

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
October 26, 2021 via Zoom and In Person

Directors Present: David Balkin, Marian Hodges, Larry Garatoni, Michael Garatoni, Mark Melnick, John DeSalle, Nick Swisher, Chad Hartzell

Staff Attending: Dean Fecher, Jeremy Lugbill, Nick Garstka, Kim Richardson, Sam Ells, Rob Kohler, Rhonda Myers, Tammy Youngs

Via Zoom: Emily Gaskill, Lindsay Omlur, Charles Loeser

A. Call to Order. Larry Garatoni called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

B. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the prior (September 28) meeting were approved.

C. School Operations.

1. Overview.

a. Recent & Upcoming Events.

Jeremy reported that the schools' federal grant application under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) has been approved, including funds for teacher stipends in recognition of the extraordinary commitment shown in last year's difficult circumstances. Larry expressed the board's appreciation of the staff's performance. Jeremy noted the grant also included funds for athletic field and shop area improvements.

Jeremy announced that Career Academy's robotics team, coached by Dave Ebersol, won first place in a tournament earlier this month (2021 Boiler Bot Battle October 16, 2021 at Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds, Lafayette), competing against 15 area teams (event photos at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/indianafirst/albums/72157720024196434>, Career Academy Facebook page <https://team5484.com/about-us/>). Robotics has become an important part of school culture, it's good to see this year's team has 13 female students out of 33 members.

b. Advisory Boards.

Jeremy said his team is looking for help from the Board in establishing advisory councils of industry experts for some of the career "pathways" offered by the school. To refresh the Board's recollection, he distributed a one-page summary listing the courses required and the

career options for each Pathway: computer science, healthcare, welding technology, entrepreneurship, precision machining, and engineering. To the extent possible, he said, he'd like to use advisory groups that already exist rather than create a new group. For the entrepreneurship pathway, the plan is to consult the steering committee for Iris Hammel's Regional Innovation and Startup Education, Inc. ("RISE"), d/b/a/ Startup Moxie (high school) and Applied Entrepreneurship (college). For the computer science pathway, the steering committee for Shabbir Qutbuddin's IT Sector Partnership will be consulted. For healthcare, we'll need a new group. We'll also need a new group for welding technology, precision machining, and engineering, which will be combined with a shared advisory group. Jeremy asked for recommendations from the board for these groups.

c. Strategic Plan – Measures of Success.

Jeremy distributed copies of the strategic plan adopted by the school last year to which his team has added suggested measures of success for each goal. Larry said the board will review this and come back with comments at the December board meeting.

2. Principal Reports.

a. High School – Nick Garstka.

Nick said academic performance has improved as measured by grades: the number of A's has gone up and the number of F's has gone down. He's put an element of fun into this, and brought students' attention to it, with the "flying aces" game: for every A on a student's report card, the student gets a shot at winning a prize by throwing a paper airplane into a ring in the gym. The students have a lot of fun and it adds incentive. The high school had over 1200 A's, an average of about three A's per student.

Darrell Turner, the Early College and Career Counselor for the high school, said on October 8-9 the students went to Notre Dame to watch the "Ideas That Matter" pitch competition but ended up competing in the event, which went from Friday evening, when they left at 10pm, to Saturday at two o'clock. They got together with other students from Notre Dame and Ivy Tech and from other high schools (Washington, Adams, and Riley), breaking into groups, and our two groups won first place, with a prize of \$1,000, and second place, with a prize of \$750. The first team developed shoes for runners to alleviate pain. The second team developed a treatment for natural curly hair and how to market it. Two members of the second team gave a presentation of they'd done at the competition, and in response to a question from Marian, said the competition was a great learning experience and terrific motivation for pursuing a career in business.

b. Primary School – Dean Fecher.

Dean said Success Academy will have a big Halloween party on Friday, parents have donated 17 bins of candy and we're expecting about 1000 parents, students, siblings, and community members to attend.

Dean said there will be many innovations in instruction this year, for example Math Talks, providing higher level thinking questions. Dr. Nash and students then gave a presentation of Math Talks.

Mr. Fecher then said we also have Dr. Amanda Serenity here, who with her husband is the founder of Riverbend Math. She's worked closely with the South Bend, Mishawaka, PHM and Success Academy schools in the area of high ability math, understanding and math education. She's also working with our Boys and Girls club for our STRIDE program after schools and academic program. Currently, she's spending an hour each day with Megan Roberts, one of our fourth-grade teachers.

Dr. Amanda then presented, saying this semester we are working in fourth grade with matters including decimals and fractions, the relationship between multiplication and division, strategies for multi digit multiplication and division, and algebra concepts. An end of the semester project will combine all these skills. They will be drafting engineering designs, plotting on coordinate grids, and using a laser cutter. They're learning about digital electronics, LEDs, resistors, batteries, and capacitors. The goal is to show how mathematics integrates with real world skills that will help them. The students are having a lot of fun and learning in the process. This is part of an initiative called the Advanced Math Pathways Project, the goal of which is to offer students a pathway to Algebra one and geometry for high school credit by eighth grade. Not that every student should have to do that, but every student should have the chance to push themselves and go for that if they want it, especially if they want to pursue an advanced STEM career. And what I've seen in this class is that we have a lot of students who have that hunger to push themselves, who are opting to go above and beyond and do extra assignments, so that they can excel and move up through the sort of grade levels a little bit faster. Given what we had last year, it's important to make up for some gaps in learning, which will take a lot of work, but they've shown us that they have the drive to put in that work to make that happen.

c. Middle School – Rhonda Myers.

