

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
September 25, 2018

Directors Present: Daniel Adams, Steven Van Bruaene, Thomas Coley, Larry Davis, Larry Garatoni, Marian Hodges, Lori Smith
On Phone : Michael Garatoni
Absent: Dave Risner
Staff Attending: Alex Hammel, Rob Kohler, Dean Fecher, Greg Dettinger
Also Attending: Charles Loeser, Emily Gaskill (nee Kleinschmidt)

Larry Garatoni called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm at the Career Academy, 3801 Crescent Circle, South Bend.

A. Minutes of Prior Meeting. The minutes of the prior (July 24) meeting were approved.

B. Adjustment of Budget. Alex Hammel presented a modification of the budget as approved at the July 24 meeting. The revision is necessary because enrollment is lower than expected: Count Day (September 14) enrollment was 1,286, a reduction of 29 from the originally budgeted 1,315. High school enrollment was 305 versus the projected 320, middle school (6-8) enrollment was 352, slightly up from the projected 345, and primary school enrollment was 629, down 21 from the projection of 650. The reduction will result in direct revenue loss of roughly \$208,000 (the combined reduction of State tuition and reduction of the State \$500/student/year capital expenditure grant for qualifying charter schools). Fortunately, costs can be reduced to remain at a positive cash flow without reducing anyone's pay, letting anyone go, or reducing supplies or equipment for instruction. Most of the cost reduction is by not replacing staff members who resigned recently or over the summer. There was also a substantial reduction in capital expenditure due to the parking lot changes (which have succeeded in substantially reducing the time and traffic in the pick-up and drop-off processes) being completed for much less than the budgeted cost. The combined reductions in expenses are slightly more than the revenue loss, resulting in projected positive net operating cash flow for 2018-19 of \$112,178. Upon motion, the revised budget was unanimously approved.

C. Financial Statements. Alex presented financial statements for August and for the 2018-19 fiscal year (beginning July 1) through the end of August, in comparison with the revised budget. The year-to-date income statement showed positive cash flow of roughly \$37,000, which is a positive variance (improvement) from budget. To some extent this is the result of timing of payments and accruals, as part-time salaries are budgeted over twelve months but not paid until employees begin work in August. On the other hand, the school lunch program, which from last year's experience we are sure will generate positive cash flow, had expenses without revenue during July. There are several other timing issues but none are material. Upon motion made and duly seconded, the financial statements were approved.

D. School Operations.

1. Enrollment Update. Alex distributed a chart showing Count Day enrollment by grade as compared to last year's enrollment, as well as the number of new students and returning students in each grade and the retention rate (percentage of students from last year who have returned this year). Overall the retention rate has improved but the transience rate is still higher than in typical suburban schools. The charts:

Success Academy Enrollment Summary – September 2018						
Grade	New Students	Returning Students	Total Students	Total Last Year	Delta	Retention %
K	104	N/A	118	112	6	N/A
1	21	83	104	102	2	74%
2	19	79	98	103	-5	77%
3	10	81	91	94	-3	79%
4	21	79	100	118	-18	84%
5	15	110	125	118	7	93%
Total	190	432	636	647	-11	

Career Academy Middle School Enrollment Summary – September 2018						
Grade	New Students	Returning Students	Total Students	Total Last Year	Delta	Retention %
6	32	98	130	109	21	83%
7	22	88	110	102	8	81%
8	24	89	113	117	-4	87%
Total	78	275	353	328	25	

Career Academy High School Enrollment Summary – September 2018						
Grade	New Students	Returning Students	Total Students	Total Last Year	Delta	Retention %
9	14	82	96	82	14	70%
10	2	60	71	95	-24	84%
11	5	79	84	62	22	83%
12	4	50	54	62	-8	81%
Total	25	280	305	301	4	
District	293	987	1294	1276	18	

Alex noted that fourth grade and eleventh grade make up most of the drop. Dan asked if it's possible to analyze the reasons for students leaving. Alex said he plans to follow up but it's not always possible to get responses. Lori suggested kids might be more candid than parents. Greg said many of the kids who leave at the high school level are motivated by sports. Lori suggested reviewing student surveys.

2. Demographic Comparison. Alex presented bar graphs showing the number of students this year compared to last year by Special Education status, ethnicity, gender, and lunch status (i.e., low-income status) for the schools combined ("District") and for each school.

A. Special Education. There are more Special Education students enrolled than last year, the main categories are as follows:

	17-18	18-19	Autism	Speech	Learning	Other Health	Emotional	Cognitive
District	257	275	54/52	55/54	83/94	40/43	12/18	9/11
Success	127	119	17/15	48/44	32/29	17/19	7/9	3/1
Career Middle	56	72	13/14	5/6	21/25	12/15	2/5	3/5
Career HS	74	84	24/23	2/4	30/40	11/9	3/4	3/5

It was agreed that in the future demographic information should be shown in percentages.

