

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
February 27, 2024

Directors Present: John DeSalle, Michael Garatoni, Iris Hammel, Chad Hartzell, Marian Hodges, Nick Swisher, Janet Scott
Via Zoom: Larry Garatoni, Rachel Savoie
Staff Attending: Jeremy Luginbill, Roxanne Bryant, Becky Bartlett, Andrew Hoyt, Nick Garstka, Maria Reilly, Candy Vanbuskirk, Rob Koehler, Steph Ebersol

- A. Call to Order. Mike Garatoni called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.
- B. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the most recent (December 5) meeting were approved.
- C. Resolution as to Clay High School. Larry said that in addition to the resolution that was approved at the last meeting, authorizing him and Jeremy to take actions to lease or purchase Clay High School, an additional resolution is needed, including language from Indiana statutes, to preserve our rights. A copy of the proposed resolution is attached. Upon motion, the resolution was approved unanimously.
- D. Organization Updates.

- 1. Celebrations and Success Stories.

- a. Data Detectives. Jeremy introduced Tracy Ackerley, STEM Coach for Career Academy Middle School, who described the “data detective” club involving middle school students working with Notre Dame data science majors. The kids learn how to analyze advertisements from a data science standpoint, there are field trips, and teams of kids will do presentations at Notre Dame. It’s a good learning experience and a lot of fun. The contact with Notre Dame is good for our students.

- b. Opening of the Portage School of Leaders. Jeremy said the January 19 grand opening of the Portage School of Leaders was a great success. Indiana Secretary of Education Dr. Katie Jenner spoke about the benefit of the school providing space for the Boys and Girls Club teen center and the Future Lab being available to all community students, exemplifying the value of schools working with industry, nonprofits and community leaders. Mayor Mueller spoke about the benefit of such an investment in downtown South Bend. Congressman Rudy Yakum spoke about the importance of investment in people as the essential asset of any community. There were County Council members and other community leaders there, and a big crowd.

2. High School Redesign. Jeremy said there's a major initiative underway in Indiana, leading to and directed by House Bill 1002 enacted by the Legislature, for redesign of high school. This will involve modification of graduation requirements, increased emphasis on internships, apprenticeships, industry credentials, and other changes consistent with our vision. We're going to be among the schools working with Secretary Jenner and her team on this.

3. Administrative Matters.

a. Calender for 2024-25. Jeremy presented the proposed 2024-25 school calendar. No major changes from this year. School to start August 7 and end May 29. Fall break to be a week, October 14-18. Upon motion, the calendar was approved.

b. Procurement Policy. Jeremy presented a proposed procurement policy. Mike asked if there was an incident that gave rise to this. Jeremy said no, but under federal law, a formal policy is needed. Upon motion, the policy was approved.

E. Operations and Human Resources.

1. Staffing. Candy said our HR Director is working with principals on recruiting teachers, which is a challenge, especially in elementary school. Janet asked are we going to job fairs to recruit. Candy said she believes Stephanie is going as far as Fort Wayne. Janet said in past years we've gone to Bloomington, Ball State and Butler as there are students who live here in South Bend and Granger who go to those universities and come back home to live. Candy said we're working IUSB, Bethel, and St. Mary's plus working on helping our paraprofessional instructional staff members become licensed teachers.

2. Symposium On Experiential Learning. Candy said one of our long term goals is to host a conference next Spring on experiential learning, and in preparation for that we'll host a local seminar on May 10, inviting local schools.

3. Wellness Policy. Candy said board approval is required for a wellness policy. This is a federal legal requirement for schools participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program, including policies and teaching about healthy diets and exercise. As the law requires, we obtained input from students and families, so there have been a few changes from the policy we'd previously approved. Marian asked what are the changes. Candy said she didn't have the prior policy so couldn't say. Marian said the policy is fine, no need to compare. On motion, the policy was approved.

F. Principals' Reports.

1. Principal Report - Career Academy High School. Nick Garstka said there are roughly 100 students from Career Academy High going to the Future Lab at the Portage School on a typical day, most of them on our buses. It's a big attraction.

Nick noted Marian had asked at the last meeting what's being done to help students with college applications. Nick said he's working with Mr. Baney, our college counselor, and Miss Miller, our guidance counselor, to meet with all seniors to complete the FAFSA and plan. Part of the FAFSA has to be completed by parents, most can do it but we've offered FAFSA night for parents to come to the school and get help with the form. The new FAFSA form wasn't released until January but roughly 40 have been completed and for other students most are in progress. Mr. Baney and Miss Miller spent a lot of time early in the year helping students fill out the common application (used by virtually every college). We encourage all students to apply to at least one college, even if they're not sure they want to go, that helps keep options open. We've also helped more than half of our students apply for "Career Scholarship Account" ("CSA") state-funded scholarships of up to \$5,000 to pay for career preparation expenses, <https://www.in.gov/tos/csa/>.

