

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
February 25, 2020

Directors Present: Dan Adams, Larry Garatoni, Chad Hartzell, Marian Hodges, Mark Melnick, Lori Smith, Nick Swisher
By Phone: Kay Antonelli, Charles Loeser
Absent : Michael Garatoni
Staff Attending: Alex Hammel, Dean Fecher
Also Attending: Brian Pawlowski, Lindsay Omlur, Emily Gaskill

Larry Garatoni called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm at the Success Academy, 3804 Ardmore Trail, South Bend.

A. Prior Minutes. The minutes of the prior (December 10, 2019) meeting were approved.

B. Presentation By St. Joseph County Health Department. Dr. Mark Fox from the County Health Department explained that the County is requesting that all schools begin requiring, as a condition for enrollment of a child, evidence that the child has been tested for exposure to lead, similar to the current requirement of evidence of immunization. Lead exposure has been a significant problem in South Bend and St. Joseph County. Testing for exposure to lead requires a blood test, by a finger stick done twice in a three-month period. This is required for Medicaid recipients at ages one and two but is not universally administered for other children. The test is covered by health insurance and for children without insurance is available at the County Health Department, via its mobile unit, at no cost. South Bend Community School Corporation has adopted this policy for the 2020-2021 school year. Larry asked Dean to follow up with the Health Department and present to the Board a proposed policy.

C. School Operations.

1. Staff Survey. Alex distributed a summary of the responses to the staff survey taken in December, noting that overall the scores are the highest in the years (since 2012) that surveys have been taken. There were significant improvements in reported satisfaction, especially at Success, and improved scores for teamwork at Success and the middle school (although the high school continues to outscore both). There are still issues, such as recognition and praise, and there were some items for which scores declined for the middle school. To address the issues identified in the survey, the leadership teams had a series of meetings with staff members. One of the resulting plans is to improve academic achievement using a methodology referred to as "Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" ("MTSS"), based on supporting the "whole child", whether an advanced or struggling learner, through academic, behavioral, social and emotional services.¹ We've been providing such services but see a need for a systematic approach including greater communications between teachers and other service providers. Similarly, we've established a more systematic approach to discipline with enhanced information-sharing. For the middle school, there have been drawbacks resulting from increased enrollment with reduced space per student, not by larger classes (we've kept to the model of 25-student classes) but by more classes, using open meeting areas for classes. We've also hired a dean of students to take responsibility for discipline at the middle school. There's to be an all-staff meeting in mid-May to share the survey data and plans resulting from it. Alex said he'll follow up at a later meeting as to the parent and student surveys.

¹ See <https://www.pbisrewards.com/blog/what-is-rtss/>.

2. Compensation Plan. Alex distributed a summary of the recently completed compensation plan which has been shared with the staff and implemented. He explained that a central concept is to accelerate raises for the least compensated staff. The figures in the plan are based on the current budget and available "raise pool" funds. Raises will be on a calendar year (January-December) basis rather than by school year, which allows use of actual enrollment rather than projections. Alex noted that the amount available for the raise pool has been increased due to the State's reduction of the required employer contribution for Teacher Retirement Fund (TRF) pensions from 7.5% to 5.5% of compensation.²

3. Land Acquisition. Alex explained that the Corporation has received an additional donation from Cressy & Everett of vacant land south of the Career Academy building. The donated lot is Lot One of Blackthorn Corporate Office Park Minor Subdivision #8, state parcel # 71-03-20-300-006.000-009. As with the other parcels that have been donated in recent years, the land is not buildable due to substantial incline, but may be used for science classes and walkways.

4. Completion of 2017-18 Audit. Alex explained that the Corporation's auditors have completed the audit for the fiscal year ending 6-30-2018 and are now on schedule to complete future audits on a timely basis.

D. Financial Statement. As CFO Kim Richardson was on vacation, Alex presented the financial statement for the period ending 12/31/2019. There were no material unexpected items. On motion, the financial statement was unanimously approved.

E. Trine Report. Emily Gaskill presented the Trine Team's report on its observations of the three schools, including a Compliance Check for Special Education and English Language Learners, an Accountability Plan Status Update, and an Instructional Rating Breakdown, which Emily noted reflects continued improvement in instruction at Success Academy and Career Middle School. Lindsay Omlur reported that CASB teams participated in Trine's Innovation One Challenge on the Trine campus, presenting in both the Technology category and the Business category. This is a statewide, multi-step competition, with a judging panel comprised of business/technology professionals from across the region. There were nine CASB groups judged for Technology and eight CASB groups for the Business competition. In the Technology category, three CASB groups won awards (1st place, 2nd place, and People's Choice). In the Business category, a CASB group won a People's Choice award.

F. Public Comment. There being no comments, questions, or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 pm.



Charles M. Loeser, Assistant Secretary

² The required employer contribution for employees enrolled in TRF is based on the State's actuarial determination of the amount required to be collected from employers to cover the cost of teacher pensions (the "defined benefit" retirement annuity for qualifying participants after ten years of service). Since this determination is based on expected investment return to be earned by the State on collected funds, the amount may vary from year to year. Career Academy's 401k plan for employees not participating in TRF provides for an employer contribution (even if there is no employee contribution, unlike 401k plans for employers other than schools) equal to the TRF required contribution percentage; accordingly, the 401k employer contribution has also been set at 5.5%, resulting in an additional increase in funding available for the raise pool.