

APPROVED



# Young Scholars Charter School

## Minutes

### Regular Board Meeting

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#### **Date and Time**

Tuesday September 12, 2023 at 3:45 PM

#### **Location**

900 North Marshall Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

If attending virtually, join this Zoom Meeting:

<https://phillyscholars-org.zoom.us/j/86741548174>

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This meeting is being held in compliance with Open Meeting requirements of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act and is open to the public. Notices were duly posted and the meeting was advertised in The Philadelphia Daily News. Formal action will be taken.

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#### **Trustees Present**

B. Young (remote), D. Dwirantwi (remote), E. Ashe (remote), E. Kaplin (remote), G. Singer (remote), I. Brind (remote), J. Brown (remote), J. Wang (remote), T. Rebar, V. Schwartz (remote), W. Churchill (remote), W. Weisman

#### **Trustees Absent**

B. Harrison

#### **Guests Present**

Abvdulrahman Atta (remote), Alexandra Less, Aubrey Wang (remote), B. Chazin, Beth Birnkrant, C. Freyer (remote), Charlene Caposecco, Corran Branch, Dianna Phelps, Elyse Capone,

Habibah Haqq, J. Amenda, K. Corcoran, K. Lamilla (remote), K. Tini (remote), Robin Halpern, S. Smith

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## **I. Opening Items**

### **A. Record Attendance**

### **B. Call the Meeting to Order**

W. Churchill called a meeting of the board of trustees of Young Scholars Charter School to order on Tuesday Sep 12, 2023 at 3:55 PM.

## **II. Board Discussion Topics**

### **A. Introduction of Prospective New Trustees and Establishment of an Advisory Committee, End of Meeting Vote**

W. Churchill made a motion to to approve the establishment of Advisory Committee and Abdulrahman Atta as Advisory Committee founding member effective 9/12.

W. Weisman seconded the motion.

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

### **B. School Leadership Team Introductions and Beginning of Year Highlights**

Leadership Team members, including Beth Birnkrant (Principal), Habibah Haqq (Director of Culture), Alex Less (Director of Curriculum and Instruction), Elyse Capone (Special Education Coordinator), Charlene Caposecco (Director of Interdisciplinary Learning) and Dianna Phelps (School Counselor) joined the meeting and gave brief introductions to the board.

### **C. Approval of School Goals for 23-24; Prioritized Focus Areas in Culture and Instruction**

John Amenda presented 2023-2024 school academic and school culture goals. He highlighted that there will be increased coaching this year based on organizational health survey results and there will be weekly team meetings to look at data and learning progression.

Ms. Haqq discussed the goals for school culture this year include establishing a calm, joyful culture for students, culturally responsive teaching and focusing on intentional language. Ms. Less talked about increasing instructional coaching.

### **D. HS Admissions Changes in Philadelphia and HS Placement Status Update**

Corran Branch, Academic Guidance Counselor, gave a high school admissions update on application admissions changes, including submission timelines and updated application criteria. She also gave an end-of-year closeout for 22-23.

**E. Transcend Partnership**

The school is partnering with Transcend to work on enhancing school strategy, including leadership team structure, strong data culture and cycle data response, specialized content coaching, and continued focus on project based learning and college and career readiness integration across programming.

**F. Enrollment Strategy and Possible 5th Grade Amendment Discussion for December Submission**

Shakira Smith, Chief Operations Officer, provided information on enrollment this year. The school has a strong retention of 7th and 8th grade students this year compared to last year.

**G. Staffing and Talent Market Update**

Becca Chazin, Chief of Staff, gave a talent update. She noted that there has been strong retention year after year since COVID 19 began. This year there were 5 new hires. Diversity within staff is increasing this year with 49% of staff identifying as BIPOC.

**H. Fundraising Update and Request for Sponsorships**

The school has almost reached its annual fundraising goal of \$350,000. The 25th anniversary event is on October 18th and is aiming to raise \$250,000 to go towards the annual goal.

**I. Land Acquisition Update**

Mr. Amenda discussed exploring the need for investment in a geotechnical engineering study. He shared the overall project timeline if things go as planned. Access to the gym facility will likely be at the end of 2025.

**J. Finalizing Charter Documents**

Mr. Amenda noted that the school received unanimous School Board Approval for our next 5 Year Charter Term, as the school is well positioned for success.

**K. Committee Updates Where Applicable**

Kevin Corcoran and Tom Rebar gave a Finance Committee update. Mr. Corcoran shared that the school is off to a good start this year. Projections are all positive. This is the final year of ESSER funding.

### III. Approval of Minutes

**A. Resolved that the Board approve the Regular session minutes from the May 2, 2023 meeting.**

W. Churchill made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 06-08-23.

T. Rebar seconded the motion.

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

### IV. Motions for Approval- Policy / Governance / Operations / Miscellaneous

**A. To approve the following: 2023-2024 HR Handbook, 2023-2024 Student and Family Handbook, and Closure and Dissolution Plan and Policy**

W. Churchill made a motion to all listed motions, except board advisory and new board members.

W. Weisman seconded the motion.

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

### V. Motion for Approval: New Board Trustees

**A. To Approve New Board Trustees Effective September 12, 2023: Aubrey Wang and Robin Halpern**

W. Churchill made a motion to approve board members.

G. Singer seconded the motion.

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

### VI. 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 5:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

W. Weisman