2. Principal Report – Success Academy. Roxanne Bryant said her first main goal of increasing attendance is having mixed results. Overall attendance this year is 90.55%, above last year but short of our 97% goal. As in prior years, attendance has declined from Fall to Winter. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of instructional days (18 days), declined from 51% in 2021-22 to 38% last year and is on pace for less than 30% this year.¹ Roxanne's other main goals are increasing iReady scores by at least 5% and strengthening our connection with parents. We're making progress with parents and that's more important for helping students than most people realize. Getting involved with adult literacy for our neighbors at Beacon Heights is good for the community and our students. We need to be collaborative team members with parents. A lot of our students need extra support, over 20% have IEPs (Individualized Education Plans – Special Education), we have roughly 300 kids (more than half our enrollment) who are two or more grade levels behind. We need extra hands, both instructional and social workers. We make progress with our kids but starting so far behind there can be a lot of progress without reaching passing scores. Understanding a

¹ Absenteeism has become a chronic problem in Indiana schools after COVID. <https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2023/12/18/why-arent-hoosier-kids-showing-up-to-school-and-what-can-indiana-lawmakers-do-to-help/>.

school like ours isn't a matter of one number. Connecting with our kids and parents is the key step.

3. Success Academy at Boys & Girls Club. Brie Childs said there have been positive developments at SABGC, including hiring of a third grade teacher, who's been a great fit, and the hiring of a literary coach. We've also hired an experiential learning coordinator, who's led the way planning future trips. And the school has been approved as a Title 1 school for 2024-25, which means qualifying for federal funding targeting low income schools. Jeremy explained qualifying for Title 1 depends on data from the prior year, so it's not possible to qualify in the first year of operation. Larry asked what's the level of funding. Jeremy said with SABGC's enrollment approximately \$65,000.

4. Principal Report – Career Academy Middle School. Maria Reilly presented via Zoom from Texas, where she and a team are visiting three schools for ideas about improving instruction. Maria said the middle school has started a robotics team and hosted a competition at Success Academy attended by 27 other schools. Her main goal for the year is improving ILEARN scores. One step for that has been engaging three instructional coaches to work with students during the school day. We've also engaged a math consultant who's been working with our teachers. For both math and English we've had Professional Development presentations for all our teachers to help teachers in all subjects contribute to teaching the how-to subjects, math and English. We're building a culture for teachers to learn new skills and learn from one another so that we can help our students grow.

5. Portage School of Leaders. Andrew Hoyt said on his way to this meeting he saw, after the end of the school day, there were a lot of kids at the Future Lab and the Club at the Portage School, both our students and students from other schools. It's a gift to the community and builds our reputation and goodwill.

We're still working through the requirements to be recognized by the Mastery Transcript Consortium to be recognized as a mastery transcript school. There's a lot to consider, such as the competencies we aim for and how much of the model of traditional schools to keep. For example, we've decided on flexible schedules – a class might be 45 minutes one day, 90 minutes another day. There are no bells, students know when and where to go. A key measure for us is student sense of self-efficacy: do students feel that they are in control of their lives, able to do what they want to do or find effective help if they need it. The surveys of our students show that their sense of self-efficacy is improving. A mastery-based education has many implications but building the students' sense of ownership of their educations and ability to control their lives is perhaps the most important mastery there is.

G. Trine Report/Middle of Year Data.

1. Accountability Updates.

a. Instructional Rating. Emily said both high schools and the middle school are at Exceeds Standard for instruction, both elementary schools are at Approaching Standard.

b. Attendance. All schools are at typical Indiana levels 90 – 93%.

c. Financial. The organization remains at Not Meeting Standard for financial reporting. In addition to the audited financial statement for FYE 6-30-22 not having been completed, some Form 9 financial reports have not been filed.

d. Special Education and English Language Learners. Special Education and ELL instruction were found in compliance.

2. Middle of Year Academic Data.

a. Progress Toward Proficiency. Emily explained “progress towards proficiency” combines students testing as proficient and students meeting State-defined growth goals for similar students. The State does not have a growth measure for high schools. The other three schools are evaluated as:

Progress Towards Proficiency	Reading	Math
Success Academy	Approaching Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
SABGC	Does Not Meet Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
Career Academy Middle School	Meets Standard	Approaching Standard

b. Reading Next Steps. Becky Bartlett discussed measures being taken for improvement of reading proficiency. Success Academy is using a reading program called Lexia, it has a history of success but takes years to reach proficiency. Every grade has improved in Lexile reading rate. We want to add instructional assistance (currently have one per grade level) and we need to recruit certified more teachers.

