

APPROVED



City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

November 2021 Academic Excellence Committee Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday November 2, 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.

Committee Members Present

Edelyn Contreras (remote), Robyn Shahid (remote), Sarah Griffin (remote)

Committee Members Absent

None

Guests Present

Laura Edouard (remote), Maddie Collins (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Sarah Griffin called a meeting of the Academic Excellence Committee of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Tuesday Nov 2, 2021 at 5:32 PM.

C.

Approve June 2021 Minutes

Edelyn Contreras made a motion to Vote to Approve June 2021 Minutes.

Robyn Shahid seconded the motion.

The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Edelyn Contreras Aye

Robyn Shahid Aye

Sarah Griffin Aye

II. School Year 2021-2022 Learning Update

A. School Year 2021-2022 Learning Update

Sarah Griffin, Committee Chair, had each Committee member share their background and purpose for commitment to the Academic Committee. Griffin shared the academic data arc of the Committee, recapping for the Committee which pieces of data will be reviewed throughout the School Year.

Laura Edouard, Principal, then shared a presentation with the Committee that highlights trends and action items pertaining to City on Hill's Quarter One progress report data. Edouard shared with the Committee that Quarter One closed on 11/2 and that the data for the quarter in its entirety will be available at the December Academic Excellence Committee meeting.

Edouard shared trends in the Quarter One progress report data, which included, but were not limited to, progress report grades across all subjects being much higher than last school year, 12th graders being the top performing grade overall, and 10th graders being the lowest performing grade overall.

Edouard shared progress report data that highlighted comparative data from SY21 and SY22 in subjects tested by MCAS (Math, Science and English), providing context for each subject. The Committee asked how the data compared with other school years outside of 2020-2021, for example, school year 2019-2020. Edouard shared that while this SY 22's quarter one progress report data is lower, it is not as drastically lower than SY20's data as it was last school year.

The Committee discussed the engagement struggles that City on a Hill faced last year implementing a remote school year which led to learning struggles for students. Edouard then shared comparative data in other subjects including US History, Spanish, and English Language Development courses, giving context for each subject. Edouard shared that Spanish Language and Culture is a new course at COAH targeted for native Spanish speakers who want to continue taking Spanish classes. This new course contributes to the decrease in Spanish 3 progress report scores, as native Spanish speakers who would've previously taken Spanish 3 can now take the new course.

Edouard highlighted action plans that the Leadership Team and faculty have implemented after the review of Quarter One progress report scores. These action plans include, but are not limited to, providing teachers with additional professional development on effective planning, continuing to observe faculty on a weekly basis, and identifying students who would benefit from the online tutorial program COAH is partnering with this year, Stride.

The Committee asked more specifically what Stride was. Edouard explained that Stride is a completely online, live tutoring program that is providing both homework help and tutorial to students who might need it outside of school hours.

The Committee probed about why Biology was the subject that Leadership developed the most action steps for out of any subject. Edouard shared that in Biology, fewer than forty percent of students were passing when progress report data was published. The Committee clarified what grade students at COAH took Biology. Edouard shared that COAH ninth graders take the course.

Edouard then shared the action plan for Spanish, highlighting that one Spanish teacher left the school for an alternative teaching role one week into the school year. Edouard shared that while COAH is still hiring for that open role, the lead Spanish teacher has put together a program for Spanish 1 to complete online through the platform APEX, a platform COAH has used in the past.

The Committee shared that Spanish is one of the hardest education roles to hire for, and asked for an update around hiring this position. Edouard shared that three candidates have been sent offers in the past months, all of which were declined. Edouard shared that another offer was sent out that day to a promising candidate that the Leadership Team is waiting to hear back from.

The Committee asked if the demerit system was still in place at City on a Hill. Edouard shared that the demerit system at COAH has not been in place for several years, and that the school now uses a combination of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and restorative justice.

Edouard shared that tenth grade students scoring the lowest on progress reports was somewhat anticipated, as students started at City on a Hill during the pandemic and have had a challenging time re-acclimating to school. The Leadership Team has been and continues to work closely with tenth grade teachers.

The Committee asked about the learnings from other schools with students returning back from the pandemic. Edouard shared that many other charter peers are facing similar challenges.

The Committee asked for more specific on how teachers are being supported at COAH right now, as it pertains to retention. Edouard shared that because teachers are working very hard and facing the challenges of returning to school after and amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Leadership Team has scaled back some professional development sessions in favor of providing additional time to complete grading and other work.

Edouard also shared that teachers are compensated for coverage any time that they cover a class. The Committee asked if COAH would be administering the staff and school culture survey through TNTP this school year. Edouard shared that that survey is now administered through a platform called Panorama, and faculty and staff are currently completing it, with data available at the next meeting.

The discussion concluded with the Committee asking how the Board can support the challenges COAH is currently facing, specifically regarding supporting teachers. Edouard shared that COAH Leadership is hosting a teacher appreciation event once a month this school year, and that the Committee could work with the Board to host one of those events. The Committee plans to discuss the potential sponsorship at the December 2021 Academic Excellence Meeting.

III. 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 6:14 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Griffin