

APPROVED



City on a Hill Charter Public School

Minutes

October 2024 COAH Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time

Tuesday October 22, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Location

<https://cityonahill-org.zoom.us/j/81315100800>

This meeting took place remotely pursuant to a supplemental budget bill which, among other things, extends the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025 signed into law by Governor Healey on March 29, 2023.

Trustees Present

Alekz Hirschmann (remote), Andres Tejeda Soto (remote), Brooke Fincke (remote), Danielle Canty (remote), Edelyn Contreras (remote), Ted Gildea (remote)

Trustees Absent

Gabriela (Gaby) DeLeon-Evora, Jacqueline Bennett, Kimberley Thai Small, Melisa Lemire

Ex Officio Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Non Voting Members Present

Sonya Pratt (remote)

Guests Present

Asha Ibrahim (remote), Diana Landry (remote), Nikia Davis (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to Call the Meeting to Order.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Brooke Fincke	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Gabriela (Gaby) DeLeon-Evora	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Absent
Alekz Hirschmann	Aye
Danielle Canty	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Kimberley Thai Small	Absent

Andres Tejeda Soto called a meeting of the board of trustees of City on a Hill Charter Public School to order on Tuesday Oct 22, 2024 at 5:06 PM.

C. Approve September 2024 Board Minutes

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to approve the minutes from September 2024 COAH Board of Trustees Meeting on 09-24-24.

Brooke Fincke seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Kimberley Thai Small	Absent
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Alekz Hirschmann	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Absent
Danielle Canty	Aye
Gabriela (Gaby) DeLeon-Evora	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye

II. School Updates

A.

General School Updates

Ted Gildea, Board Vice Chair & Treasurer, directed the attention of the Board to the General School Updates. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, began by sharing the success of the dual enrollment program, highlighting that students are highly engaged in their classes. She stated that the program allows students to attend in-person for two to three days a week while participating in dual enrollment courses at Roxbury Community College (RCC) and Wentworth Institute of Technology on the remaining days, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from students. Additionally, she noted that the school has reached an enrollment of 78 students, surpassing the initial target of 75, marking the first official over-enrollment in several years and reflecting strong community interest.

Sonya confirmed that the school is fully staffed with no current vacancies, mentioning that an additional math teacher has been hired. She also noted that despite offering Spanish classes online, the school successfully recruited an extra Spanish teacher to enhance support for the program. Furthermore, Sonya assured the Board that the school remains on track with all compliance requirements, including that the SIMS (Student Information Management System) was filed on time and that closure work is on track with monthly meetings with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

B. SY24 Academic Results & SY25 Academic Goals Discussion

Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, noted several key academic updates, drawing insights from Alex Hirschman, Committee Chair of the Academic Excellence Committee. She began by outlining the end-of-year action plan, focusing on the transition to a dual enrollment program in which approximately 80% of students are now enrolled in classes during the school day and evenings. Pratt mentioned that most seniors attend daytime classes, while juniors typically have evening sessions. Currently, 26 out of 40 11th graders and 32 out of 38 seniors are participating in dual enrollment, with some students not enrolled due to challenges related to placement tests or incomplete enrollment information.

Pratt highlighted that student performance, with passing rates ranging from 65% to 75%, is significantly influenced by attendance. She pointed out that students who are in class tend to perform well, while those who are absent are struggling. Plans are in place to evaluate support for lower-performing students after the first term, especially since there will be no summer school available. Pratt also addressed the MCAS, noting that only a small group of students are retaking it. She mentioned that MCAS preparation has been incorporated into study halls to further assist these students.

Additionally, Pratt emphasized the importance of preparing 11th graders for college applications. She stated that the goal is for students to complete their Common App essays, secure recommendations, and finalize their college lists by the end of the year, ensuring they can navigate the application process independently. Pratt noted financial aid instruction would be available for both students and their families.

During the discussion, the Board inquired about post-graduation support, and it was confirmed that Pratt and Jordan Pina, Chief Operating Officer, would be available to assist students primarily via email after closure of the School in June 2025.

