

**St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**February 15, 2022**  
**(approved on May 17, 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 officer 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

**St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**May 17, 2022**  
**via zoom**

**Present:** Francis Campbell, Chip Henstenburg, Josh Lewis, Carla Ware-Easterling, Frances Slaughter, Adele Robey, Shanta Bryant, and Dr. Peggy O’Brien, Chair. Also present: Michael Rodrigues, CEO; Kaiheem Mason, COO; Amy Warden, Interim Principal, and Michael Olivarri, CFO. Joining in executive session was Shereen Williams, senior consultant, Education Board Partners.

**Agenda circulated prior to the meeting:**

- Call to order
- Approval of minutes of previous board meeting (2.15.22)
- Warm welcome and greetings to new board members Shanta Bryant and Adele Robey, and quick introductions all around
- The State of School
  - Overview and items of note—Amy Warden, Interim Principal
  - Financial report—Michael Olivarri, CFO
  - Overall progress report—Mike Rodrigues, CEO and Kaiheem Mason, COO
- Transactional Board Business
  - Update on compliance
  - Extension of board terms
- Future business
  - Preview of strategic planning meeting (Wednesday, May 18) and further process
- Call to adjourn

*Executive Session*

- Shereen Williams, our partner from Education Board Partners, joins for discussion of our Board Diagnostic Report and next steps

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Minutes of the prior board meeting (2.15.22) were unanimously approved.

**New board members** Shanta Bryant and Adele Robey were welcomed warmly with a round-robin of introductions from board members and attending staff. They both expressed their pleasure on joining the board and working on behalf of the St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School.

**The State of School**

- **Interim Principal Amy Warden** shared news of the recently completed NCASES accreditation review—we met all of their standards—and of the successful visit from Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis, executive director of the DC Public Charter School Board. Great news about enrollment (and waitlists in Houses 1, 2, and 3) portends reaching our enrollment goal of 250 students for next school year, and real progress on hiring teachers and paraprofessionals as well as starting a search for an AP. She also reported on 2 parent complaints—both have been resolved—and St. Coletta’s current thinking and practices re Covid, since there is evidence in about half our

classrooms now. The fragility of our student population mandates us to think more carefully about how to protect them, so our practices are more stringent than those evident elsewhere. There was general follow-up discussion on these topics.

- **CFO Michael Olivarri** noted that the FY23 budget will be necessarily presented for a board vote later than anticipated; it's important to think through expenses related to staff compensation and the new strategic plan. He then took us YTD through March 31, 2022.
- **CEO Michael Rodrigues** reported briefly on the success of the well-coordinated management team working together, and the current creation of a "blueprint for advocacy" to launch a vigorous campaign to recover the gap payment from DC. He also gave a brief preview on the strategic plan to be voted on at a Special Board Meeting the following night (May 18, 2022).

### **Transactional Board Business**

- **Chair Peggy O'Brien** reported that we are in communication with DCPCSB's compliance officer, and in good transitional standing as of now.
- Board members with expired or nearly expired terms were re-elected to two-year terms as we move into our board development work. This is a transitional action. As part of board development, a grid of members (included anticipated new members) will be created to clarify length and overlap of terms.

### **Executive Session**

Shereen Williams, Education Board Partners, joined board members and Mike Rodrigues and Kaiheem Mason for our first meaty discussion on board development. Shereen took us through our responses to the EBP's Board Diagnostic, her recommendations, and some potential next steps. Deep thinking and lively and productive discussion all around.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy O'Brien".

Dr. Peggy O'Brien  
Board chair and notetaker