



## **Achievement House Cyber Charter School Board of Trustees**

Public Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

The Executive Session commenced at 6:00 p.m. and continued until approximately 7:05 p.m.

- I. Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call
  - Mrs. Lisabeth Sweeney (Vice President)
  - Mrs. Kristin Chettle (Treasurer)
  - Mr. Don Fraatz (Secretary)
  - Dr. Bob Maranto
  - Mr. Desmondé Pringle
- III. Notification of Recording
  - A. Brian Leinhauser announced that the Public Session would be recorded on an audio device.
- IV. Executive Session Statement
  - A. Lisabeth Sweeney stated that the Executive Session was held to discuss personnel, financial and legal matters.
- V. Approval of Minutes from March 17, 2020 Board Meeting
  - A. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2020 board meeting.
    1. Motion to approve the minutes from the March 17, 2020 board meeting by Bob Maranto. Seconded by Don Fraatz. Unanimous.
- VI. Discussion of Enrollment/Marketing Video Report
  - A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any questions or comments about the Enrollment/Marketing Video Report.
    1. Alane Butler stated she focused her report on end of year items. She put up a slide with a graph showing student enrollment numbers and you could see that student enrollment has increased and our student retention is better than last year.
    2. A. Butler also shared the special way in which AHCCS honored our valedictorian and salutatorian. We purchased personalized lawn signs congratulating them, banners to be hung wherever they choose, flowers, and balloons. We then arranged with their parents to surprise them on a specific day and 15 of our staff got in their cars and drove to their houses and did a drive by to congratulate them. Even Buzzy, our school mascot, came along for the ride! We got some great pictures and captured it on video.
    3. A. Butler noted that she has received several letters from parents recently thanking us for the transformation they have seen in their children. For this reason, for our Student Spotlight this month, she chose an 8<sup>th</sup> grade honor roll student who was bullied at their previous school and now is doing so much better academically and emotionally. A. Butler thanked Angela Alderfer, her home room coach, for being a key player and reaching out to this student and keeping her engaged throughout the year.
    4. Since we hit our student enrollment number of 800 during quarantine, A. Butler shared that she decided to purchase mini Bundt cakes for her team and drove to

each of their houses, left them on their door step for them and then the next day they had a Skype meeting and all ate their Bundt cakes together to celebrate.

VII. Discussion of Academic Video Report

A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any questions or comments about the Academic Video Report.

1. D. Asplen asked Neal Thomas to give a quick overview of his video report and especially of slides 15 to 18 regarding the School Improvement Plan. This is a fluid document that can and does change to meet our changing needs.
2. Neal Thomas explained that we are keeping the same priorities this year which are curriculum and professional development and we will further develop them with a focus on student achievement and student growth. The SIP should be finalized by the end of next week so that it can be reviewed by the Board and then posted publicly in June.
3. B. Maranto asked if he had found any surprises during the process. N. Thomas responded that the state provided a team of five people who came in at the beginning of the year. There were four Core Team members and a school facilitator. He found that by including other people in our processes there have been some really good outcomes and they have been a really great asset. We made great progress and growth with our curriculum and they helped us reset our PLC strategies.

VIII. Discussion HR Video Report

A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any questions or comments about the HR Video Report.

1. Bob Worn reported we have recently interviewed a lot of people and had a good period of new hires. He feels that they fine-tuned their interviewing process and are really getting to the heart of people.
2. He also noted that he feels we are finding a better quality of teachers because teachers are realizing that charter is choice for them.
3. B. Worn shared a candid, heartwarming email that he received from Nick Squeri, one of our new Special Education teachers.

IX. Discussion of Guidance Video Report

A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any questions or comments about the Guidance Video Report.

1. Kris Botes talked about some things they are doing this year to help retain students. One thing they are doing is starting course selection during the school year so the kids would know what courses they are getting and what they could look forward to next year. They are also working on special education course selection.
2. Kris shared that graduation will be virtual this year because of Covid-19. It will have all the same speakers but will just be online. All departments are involved in trying to make this as special as possible for our students.
3. Dr. Maranto noted that he was impressed with the students who had perfect attendance this year. A. Butler noted that she listed this in her report because she noticed that the students were logging in during the pandemic at the same rate as they were three months ago, whereas, in many other schools there was a drop in attendance and engagement. So, because we were able to provide a continuity of education, we were able to keep the same number of students or more engaged on a daily basis.