Rhonda Myers said the middle school had a weather balloon launch on October 16: the seventh grade Environmental Technology students launched, tracked and recovered a weather balloon that reached 95,000 feet, which is 18 miles above Earth. It was a windy day

and the balloon came down in Ohio. The kids were enjoying the ride in minibuses following it, but we wanted to be back before dark so we turned around and let Mr. Bernhard recover the balloon. The kids extracted the data. They'd calculated and ordered the helium, identified and ordered the parts they needed, ran prediction models, and analyzed the data. It was a terrific time.

Rhonda said parent teacher conferences last week were offered via Zoom as well as in person, which led to over 80% of parents participating. That's higher than normal, many parents expressed appreciation for that option and for our extending the time for conferences until past 7 pm. Roughly half the conferences were virtual and half in person.

3. Career Academy Online.

Tammy Youngs said Career Academy online continues to grow, now having a little over 100 students, about 20 more kids than at the last meeting. We're adding the capacity for online students to earn college credits through Salem University for roughly 30 classes. For a modest fee, Salem will provide teachers and curriculum while providing us with all the backend so we can do the reporting, keep in touch with families, monitor progress, and help ensure that the students are successful. The credits will be accepted at all Indiana state schools, just as Ivy Tech credits are. Beyond Indiana, some schools will accept the credits and some will not.

Jeremy said we applied for grant funding to cover the cost of this and this week we found out that at least part of that (for the 20st Century Scholar program) will be covered.

Mike asked how much interest in online education is expected when the pandemic is over? Ms. Youngs said most of our online students have selected that option for reasons other than the pandemic. Some like the flexibility of the schedule. Some are in divided custody situations with one of the parents not living near South Bend, so online schooling avoids the need to choose one of the locations for school. There are many reasons for using online education, so we expect this program to have permanent value.

D. Facilities and Operations Report.

Sam Ells then reported on the operations team, which is responsible for providing the instructional staff with support they need. Sam introduced his department leaders: Evan Henry, Director of Facilities; Rob Kohler, Director of Marketing; Craig Young, Director of Technology; and Elaine Waterhouse, HR coordinator. Some of the projects completed this past year:

- Facilities:
 - Parking lot repaved
 - Rooftop heating/cooling units replaced

- o Outside of building repainted
- o Cafeteria enlarged with faster serving lines
- o Lighting upgraded to LED
- o Upgrades of gym and class interior sound system
- o Coming soon:
 - Athletic field expansion
 - Shop and welding area upgrade
- Technology
 - o Staff and students received new laptops this year.
 - o Phone system upgraded.

The job of support requires dedication, which the instructional staff deserves for their extraordinary performance. The ops team has been busy, busy, busy and deserves our thanks.

E. Board Membership Renewal.

Larry said three board members' terms on the board will expire soon: Nick, Marian and Mike, all of whom have said that they would like to continue on the board. On motion duly seconded, all were elected for another two-year term ending 10/1/2023.

F. Financials.

1. Claims/Payments Report [July, August and September]

Kim presented the claims report for claims July 1 to September 30, listing all payments from school accounts, with a list attached with detail for credit card payments. On motion duly seconded, the expenditure list was approved.

2. Year-to-Date September Results

Kim presented financial statements for the fiscal year-to-date (July 1- September 30). Revenue has exceeded budget by \$53,000 due to higher than expected textbook reimbursement: we've collected \$71,000 and we budgeted \$18,000.

Kim noted the budget used for comparison has not been updated to reflect actual enrollment: the budget was prepared using last year's enrollment of 1350, our actual enrollment was 1422.

Larry said there were also some other changes, so the Board Financial Committee will review this and prepare an updated budget for approval at the next Board meeting in early December.

Kim noted the State Board of Accounts has modified the required format for payroll. Capital expenditures include asphaltting the parking lot, a concrete pad for environmental storage containers, sealcoat for additional parking, and LED lighting upgrades. Food service to-date is \$40,000 to the good. Chartwells gave us a five-year 0% loan for \$180,000 which we've used to upgrade our serving line and to buy a van for use for food service. We will pay it back over five years with 0% interest from the earnings from food service. Excess of usable cash flow for year to date (through September) is \$51,000.

On motion duly seconded, the financials were approved.


G. Trine Report. Emily Gaskill

Emily Gaskill said she's been impressed with improvements this year, especially in math instruction. Attendance at Success remains at "approaching standard" with 92% but there've been drops in attendance for the middle school and high school, now below standard, this should be reviewed to see if this is COVID related. The next piece that we're able to update is the comparison to local schools. Recall the comparison is with schools within a 5-to-10-mile radius with similar student populations, whether it's free and reduced lunch students, ELL students or Special Ed students. The high school is at "meets standard" and the middle school is at "approaching standard" as two of the four comparison schools outperformed the middle school. These ratings are only based on I-LEARN achievement scores, growth has not been released yet by the state, so we're unable to compare you in that capacity.

For organizational reporting requirements, all three schools meet standard, having submitted everything that needs to be submitted for the month. For community connections, Emily said we'd like to thank Mr. Garstka for taking time out of his week to come to Trine to speak to our math majors in math education. We want to partner with you to increase the teacher pipeline into your school, but we know that finding teachers is something that's really difficult in our profession currently, so we want to thank Mr. Garstka. I know a lot of Trine students want to come see Career Academy. Also your E-Sports team visited Trine on the 15th and were able to get a presentation on the university, look at dorm rooms, eat lunch in the University Center, and see the E-Sports program.

As a reminder, quarterly financials will be due in November reporting and school leader evaluations will be due in December reporting. Those are the 15th of each month.

There being no comments, questions, or further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Charles M. Loeser, Secretary