Janet asked are our diagnostic tests predictive of ILEARN? Emily said no, there’s no diagnostic test that does, but iReady is the closest. Janet asked if the state is going to give 3 ILEARN tests next year. Emily said there will be 3 optional ILEARN tests next year for guiding instruction and then the actual assessment at the end of the year.

Becky said SABGC's reading interventions are different. They've identified students for daily additional support. With the paraprofessional instructional assistants supplied by BGC they have a lot of small group practice.

Emily said math is an area of concern for all the schools. Teaching resources are more limited. Becky said Career Middle is doing well with targeted intervention classes, targeted PD, tutoring program, math coach and consultant.

Emily noted that for the first time the beginning-of-year data shows non-legacy students starting at a higher proficiency rate than legacy students. That may be affected by the change in definition of legacy students, now limited to students who've been with us for 3 or more years.

Marian asked what's a reasonable expectation for where our students should be at the end of the year? Emily said there's a target for each school, she didn't have it with her but can send email to follow up. Marian said it'd be helpful to have reports throughout the year of how are we doing compared to the growth that can be reasonably expected. Janet said it seems like every year we hear that our students are behind and we don't hear how the end of the year compares to what we thought was achievable.

Becky said it's important to understand that less than 10% of our students went to preschool, so they arrive not knowing letters or numbers, sometimes not potty-trained.

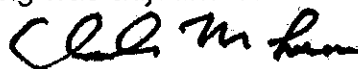
Mike asked how do we compare with other schools? Emily said she'll work on a comparison without so much data that it's unclear. Mike said he'd like to see a limited number of priorities, if everything is a priority then nothing is a priority. Becky said there's a state-mandated procedure for "school improvement plans" which we're working from.

H. Marketing and Enrollment. Rob Kohler reported that after the Portage School grand opening in January our website and social media traffic has risen sharply. Steph Ebersol reported that the enrollment process is being improved with an enrollment hotline that goes to three people so the number of missed calls is reduced. We have more applications than last year at this time and we're processing them more quickly. There will be a marketing showcase for all our schools to be held at the Portage School on May 18. We're having a lot of potential applicants visiting the Portage School by "shadowing" one of our students for a day, that's proven to have good results in attracting applications.

I. Financials. Interim CFO Mary Hunt explained that financial statements are still in process. She presented the expenditures report, which was approved.

J. Public Comment. Mike asked if anyone listening wanted to comment. There was no response.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Charles M. Loeser, Secretary

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Career Academy of South Bend, Inc. (the “Corporation”) operates charter schools in St. Joseph County, Indiana;

WHEREAS, South Bend Community School Corporation (“SBCSC”) has announced that Clay High School, 19131 Darden Road, South Bend (“Clay”) will no longer be used for classroom instruction after the 2023-24 school year;

WHEREAS, Indiana Code 20-26-7.1 (the “Statute”) provides that a school building no longer used for classroom instruction by a district school corporation shall be available for purchase or lease by a charter school;

WHEREAS, the Corporation’s management team has concluded that Clay would be an appropriate location for a new charter school to be operated by the Corporation;

WHEREAS, the Statute requires, as a pre-condition for a charter school’s exercise of the right of acquisition or lease of a closed school under the Statute’s procedure, that the charter school’s board of directors submit a resolution including confirmation of details as stated below concerning the intended use of the closed school property;

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Corporation (“Board”) approves the conclusion of the Corporation’s management team concerning Clay;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION, AS FOLLOWS:

RESOLVED: the Board has determined that, after the Corporation has made any necessary repairs or modifications, Clay will be sufficient to meet the Corporation’s needs and can be operated within the Corporation’s budget beginning within two years of the date that Clay is no longer used for classroom instruction by SBCSC;

RESOLVED: the Corporation’s management team is authorized to take any action which it may deem appropriate to secure the right to acquire and/or lease Clay pursuant to the Statute;

RESOLVED: all actions heretofore taken by the management and agents of the Corporation for such purpose are hereby ratified, confirmed and approved.

RESOLVED: this Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption.

(Signature page follows)

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of CAREER ACADEMY OF SOUTH BEND, INC., an Indiana nonprofit corporation, this 27th day of February, 2024.

Larry Garatoni, President

John DeSalle, Member

Iris Hammel, Member

Michael Garatoni, Member

Chad Hartzell, Member

Marian Hodges, Member

Rachel Savoie, Member

Janet Scott, Member

Nick Swisher, Member