X. Finance/Business Report

A. Ryan Schumm provided the monthly Treasurer's Report.

1. R. Schumm gave a short summary for April and stated that right now is a good time to be a cyber charter school.
  2. R. Schumm mentioned the 20-21 draft budget and noted the variables we are heading into for next year are much different than in the past. We are in good financial position to weather the uncertainty and we can do it with as little disruption for students and staff as possible as it relates to finances.
  3. Because of the way PA charter school funding works we expect that the negative disruption from COVID-19 will not hit charter schools until fiscal year 21-22. This gives us plenty of time to plan accordingly and adapt and react as this situation evolves.
- B. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve the written Treasurer's Report.
1. Motion to approve the written Treasurer's Report by B. Maranto. Seconded by Des Pringle. Unanimous.
- XI. Discussion CEO Video Report
- A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any questions or comments about the CEO Video Report.
1. D. Asplen stated that things are in flux right now and all schools are trying to figure out what things will look like in September. The advantage that we have is that we are already established, and we are getting prepared now to handle any combination of school openings in the fall. D. Asplen is very optimistic about the future and what is coming.
  2. D. Asplen noted that we recently hired a Social Worker and may need to hire a second one soon. Some discussion followed and both B. Worn and K. Botes said that they are very pleased with the person we hired and think that we will keep her very busy. D. Asplen said the reason he brought this up is because as we think about all of the social and emotional impact, and the anxiety and the stress on our students, the fact that we have an inhouse counselor is going to be a plus for us and our kids.
- XII. Personnel
- A. New Hires:
1. Nick Squeri, Part-time Special Education Teacher, \$25/hr.
  2. Pamela Klass, Math Specialist, \$48,000
- B. Promotions:
1. Declan French, Curriculum Coordinator, \$68,000
  2. Trina Knauff, Supervisor of Special Education, \$75,000
- C. Transfer:
1. Lisa Moritz, Math Teacher, \$51,000
- D. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve the aforementioned new hires, promotions, and transfer of personnel at the salaries/rates specified.
1. Motion to approve the aforementioned new hires, promotions, and transfer of personnel at the salaries/rates specified by D. Fraatz. Seconded by D. Pringle. Unanimous.
- XIII. Governance
- A. L. Sweeney called for a motion to pass the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) with the understanding that refinements may be made prior to June 30, 2020.
1. Motion to pass the annual School Improvement Plan with the understanding that refinements may be made prior to June 30, 2020 by B. Maranto. Seconded by L. Sweeney. Unanimous.

- B. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve the purchase of laptops, computers, and equipment with anticipation of increased enrollment understanding that even if there is no increased enrollment, we will use the laptops, computers, and equipment at a later date.
  - 1. Motion to approve the purchase of laptops, computers, and equipment with anticipation of increased enrollment understanding that even if there is no increased enrollment, we will use the laptops, computers, and equipment at a later date by D. Fraatz. Seconded by K. Chettle. Unanimous.
- C. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve the 2020-2021 final school calendar.
  - 1. Motion to approve the 2020-2021 final school calendar by K. Chettle. Seconded by B. Maranto. Unanimous.
- D. L. Sweeney called for a motion to approve a resolution to implement a series of summer camps for students, both Achievement House students and non-Achievement House students, to be funded by the marketing dollars that were saved by not having to advertise in the past couple of months.
  - 1. Motion to approve a resolution to implement a series of summer camps for students, both Achievement House students and non-Achievement House students, to be funded by the marketing dollars that were saved by not having to advertise in the past couple of months by K. Chettle. Seconded by D. Fraatz. Unanimous.
- E. D. Asplen could not find the words that would express the administration and the Boards appreciation for the way our staff has handled this entire situation. What they have gone through personally, the sacrifices they have made, and the adjustments they have had to make. They stuck with us and hung in there! D. Asplen then called for a motion to approve a year-end bonus of \$1000 to each employee employed at Achievement House on the last day of school.
  - 1. Motion to approve a year-end bonus of \$1000 to each employee employed at Achievement House on the last day of school by B. Maranto. Seconded by K. Chettle. Unanimous.

