



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA

In Person Session

“25 Years Strong...Keep on Keeping On.”

Tuesday, October 11, 2022- 6:05 pm

Meeting ID: 829 2725 0502 - Passcode: Ck2X7u

Board members present:

James Michel, Board Chair

Damien Pittola, Community Representative

Leticia Acosta, Teacher Representative

Myron Stewart, Community Representative

Thomas Smith, Community Representative, Secretary

Attendees: Dr. Monroe, Mr. Hines, Dr. Gordon-Hall, Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy, Mrs. Fernandez, Mrs. Jacobi, Mr. Zeiner, Principal Green, Principal Johnson, Dean Bynoe, Ms. Williams, Mrs. Brown, Ms. Whitter, Sedona Hall (Markayla’s mom), Aaliyah and family.

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

I. OPENING

There were no public comments

II. BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Opening Remarks

Welcome & Introduction of new board member, Mrs. Leticia Acosta,
Teacher Representative

The Board Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and asked if there were any public comments, the Executive Director confirmed that there were no public comments.

The Board Chair requested a motion to nominate Mrs. Leticia Acosta as member of the Board of Directors in the capacity of Teacher Representative.

Mr. Stewart moved for the nomination which was seconded by Mr. Pittola. There was no opposition, or abstention and the vote carried unanimously.

The Board Chair requested a motion to rearrange the board meeting agenda moving the Executive Session to the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Pittola moved for the adjustment which was seconded by Mr. Stewart.

The Board Chair stated that another vote is necessary to go into the Executive session of the meeting. The focus of this session is on pending claims and pending litigation.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Mr. Pittola moved for the board to go into Executive session and this was seconded by Mr. Stewart. The Chair voted and the motion passed.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- i. Discussion of pending claims and pending litigation

The Board of Directors meeting went into Executive Session at 6:08 pm and all parties not involved in the process were excused from the meeting. The Executive session closed at 6:32 pm and all excused parties were readmitted to the meeting.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT PART A

September - Scholar of the Month Recognition

Markayla Johnson, JA-TED
Aaliyah Brown, JAH-SMaRT
Andrika Taylor, JAH-HC

The Board Chair welcomed the Executive Director to share his report beginning with the Scholar of the month recognition.

Principal Johnson recognized Markayla Johnson as September scholar of the month for Thelma Ellis Dickerson Jumoke Academy Elementary School. Markayla is described as a role model for her peers. She is always ready to learn and helpful to others. She maintains a positive attitude and is a great contributor to the learning environment.

Dr. Monroe congratulated Markayla and her mom for her efforts and award for scholar of the month and encouraged her to continue to work hard. He also shared that a gift bag is available for the scholar and a gift card of \$25 will also be given to the scholar at a later date.

Principal Green recognized Aaliyah Brown as scholar for the month of September. Aaliyah is described as a leader who is helpful and prepared to learn. She builds positive relationships with her peers and is a welcome addition as a first year scholar at JAH-SMaRT.

The Executive Director presented a certificate and gift bag to Aaliyah and congratulations were extended to her family who came out to support Aaliyah's accomplishment.

The Instructional Coaches, Mrs. Jacobi and Mr. Zeiner shared the presentation for Andrika Taylor Jumoke Academy Hartford Conservatory September scholar of the month. Andrika is described as a young lady who exemplifies the work of a hard working scholar to the best of her ability and is a great friend. She is enthusiastic about education and actively participates in class.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Ms. Brown, Andrika's Academic Assistant accepted the award on behalf of Andrika and her family. The Executive Director congratulated Andrika and wished her well in all her future endeavors.

The Board Chair congratulated all the scholars and their families for their hard work. He thanked the scholars and families for attending the meeting both in-person and online.

PART B

District Updates

Dr. Troy A. Monroe, Executive Director

1. District Report

- **School Opening**

School opening went well, it was a smooth transition. Scholars settled in well. We still have a few open positions to fill.

The Executive Director shared that our very own Board Chair, Mr. James Michel has been honored as 2022 Lifetime Achievement and C-Suite in the Hartford Business Journal. This prestigious award is given to top executives who made significant contributions to their companies over the last year. The article is available in the September issue of The Hartford Business Journal for anyone interested in reading more about it.

- **Website Refresh Update**

We did a revamp and refresh of Jumoke Academy website. The new website went live last month. It has a better interface, is more user friendly and informative. It is still being built out and we will see additional updates.

- **COVID-19 Status**

We had 4% of our staff tested positive for COVID-19 across the district. Only 1% of our scholars tested positive districtwide.

- **25th Anniversary Gala Update**

Our 25th anniversary Gala was well attended. We had a great team working behind the scenes to make it a success. The statistics are being put together to finalize the final outcome. We collected approximately \$36,000 to date in total proceeds. More information will be shared as it relates to associated costs pending all expenses paid.

There are ongoing efforts to raise our goal of \$50,000, we will provide additional updates at a later date.

