture support. The “True Up” process is coming in the third quarter which will require a payment to BCPSS related to services, and auditing is underway. The draft audit will be reviewed in January. Jane also noted that PPPCS is in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of its 5-year charter. It’s not clear if the renewal process will look like it did last year, when, because of COVID restrictions, the focus was heavier on finance and governance.

### **VIII. Facilities**

Lazette Wells, chair and board vice president, presented the report. She reported on PPPCS items being addressed, some with assistance from architect Ana Castro (teachers lounge). The committee is speaking with owner’s representative Bob Proutt about phase 2 renovation for CHPCS. Preparation is underway for RFPs for an architect and a general contractor.

The committee goals for the year were presented and approved by the board: grow the committee; support administration in the effective use of the facilities; support administration in finding solutions to structural challenges and building systems; support administration with capital assessment; and help implement phase 2 construction for CHPCS.

### **Closing Items**

- A. The next meeting will be in January.
- B. The meeting adjourned 8:43 pm.