XIV. New Business

- A. D. Asplen announced that Trina Knauff is in the midst of getting her special education supervisory certification and is being promoted to our Supervisor of Special Education. We chose her for this position not just for her intelligence IQ but her emotional IQ, empathy, drive, and determination. N. Thomas added T. Knauff has shown every step of the way that she can jump into this leadership position with her practice this year as Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA). She has gone above and beyond in what was asked in that position.
- B. D. Asplen announced that Declan French is being promoted to Curriculum Coordinator. He said he is like a sponge and soaks up so much information, he thinks incredibly quickly, he is regimented, and D. Asplen is glad to have him on our team. N. Thomas stated that with D. French he has spent countless hours working on curriculum with the Core Team members in trying to bridge the gap between our goals from last year and where we want to be in the future with curriculum. And thanks to the Board, we also had Dr. Wingerter working with us as our Curriculum Consultant and he helped D. French every step of the way.
- C. D. Aspen stated that both T. Knauff and D. French have great ideas for next year and he asked them to take a minute to share about themselves and what they want to do in this position.
  - 1. T. Knauff said she is grateful to be here at Achievement House and she has a true passion for working with at risk students. She has always worked for charter schools and is also passionate about that. She was fortunate to have Dr. Mason as

her mentor this year and throughout her Special Education certificate program and as a TOSA. Heading into next year some of the things that she is really excited about for her department is that she had an opportunity to lead an Emotional Support Committee this school year and they developed an Emotional Support Program that they will be implementing in the upcoming school year. They already have plans for the new Social Worker and feels she will be a big asset to their program. The Social Worker will be facilitating group counseling for our students in the Emotional Support Program as well as individual counseling. Their goal is to provide an educational component for our students who have social and emotional concerns and help them to develop coping skills here in the cyber environment. They are implementing a new curriculum called BASE. It is a web-based program which is perfect for a cyber setting. Some other items for next year are to continue to emphasize our compliance and to focus on dropout prevention by bringing in resources from the Intermediate Unit and PATTAN. She is looking forward to working with D. French to strengthen our supplemental learning support curriculum. She shared it was exciting to meet the board tonight.

2. D. Asplen said that we have tried curriculum in many different ways, but D. French is the first person who has been able to actually make a measurable difference in curriculum and to get teachers to want to be better at their craft through curriculum. D. French shared that he just kind of fell into curriculum. Last year he was asked to work on the AHIT curriculum which was a smaller curriculum position. He said it was like D. Asplen was saying, we had standards and we just pasted them in and said let's move on. For this year, through the work they have been doing, it just naturally came out that we needed to slow down a little bit with that process and we needed to get teachers talking about it across their grade levels and across their contents. A lot of teachers are the only teachers who teach certain courses, and this is the first school that D. French has been at that is like that. So a lot of times teachers end up isolated with how they are planning their courses, so we have opened that up a bit to get teachers to start talking with teachers across their department and getting the discussion about what is a standard and how do I teach a standard. Looking at what we are trying to do going forward, curriculum is constantly changing, and Pennsylvania is in the process of adopting new science standards so we have some big projects like that bringing in changes in standards on a state and national level. We are also working on getting some alignment with our courses from year to year and getting similar language and making sure that our texts are building up the way that we want them. He noted that he says to our teachers that he believes everyone is capable of making their own curriculum but it is when you then have to say but wait this student is going to have to move through six different years here so we want to make sure that all of us are talking in the same language when making that curriculum. Continuity is what we will be working on next year as N. Thomas mentioned in regard to our School Improvement Plan. D. French is very excited about the work he will be doing.

- D. D. Asplen noted that not only does T. Knauff have a passion for the curriculum that she is introducing, but she is also looking at the cost and thinking about how we can do these things more cost effectively but equally as well. She talked about having some of our tutors in house so that we have better quality control over them.

XV. Public Comment

- A. L. Sweeney asked if there were any public comments.

1. Erinn Bean shared that she was very excited for T. Knauff and D. French. She also said that It has been really cool to see how our team has persevered through these trying times and the amazing ways we have shifted to cope even with people with kids at home. She is very excited to be a part of this team and is excited to see where we go in the future. The summer camp meeting this morning went great and she likes the idea of presenting our courses to kids who may not have experienced this before and get them engaged and excited about on-line learning.

XVI. Adjournment

- A. L. Sweeney called for a motion to adjourn the public board meeting. Our next meeting will be June 16, 2020 at 7:00 PM.
  1. Motion to adjourn the public meeting by B. Maranto. Seconded by D. Fraatz. Unanimous.