APPROVED

City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

September 2021 Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday September 21, 2021 at 5:30 PM

This meeting took place remotely pursuant to An Act Extending certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency signed into law by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021.

Trustees Present
Andres Tejeda Soto (remote), Gary Morton (remote), Jack Gearan (remote), Jeff Jablow (remote), Melisa Lemire (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

Trustees Absent
Edelyn Contreras, Jacqueline Bennett, Jessica Yang, Sarah Griffin

Ex Officio Members Present
Sonya Pratt (remote)

Guests Present
Jordan Lopez (remote), Kevin Taylor (remote), Maddie Collins (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B.

Call the Meeting to Order

Andres Tejeda Soto called a meeting of the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Tuesday Sep 21, 2021 at 5:33 PM.

C. Approve August 2021 Meeting Minutes

Melisa Lemire made a motion to approve the minutes from August 2021 Board Meeting on 08-27-21.
Jeff Jablow seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Sarah Griffin	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Jack Gearan	Aye
Jessica Yang	Absent
Gary Morton	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Jeff Jablow	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye

II. Vote to Approve Student / Family Handbooks

A. Vote to Approve Student / Family Handbooks

Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, shared that minor changes have been made to the Student & Family Handbook as well as the Faculty & Staff Handbook for School Year 2021-2022. These revisions include, but are not limited to, policies related to COVID-19 procedures and policies for remote, hybrid and in-person learning.

Pina noted that faculty and staff that are a part of the Union have contracts that supersede any policies outlined in the COAH Faculty and Staff Handbook.

The Board sought clarity about the Student and Family Handbook covering any scenario in which City on a Hill would have to return to remote learning. Pina shared that the revisions were made to cover every learning scenario that City on a Hill might have to enact this year due to any unforeseen changes caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. Pina also shared that City on a Hill's leadership team has been working closely with other charter peers to employ best practice procedures that are working well for other schools.

The Board asked management about the Influenza vaccination mandate outlined in the Student and Family Handbook and specifically if COAH had plans to require the COVID-19 vaccine as well.

The discussion concluded with Pina sharing that while the COVID-19 vaccination is highly encouraged for COAH students and information on how to do so is frequently shared with families, it is not required.
Ted Gildea made a motion to Vote to Approve Student / Family Handbooks.
Jack Gearan seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Sarah Griffin	Absent
Jessica Yang	Absent
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Jack Gearan	Aye
Jeff Jablow	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Gary Morton	Aye

III. Vote to Approve Massiel Eversley and Robyn Shahid as Board of Trustees Members

A. Vote to Approve Massiel Eversley and Robyn Shahid as Board of Trustees Members

Melissa Lemire, Governance Committee member, shared the process of onboarding the two new board candidates. Lemire shared those two new Board candidates have completed the process of an initial interview with a Governance Committee member, interview with City on a Hill's Executive Director and Chief of Staff, as well as shadowed a Board of Trustees meeting.

Lemire shared that the Governance Committee continues to work towards the goal of having fifteen City on a Hill Board of Trustees.
Melisa Lemire made a motion to Vote to Approve Massiel Eversley as Board of Trustees Member.
Jeff Jablow seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Jeff Jablow	Aye
Sarah Griffin	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jack Gearan	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Jessica Yang	Absent

Roll Call

Gary Morton	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Aye

Jeff Jablow made a motion to Vote to Approve Robyn Shahid as Board of Trustees Member.
Ted Gildea seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Sarah Griffin	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jack Gearan	Aye
Jeff Jablow	Aye
Gary Morton	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Absent
Jessica Yang	Absent
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Melisa Lemire	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye

IV. School Updates & SY22 Academic Action Plan

A. School Updates & SY22 Academic Action Plan

Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, shared the revisions that have been made to City on a Hill's SY22 Academic Action Plan. These revisions included, but are not limited to, changing Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) metrics to also include NWEA MAP data, a nationally normed growth-based assessment that will be administered to COAH students three times a year.
Pratt outlined that each section of the Action Plan includes accountability measures that are assigned to all members of the COAH Leadership Team, including the Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Specialized Services, Director of Teacher Development and Compliance, as well as the Executive Director.

The Board sought clarity about DESE accepting the revisions on the Action Plan, specifically around allowing COAH to use MAP data as evidence of student academic achievement.
Pratt shared that City on a Hill will continue to administer MCAS to COAH students and the data collected will still be reviewed by DESE. Pratt noted that in addition to MCAS data, DESE will now review COAH's NWEA MAP data as well, as it is a nationally normed exam.

The COAH Leadership Team continues to have conversations with DESE regarding looking at both sets of data when considering progress towards City on a Hill's probationary measures based on academic outcomes for students.

The Board asked management if COAH students will be prepared in class for the NWEA Map test, or if the test would just be administered. Pratt shared that after students take the first MAP test in October 2021, which will act as the baseline exam, data will be available that highlights growth opportunities for students on an individual basis. City on a Hill has partnered with platforms that highlight this growth data and provide supplementary materials for students to work on during tutorial class to address these areas of growth. These materials will be worked through before students are administered the MAP test for the second and third time.

The Board discussed NWEA MAP acting as a great resource for teachers to tailor lesson plans to their classes highlighted growth areas.