B. Ethnicities. The ethnic mix of students is fairly consistent with last year:

	Caucasian		Black		Hispanic		Multi-Racial		Asian		Native Am	
	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19
District	579	587	424	443	135	137	121	113	12	10	3	2
Success Academy	234	235	275	271	73	73	55	55	2	2	0	0
Career Middle	163	169	87	95	24	36	41	33	4	4	1	1
Career HS	170	174	53	70	36	26	23	24	6	4	2	1

C. Gender. As in past years, the schools are attracting more males than females:

	Male %		Female %	
	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19
District	54	55	46	45
Success Academy	53	55	47	45
Career Middle	55	56	45	44
Career HS	54	55	46	45

D. Lunch Status. The number of students qualifying for free or reduced price meals has increased:

	Paid Lunch		Free Lunch		Reduced Lunch	
	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19	17-18	18-19
District	454	399	723	786	75	109
Success Academy	179	146	423	443	38	47
Career Middle	137	123	165	196	19	34
Career HS	138	130	135	147	18	28

Alex said he believes the greater number of free/reduced students is not due to a demographic change of the student mix; rather, it's due to a more effective process of informing families and completing the qualification process, and perhaps because the meals provided by the food service contractor are more attractive than what was provided by our original contractor at the start of last year.

Greg Dettinger said one of the reasons for the number of Special Education students increasing is that their parents appreciate the service we provide and the kids aren't attracted to other schools by sports programs. Steve said parents of Special Ed students tend to be more focused on educational services than other parents. Larry said one parent of a Special Ed student went to Mike's house, thinking it was Larry's, to express her appreciation for how the schools (first Success and then Career) have helped her son, who is autistic and has been very successful.

Marian said she would like to see the percentage of students, by gender and ethnicity, taking STEM courses. Alex said he would ask CASB's new CTE Director, Greg Stover, to follow up. Marian said there's a tendency for girls and minorities to move out of STEM courses; we should encourage pursuing STEM, and track data to see how we're doing. Alex said we can track concentration paths that are a good measure for this. Dan asked if we can begin at the elementary level to encourage kids to pursue STEM courses, perhaps combined with assessment methods to identify students who are likely to be attracted to and successful in STEM-related work. Lori said there are career affinity tests routinely given to ninth graders in the schools her kids attend; is there some form of such assessments suitable for elementary age kids? Larry asked Greg and Dean to investigate this and follow up.

Larry Davis said we need to be careful not to press kids toward STEM fields if that's not their preference, any more than forcing left-handed kids to write right-handed. Dan said helping kids identify what they're good at and likely to enjoy is as important for an artistically-oriented kid as for STEM-oriented kids; the "career" focus of the school should be helping kids develop a realistic understanding of how their interests and capabilities fit in the working world, while they're still young enough to take full advantage of all the opportunities available to them. Alex said Career has extensive career-orientation courses in eighth grade. Lori said kids often don't know what they're good at or might like. Charles Loeser recalled a parent coming to a board meeting¹ to express her appreciation for what CASB had done for her daughter, who'd said when she first visited the school that she didn't want to come because she was not interested in math or science, that was for boys; but once she started classes she found that she loved it; project-based learning drew her into science and working in teams with other students made her more socially comfortable. Perhaps the best way to attract girls and minorities to STEM fields (or at least help them understand the possibility) would be to collect stories from older students who've found the way, especially if the student's background would not have made that an expected choice.

Dan commented that teams need a mix of skills, it's not as if everyone should be a nerd. Marian said even technology companies need leadership guided by people skills rather than tech skills.

Alex said CASB's "advisory" system provides real-life perspective starting at the middle-school level. Larry asked Alex to explain the "advisory" system. Alex said this involves small groups of students (usually 8-10) meeting on a weekly basis with a teacher or other staff member, not just for a school year but for the entire time that the student is at the school. One focus of this period is the development of "soft skills" such as interviewing, job seeking, how to interact with supervisors, etc. This includes taking personality profile tests and learning about styles of communication. It's important that each student gets advice from a knowledgeable adult who knows the student well. This is the second year of the "advisory" process at CASB and the process is evolving as advisor leaders meet and consult with one another. Alex said one of the benefits is to provide the advisors with insight into the student perspective on the school.

Greg said another practice that helps both families and the staff in understanding other perspectives is offering parents the opportunity to meet with staff teams involved with their student. Most schools don't offer this, it's one of the ways in which Career is innovative and will in the future be emulated as the benefit of the practice is recognized.

