

St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School
Board Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021
(approved February 15, 2022)
via zoom

Present: Francis Campbell, Chip Henstenburg, Josh Lewis, Frances Slaughter, Carla Ware-Easterling, and Dr. Peggy O'Brien, Chair. Also present: Michael Rodrigues, CEO; Kaiheem Mason, COO; Amy Warden, Inertim Principal, and Michael Olivarri, CFO

Agenda circulated before the meeting:

- Call to order
- Approval of minutes for previous meetings on 9.21.21 and 11.7.21
- The State of School:
 - Overview and items of note—Amy Warden
 - Financial report—Michael Olivarri
- Pending business:
 - Terms of current board members
 - Board development
 - Anything else?
- Executive session
- Call to adjourn

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Minutes of the prior board meetings—on September 21st and November 7th—were unanimously approved.

The State of School—Programs. Amy Warden outlined the current and steady state of the school. Her attached report was discussed fully. We discussed enrollment, student learning, staff retention, covid penetration, tracking, testing, and communication to parents and families, and learning recovery. Concerns about lower enrollment, teacher retention and hiring, and teacher/staff well-being were expressed; staff outlined excellent steps being taken to address these issues.

The State of the School--Financial Report. Michael Olivarri provided the board with a Q1 financial report. He also offered a clear review of the financial impact of the enrollment audit (and therefore UPSSF funding) and our currently reduced number of employees. He also introduced a modified balance sheet format that now displays deferred revenue.

Board Terms and Development. Terms of current board members were clarified, and parent member Carla Ware-Easterling was elected to serve another 3-year term. Dr. O'Brien anticipated that our board development and recruiting work—long-delayed by the extended CEO search, transition issues, and covid--would finally begin after the holidays.

Community/Neighborhood Update. COO Kaiheem Mason and board member Francis Campbell reported once again on the Hill East Development Project. Hill East Development, led by Chris Donatelli, has been designated the developer and the anticipated start in 2023. The charter school's goal is to ensure that our existing

construction management agreements are upheld and adhered to because safe and coordinated school drop-off and parking relate to student and staff safety and well-being.

Executive Session. CEO Michael Rodrigues and COO Kaiheem Mason discussed with board members the HR process around the departure of the former principal, and the positive steps being taken around enhancing staff productivity and morale.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "P" and "O".

Dr. Peggy O'Brien
Board chair and notetaker

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Board Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2022
via zoom

Present: Francis Campbell, Chip Henstenburg, Josh Lewis, Carla Ware-Easterling, and Dr. Peggy O'Brien, Chair. Frances Slaughter was absent. Also present: Michael Rodrigues, CEO; Kaiheem Mason, COO; Amy Warden, Interim Principal; Michael Olivarri, CFO, and Jay Vogt, strategic planning consultant

Agenda circulated prior to the meeting:

- Call to order
- Approval of minutes of previous board meeting (11.16.21)
- The State of School:
 - Overview and items of note—Amy Warden
 - Financial report—Michael Olivarri
 - Signs of overall progress (culture, energy, etc.)—Mike Rodrigues
- On-Going Business:
 - Strategic planning--Mike
- New business:
 - Compliance and the DCPCSB—PO'B
 - Principal search—PO'B, Mike, and Kaiheem
 - Board development—PO'B
- Future business
- Call to adjourn

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Minutes of the prior board meeting (11.16.21) were unanimously approved. It was noted that all DC public charter school board meetings are open meetings, and that the board needs to work with school staff to do a better job at communicating this not only to the school community but to the neighborhood as well.

The order of the agenda was rearranged necessarily to allow for the contributions of Jay Vogt who along with Mike Rodrigues is leading the strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning. Strategic planning consultant Jay Vogt reviewed the arc of the planning process with particular focus on critical strategic issues as identified by staff, possible 5-year objectives and 1-year objectives, and next steps in the process. The board applauded the focus on an overall improvement in quality, with supporting strategies in maximizing the quality of our services, growing our service to and development of staff, achieving national recognition, and strengthening our infrastructure and capacity. Peggy O'Brien asked for the addition of an item pointing to a "strengthened and sustainably strong charter school board" to the list of infrastructure/capacity 5-year goals.

The State of School—Programs. Amy Warden gave us a snapshot -- both comprehensive and strong -- of how our students are being served. Headlines:

--The virtual learning period which we undertook before everyone came back for in-person learning proved to be a good decision in that covid cases remain very, very low.

--Teachers and therapists are reviewing student data and planning appropriate classroom interventions that will begin to move students on the path to learning recovery.

--Staffing has increased though we remain in need of 7 teachers. Recruiting is ongoing.

--The prospect of full enrollment looks good for the next school year; 37 applications for House 1 students have been received already.

Upcoming before the end of this school year: student quarterly progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, teacher evaluations, our NCASES accreditation visits, and, with a retreat by covid, more bandwidth to focus on instruction.

The State of the School--Financial Report. Michael Olivarri provided the board with a financial report for the 6 months ending December 31, 2021. He noted that staff vacancies have been reduced but that we are still below our desired staff level. He also took us through anticipated end of year expenses, hopefully what will be a boost in the UPSFF funding next year, and several other elements that will influence next year's budget.

Signs of overall progress. Mike Rodrigues reported briefly on upticks among the staff in morale, trust, and attention to workforce improvement. He attributes a great deal of this to Amy Warden's leadership. He also outlines areas where work is still needed: compensation, general staff stress aligned with the times, number of staff absences, and communication among and with staff. Mike and Kaiheem Mason outlined plans for changing our salary structure—a proactive move that will (a) right the internal inequities among current newer and veteran employees, and perhaps more importantly (b) allow us to pay staff at levels that are comparable to DCPS, Montgomery County, and PG County so that we can attract the best staff and retain them. A good deal of data has already been gathered and revenue potential is being assessed. The board agrees with senior staff that this is a bold and necessary move that will secure St. Coletta's ability to better and more completely serve students and their families into the future.

New business:

- **Compliance and DCPCSB.** Peggy reported on her conversation with and subsequent submission to Katie Dammann, compliance offer at DCPCSB, on our out-of-compliance status because we are one board member short. An explanation along with board development plans have been filed with her office, and our compliance status is now noted as "in progress." This is a good thing.
- **Principal search.** Peggy, Mike, and Kaiheem reported briefly that they are beginning to look at possible search firms to lead the national search for our next principal. The board briefly discussed the potential make-up of a search committee and will take that up in detail at a later time.
- **Board development.** Peggy reported on her meeting with Shereen Williams of Education Board Partners. In that meeting, she outlined the Saint Coletta Charter School Board's history and our current need for significant board development. A proposal from Ed Board Partners was received late Monday. Peggy, Mike, and Kaiheem will read and discuss, and make a recommendation to the board within a couple of weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Peggy O'Brien
Board chair and notetaker