- **Annual Charter School Report Status**

The annual Charter School Report is due next week. The report covers various metrics including current enrollment, projected enrollment, board information, progress on academic goals, financials, and scholar recruitment efforts.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

2. Grants Updates

■ PCLB

The PCLB annual visit took place two weeks ago. During the visit we reviewed district progress, challenges and needs. We inquired about how requested Fall resources will be used in terms of Instructional Coaches versus use of TRI staff support. We had an agreement that additional funding could be requested in the Spring grant to help sustain the Instructional Coaching model.

■ YASS Prize

The YASS foundation is offering a \$1 million prize to an educational institution for demonstrating the STOP principle. This principle awards educational institutions with “big ideas” funding based on sustainability, transformational, outstanding and permissionless education (STOP). Dr. Gordon-Hall spearheaded the application process for the grant available for innovation. Jumoke Academy made it to the semifinals and received an award in the amount of \$200,000. The goal of the \$1 million prize is to support our Academic Assistants with proven interest and potential as teachers to complete their bachelor’s degree and subsequently their teacher certification. This will help to secure more certified teachers for our district. Dr. Gordon-Hall will travel to New York on Thursday to meet the organizers and other recipients of the award. We would like to thank Dr. Gordon-Hall for her leadership in this venture.

■ CT Storytelling Center

The Gawlicki Foundation has sponsored a Preschool storytelling experience at Thelma Ellis Dickerson Jumoke Academy Elementary School. Thanks to the efforts of Principal Johnson for securing \$2,500 for this grant.

Board chair asked if members of the board had questions. There were no questions from the board and the meeting continued with enrollment.

1. Enrollment Update

**Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy,
Student Support Services Director**

Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy shared an overview of Jumoke Academy enrollment status. As of October 1, 2022 we have 620 scholars enrolled. This is a difference of 40 scholars when compared to the same time last year. Our overall goal was 675.

Thelma Ellis Dickerson Jumoke Academy Elementary School has 394 scholars currently enrolled in comparison to 393 last year. SMaRT has 140 compared to 149 last year, while JAH-HC has 86 compared to 118 last year.

The enrollment dropped due to COVID-19 creating chronic absenteeism Statewide. Chronic Absenteeism is a widespread concern across the State when we compare Jumoke Academy data to other districts.

Chronic Absenteeism is caused by varying factors such as parents working remotely and opting for remote learning, homeschooling, families moving out of State, transient families moving from



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

school to school, transportation issues, scholars being disengaged and family issues such as trauma and illness.

Board chair asked if we are investigating by speaking with families whose scholars left Jumoke.

Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy stated that families were contacted and interviewed.

Jumoke Academy is currently working with the State to find solutions to correct Chronic Absenteeism.

The Corrective Action Plan given by the State includes projected target area of reducing Chronic Absenteeism to 9.9%. Currently 10.6% of scholars are missing more than 10% of the entire school year.

We are also working with a team established through CTSERC. That team of two work with our schools on attendance climate sheets. The department also attends Talk Tuesdays with the State which focus on strategies to work through this problem.

The Board Chair asked what is driving this issue of Chronic Absenteeism across the board? Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy stated that the main factors are COVID-19, families moving, transient families, transportation issues, disengaged scholars and family illness.

The Board Chair asked what is the biggest driver for this issue? Mrs. Solomon-McCarthy stated that we cannot pinpoint the exact reason at this point.

2. Staffing

**Mrs. Joleen Fernandez,
Human Resources Manager**

Mrs. Fernandez shared that we have covered a total of 150 interviews and currently have 19 vacancies to fill as of September 30, 2022.

The district staff breakdown consists of 70% returning and 21% new hires. Our staffing demographic is 62% African Americans/Blacks, 23% Caucasian/White and 15% Hispanic/Latino. We currently have 73% females and 27% males working at Jumoke Academy Charter School.

The Board Chair asked, with the large percentage of staff not returning, what may have been the main factor?

The Human Resources Manager stated that she will do further research and provide more detail later.

The Executive Director added that many districts had staff reporting that they would not return across the city.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Human Resources Manager is asked to review data from the city of Hartford and surrounding neighborhood and compare that information with our district.

The Board Chair also requested additional information on how the high staff turnover rate impacts the quality of instruction for our scholars.

The Executive Director stated that we have implemented programs such as work of the Academic Director and Instructional Coaches in supporting faculty/staff. Academic Assistants are also helping to create a work environment that promotes success despite limitations.

The Board Chair asked what are some of the long term impacts on our scholars? Based on educational research and studies, what are the long term impact, and what plans have been implemented to mitigate that problem?

The Executive Director stated that for our future board meetings the principals have been asked to share strategies used to mitigate learning loss. The first presentation will take place in November with Principal Johnson.

Mr. Pittola asked how competitive is our rewards package to entice new staff to apply to Jumoke Academy?