The Board asked management what the main difference between the NWEA MAP test and the MCAS was. Pratt shared that the main differences are that MCAS is an achievement-based test and MAP is growth based, MAP is administered three times a year while MCAS is administered once, and MCAS data acts as a snapshot of student achievement while MAP data shows the student's growth towards that achievement. Pratt also shared that while the tests are very different, they do align with several of the same standards.

The Board also sought clarity about the percentage of students who met growth goals for MAP last school year. Pratt shared that as it was a pilot year for the test last school year, many students took the test remotely and only once or twice, making it impossible to track growth. Because of this, City on a Hill did not reach individual growth goals for MAP last school year. This year, all students are planned to complete the MAP test in person.

The discussion concluded with the Board asking management if MAP data can be used to measure teacher performance. Pratt shared that the contract that was agreed upon to measure teacher performance has already been approved, and MAP data was not included in that contract as a measurement tool.

V. The CoaH Effect

A. The CoaH Effect

Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, shared the purpose of the CoaH Effect, a snapshot of school data that can be read like a dashboard. It is created to allow for understanding of key measures at the school and steps the organization is taking to move forward towards school year goals.

Taylor walked through COAH Effect dashboard and provided explanation of the progress towards each goal, including additional context for goals that do not have data available at the beginning of the school year, such as college acceptances, and spring student and staff climate survey data.

The Board sought clarity about the protocol for student learning when a student has to quarantine if tested positive for COVID-19. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, shared that if a student tests positive, they must quarantine for ten days. Pratt shared that each teacher at COAH has utilized a learning platform called Schoology to communicate with and publish assignments for all students. If a student is quarantining due to a positive test, their work and learning can all be accessed from their class's Schoology page.

Pratt also shared that Stride K12, the platform that COAH has contracted this School Year for online tutoring and homework help purposes, can also be accessed by students who are absent from in-person learning due to a positive COVID-19 test.

The discussion concluded with Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, sharing that the Senior Leadership Team at City on a Hill took time to provide feedback and revise the COAH Effect for the new school year, focusing on the highest priority level goals that align with COAH's Academic Action Plan and Accountability Plan.

VI. Enrollment Discussion

A. Enrollment Discussion

Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, shared a presentation with the Board highlighting current enrollment trends at City on a Hill. Pratt shared that City on a Hill originally built the School Year 2021-2022 budget based on 281 students. Currently, COAH's enrollment is around 250 students and based on historical and current churn rate, COAH is preparing to be paid for around 230 students after the February 15 claim. Pratt noted that in meetings she has had with charter peers, high school enrollment has been a challenge across charter schools in Boston as a trend.

Pratt shared that financially, City on a Hill is stable due to conservative budgeting for this school year. Kevin Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, shared the adjusted forecast with the Board that accounts for the aforementioned enrollment decline. With adjustments made by Taylor and COAH's Business Manager, Beth Sears, City on a Hill still expects to have a positive net income at the end of FY22, with no threat to COAH's debt covenants, financial health, academic program or long-term viability.

The Board sought clarity on accountability to DESE and if the enrollment numbers have implications on City on a Hill's student seat count moving forward. Taylor shared that because of current enrollment trends, the COAH Leadership Team has already reached out to DESE to have a conversation about enrollment. This meeting is set to occur in a few weeks.

Jordan Pina, Chief of Staff, shared that when City on a Hill consolidated schools in 2020 before the COVID-19 global pandemic, the student seat count was capped at 350 students. At that time, DESE communicated that if COAH could show enrollment

demand, the Commissioner would allow the seat cap to increase to 400 students. That increase was not expected to be met until 2026.

Pina shared that because of the COVID-19 global pandemic, enrollment numbers have shifted and declined. Because of this, the COAH team continues to have ongoing conversations with DESE to report enrollment trends.

The Board asked if operationally, City on a Hill's enrollment numbers remain at these levels, what would need to be adjusted moving forward into future school years. Taylor shared that COAH is already strategically planning to make investments in the school's core program, including engaging students in a way that lessens attrition at COAH, working to maintain costs by budgeting conservatively, and operating on the public dollar, not relying on any philanthropy.

The Board asked management what Trustees can do to support the enrollment at COAH. Management shared that Trustees should continue spreading the word about City on a Hill's ongoing enrollment of 9th and 10th graders and sharing information about services COAH is providing for all students through the COAH Climb program, a program that partners with programs to support students who had learning loss due to remote learning last school year.

Pina shared that Trustees can also share the Director of Development job posting, a position that is being hired by the City on a Hill Foundation, with their networks. This position, once hired, will be responsible for all marketing, fundraising and development initiatives for City on a Hill, which include collateral and marketing efforts for student enrollment.

The Board sought clarity about whether the position, if a candidate is not found, could be a contracted service. Pina shared that the reasoning for the position being hired by the COAH Foundation is because of state ethics laws. City on a Hill's legal counsel has recommended that this role be hired at the Foundation. This means that any decision to contract services or work from the Director of Development job description and responsibilities would have to be voted upon by the City on a Hill Foundation Board.

Andres Tejeda Soto, Board Chair, expressed commendations of Pratt’s plan for supporting student engagement and stabilizing enrollment, and of the years of conservative budgeting that enables the school to weather this enrollment decline in SY 2021-22.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Andres Tejeda Soto