III. Finance Updates and Discussion

A. General Finance Updates

Then, Gildea directed the attention of the Board to the General Finance Updates. Sonya Pratt, Executive Director at Central Source, provided an overview alongside Diana, the Business Manager at Central Source. Sonya highlighted the effective use of ESSER funding before the September 30 deadline, thanking the operations and leadership teams for their proactive approach in pre-spending on essential supplies.

Diana displayed the School's Budget vs. Actuals as of September 30, 2024, noting that the School was on track for spending based on the time of year. She emphasized that City on a Hill's financial position is strong and aligns with expectations, with the full ESSER allocation of \$822K secured. Significant expenditures have been front-loaded, including nearly \$100,000 on outsourced IT services funded by ESSER.

B. Review FY24 City on a Hill Financial Audit

Next, Gildea directed the attention of the Board to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Financial Audit conducted by the firm Daniel Dennis CPA. He reported that the audit yielded no findings or material weaknesses. The Board discussed the audit and Gildea thanked Central Source before opening the floor for questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

C. Vote to Accept Recommendation of Finance Committee

Ted Gildea made a motion to Accept Recommendation of Finance Committee.

Andres Tejeda Soto seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Alekz Hirschmann	Aye
Gabriela (Gaby) DeLeon-Evora	Absent
Danielle Canty	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Kimberley Thai Small	Absent
Melisa Lemire	Absent
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Ted Gildea	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent

IV. Board Committee Updates

A. Governance Committee Update

The Governance Committee did not convene for a meeting this month. The Committee will provide an update following the meeting.

B. Academic Excellence Committee Update

Alekz Hirschmann, Chair of the Academic Excellence Committee, expressed his gratitude to Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, for her comprehensive summary provided earlier in the meeting, noting that she had addressed many key points in his update. He proceeded to share updates from the Academic Excellence Committee, highlighting the positive engagement of students with the dual enrollment program. Additionally, he announced the successful hiring of a Spanish teacher to proctor online classes through Edgenuity. While acknowledging that passing rates could improve, he emphasized that ongoing efforts to reduce absenteeism and enhance participation in MCAS preparation are essential for keeping students on track for graduation.

C. Executive Director Support Committee

Gildea provided an update from the Executive Director Support Committee. He reported that the committee has reviewed Sonya Pratt's goals for the year, noting that they were well-defined and aligned with the School's objectives.

D. Finance Committee Update

Next, Ted provided an update on the Finance Committee, noting that the general finance updates had been discussed earlier in the meeting. He indicated that there were no additional updates at this time and invited any questions or comments from Board members. The Board had no questions.

V. Organizational Goals Dashboard

A. Organizational Goals Dashboard

Sonya Pratt, Executive Director, began the Organizational Goals Dashboard updates by reiterating that the School is currently over-enrolled and actively addressing chronic absenteeism. She reported that academic performance is generally strong and highlighted the recent hiring of a new Occupational Therapist, who has made a significant positive impact on the students she supports.

Pratt emphasized the completion of the culture calendar, which includes a minimum of two events each month. This month's events feature a Halloween Game Night and a skating event for students and their families.

Lastly, Pratt reported that the school continues to operate within the FY25 budget. She noted that the Student Information Management System (SIMS) data submissions have been completed, and work is ongoing to finalize the Educational Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) and School Council Survey (SCS) reports by the December deadline.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Andres Tejeda Soto made a motion to Adjourn Meeting.

Alekz Hirschmann seconded the motion.

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

Roll Call

Alekz Hirschmann	Aye
Melisa Lemire	Absent
Andres Tejeda Soto	Aye
Edelyn Contreras	Aye
Jacqueline Bennett	Absent
Ted Gildea	Aye
Brooke Fincke	Aye
Danielle Canty	Aye
Kimberley Thai Small	Absent
Gabriela (Gaby) DeLeon-Evora	Absent

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ted Gildea

Documents used during the meeting

- CoaH_Academic_Data_2024-2025.pdf
- COAH_CashFlows_9.30.24.pdf
- COAH_BSvsPY_9.30.pdf
- COAH_PL_9.30.24.pdf
- City on a Hill Exit Presentation (1).pdf
- CoaH Organizational Goals Dashboard - Oct 21.pdf