The Human Resources Manager stated that we are in line based on surveys done on how we compare to other districts.

We provide a better benefits package 80/20 and Professional Development opportunities are also offered across the district. Mr. Hines shared that Charter schools per pupil rate is less than public schools and as such we are not as competitive salary wise to secure certified teachers and more experienced staff. In addition the widespread teacher shortage is not just limited to compensation.

The Executive Director added that we may need to rethink what we can offer as a district. We currently offer leadership opportunities within our organization in which we more often than not promote within. He believes that this should be included in our recruitment package to sell those opportunities for recruitment.

The Board Chair asked if there were additional questions from the members of the board, no additional questions were asked.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

PART C

Academic Department Updates

Dr. Gordon-Hall, Academic Director

- **Algebra I**

Dr. Gordon-Hall shared that we have 11 scholars participating in Algebra I. Instruction is done in person, online and scholars have independent work sessions. The live sessions occur 2-3 days weekly, and scholars work independently on assignments on the other days.

- **World Language**

Spanish I is being offered at both middle schools virtually. We have a total of 40 scholars who meet twice weekly online (Zoom) and other days the scholars work independently.

- **Discovery Education**

Discovery Education is an online Social Studies curriculum platform. The State provides approved areas that schools are required to focus on. We receive online updates from the State. The Academic Director has created a HUB for all faculty/staff to access these resources.

- **Professional Development**

Our Instructional Coaches are focused on Tier I instructions. This includes routine instruction ensuring that scholars are ready to learn, purposeful planning for instruction, curriculum review, best practices and assessments. The criteria for success is to ensure that curriculum instruction is consistent across grade levels.

We had a districtwide Professional Development on October 10th, Teachers were able to choose sessions geared towards their teaching area. One of the sessions included Data Warehouse which is a platform that allows teachers to store scholars data for up to five years, this was newly introduced to faculty.

- **Smarter Balanced**

- **Resources**
- **Performance**

The Academic Director shared charts displaying scholars' projected growth from winter to spring NWEA data.

- We have seen significant growth based on scholars' scores.
- The State also factored in learning loss due to COVID-19
- Data comparison focused on 2018-2019 & 2020-2021
- Learning loss is minimal in our district when compared to other districts.

The Board Chair asked if this data will be used to present plans for improvement during future meetings?

Dr. Gordon-Hall stated that our scholars performed well compared to other districts. We are having difficulty pulling data for Hartford Public Schools as they provide data for individual schools versus district as a whole.

The Board Chair asked if there were additional questions from the members of the board, none were asked.



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- i. June Meeting Minutes**
- ii. August Special Meeting Minutes**

The Board Chair requested a motion to approve the Minutes for the Consent Agenda. Mr. Pittola moved for the approval of the Minutes for the Consent Agenda and this was seconded by Mr. Stewart. The motion was carried unanimously.

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Arnel Hines, Finance Director

- i. EFS Audit Update**

EFS update - the correction with the auditors is incomplete. The Finance department is working with the auditors to finalize the correction. State representative is aware of the delay. The goal is to get true up done and have this completed by next Friday 10/21.

The original deadline was 9/1 - this should have included corrections to address the reporting error submitted to the State.

The Board Chair asked the Finance Director to keep the board up to date on when this is completed.

- ii. Building Project Update**

The Finance Director reported that Crosskey Architect sent us drawings of the work to be completed at 325 Blue Hills Avenue. The drawings include the attic which was not originally part of the budget due to the high cost of materials.

Mark Hopper will be asked to attend the next board meeting to present updated information.

ARP ESSER funding for this project is available until September 2024.

With the reduction in material cost we should see a reduction in the cost for this building renovation project completion.

- iii. Van Acquisition**

There are supply chain challenges that have resulted in the vans we ordered not built. We may cancel the van order if Ford cannot come through by December/January and seek another dealership. The Finance Director will provide status updates to the board monthly. Mitchell Selig Ford was selected because they offered the lower cost in comparison to other dealers.

- iv. Refinance Update**

The refinancing is to be finalized within the next two weeks. The Attorney has followed up with the Bank.(Vanns)



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

v. **Lease Agreement Update**

The Finance Director spoke with Attorney Chinni who informed him that the lease should be signed by the end of next week per the Attorney.

The Board Chair asked if there were any questions from the board for the Finance Director, no questions were asked.

VII. **SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There was no Sub-Committee report.

VIII. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

- i. Curriculum and Instruction Update
- ii. Principal Academic Achievement Presentations
- iii. Social and Emotional Learning(SEL)

The above items referenced future board meeting agenda.

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Board Chair requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Pittola moved for the adjournment of the meeting and this was seconded by Mr. Stewart. The Board Chair reiterated that the work of teachers is difficult and the scholars are always the primary focus. He stated that the board will continue to support the faculty/staff in their endeavors to create successful outcomes for our scholars.

The Board of Directors meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.