3. Superintendent McCormick Visit. Dean reported that Dr. Jennifer McCormick, Indiana Superintendent of Education, recently visited South Bend to see the Success Academy. She was given a tour of

¹ See minutes of 9/20/2016 meeting.

the building, including a fifth grade PBL project, the multi-age class for high-ability third through fifth graders, a Singapore math class, English projects, the class for emotionally disabled students, and more. She was very complimentary. Alex said the best aspect of this was that this was not a show for her benefit, it was just what happens at Success on a regular basis, there are cool things happening every day,

4. IUSB Collaboration. Greg reported on the arrangements for IUSB students doing their student teaching at Career. Initially it had been agreed that eight students would come, then Greg was told it had been decided that the students should do their student teaching at a traditional school rather than a charter school. Greg responded with an email saying this would deprive IUSB students of an opportunity to see and work in an innovative school that in many ways is a school of the future, which he described in some detail. Shortly thereafter there came a call asking if CASB could take four student teachers, followed by a call two days later asking if Career could take 15 student teachers. So we now have 15 IUSB student teachers: eight in Social Studies, five in English, and two in math. It's good to be recognized, Greg said, and great to have the opportunity to develop relationships with students who will soon be graduating and looking for teaching positions.

5. Visitors. Greg reported that Notre Dame students visit Career every year, today there were 20 Notre Dame sociology students visiting Career as part of a study of charter schools compared to traditional schools. Greg had forgotten to tell the teachers about this but as with Dr. McCormick, what was happening in a regular day at the school impressed them. Alex said this happens with visitors on a regular basis, for example Indiana Senator Ryan Mishler, an important leader in the Indiana Senate for education issues, visited Career Academy today and was very complimentary.

6. Breakfast in the Classroom. Dean reported that at Success for the first three years there were about 90 kids eating breakfast at school, which he knew wasn't enough to meet the needs of our students. So this year Success has started providing breakfast in the classroom and there are now 500 kids having breakfast at school every day. This helps with discipline and academics as well as with students' health. The program will more than pay for itself through federal reimbursement. Breakfast gets to the kids between 8am and 8:20 in assembly for all students, then they take their breakfast to their classrooms.

7. Robotics at Success Academy. Dean reported that Success has started offering an introductory robotics program, Robotics FLL Junior (First Lego League²), for K-3 students. The kids have responded enthusiastically, there are now 13 teams with over 50 students, with another 50 students scheduled to join next semester. So there will be over 100 kids participating in K-3 robotics. There will also be a grade 4-5 Robotics FLL program, for which we have two teams with nine kids each. This is the first time Success is offering these programs and we are hoping that the girls participating in the K-3 program will be attracted to the higher level program and interest in technology. Parents of kids in the K-3 program are invited to participate and we have many participating parents, which we believe is very useful for encouraging and helping young students towards interest in technology. For the grade 4-5 program Success will be hosting a regional competition. Older kids at Career who are involved with robotics are helping.

8. Student Behavior at Success Academy. Success Academy Assistant Principal Victor Chukwedebe described the results of Success Academy's modified behavior program. Last year at this time there were 245 referrals of students for discipline, this year there have been 197, reflecting culture change in progress. The figures understate the change since the standards for a referral now include forms of misbehavior that were

² See <http://www.firstlegoleague.org/>.

tolerated last year: using last year's standards would have reduced this year's count to 117. For the students who are referred more than once, we now make greater use of community service agencies. Dean said the PBIS program has improved communication and reduced student time outside the class. Dean said he feels that staff morale is higher than it's ever been. Parise Easton, Kindergarten Team Leader, agreed.

E. Trine Report. Emily Gaskill (formerly Emily Kleinschmidt) presented Trine's first review of the 2018-19 school year. Emily said she and others at Trine have been very impressed this year with the quality of instruction at Success Academy, which in prior years Trine did not consider as meeting its standard (in contrast to the middle school and high school, which Trine has recognized as meeting or exceeding the charter standards). Emily said the team is showing a new sense of urgency and is responding very well to Trine's suggestions. This includes the Guided Reading Instruction, Differentiated Staff Development, and Classroom Management programs incorporated in the School Improvement Plan established by Trine last year. The Classroom Management program is shown as not meeting standard but that is only because Success set a goal of reducing referrals by 50% and so far the reduction is slightly less than 20%, which as Victor explained is really an understatement.

Emily noted there is still an audited financial statement due, which as previously discussed is expected to be completed soon.

F. Public Questions. Larry asked if anyone had additional comments.

Victor said he's spoken to a number of parents who are looking for jobs, can the schools help? Dan said his business has positions to fill. Larry said they should be put in contact with Work One, they're the experts on helping people find work.

Dean noted that last year the dismissal/pick-up process lasted 50 minutes, this year it's down to 12 minutes, it starts at about 3:15 and is over by about 3:25.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.



Charles M. Loeser, Assistant Secretary