



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOLS

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REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

In-Person Session

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

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 - 6:01 - 6:42 pm

**999 Asylum Avenue
5th Floor Conference Room**

Meeting ID: 826 4850 4794

Passcode: RMKWT2

Board members present:

Myron Stewart, Community Representative Treasurer

James Michel, Board Chair

Leticia Acosta, Teacher Representative

Janelle Lester, Community Representative

Damien Pittola, Community Representative

Thomas Smith, Community Representative Secretary

Statt Present: Dr. Troy Monroe, Arnel Hines, Dr. Marie Gordon-Hall, Sharron Solomon-McCarthy, Joleen Fernandez, Latoya Johnson, Anthony DiGennaro, Kashay Green, Heather Jacobi, Heidi Strom, Derek Fagan and Tanisha Whitter.

Guest Present: Katrina Fagan, Shameilia Ellis *and mom*.

I. OPENING

Welcome & Public Comments

There were no public comments

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a happy Valentine's day.

II. BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Opening Remarks

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by the Board Chair.

The Board Chair spoke about challenges in schools and across the country. Cost continues to go up but we have a strong team at Jumoke Academy keeping us on the go and moving forward. He further stated that on behalf of the board, he appreciates the work the building leadership team are engaged in to continue the business of educating our scholars.



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III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT PART A

January - Scholar of the Month Recognition

Shameilia Ellis, JAH-TED

Dean DiGennaro presented for Jumoke Academy Thelma Ellis Dickerson's Elementary School. Shameilia is described as dedicated to learning, respectful, and offers help to others. She has a positive attitude which is infectious.

Joel Vernon, JAH-SMaRT

The district scholar of the month for Jumoke Academy Honors at SMaRT is presented by Principal Green. Joel started as a 5th grader and is a great addition to the middle school. He is friendly and easily grasps new concepts. Joel also has an upbeat personality.

Katrina Fagan, JAH-HC

The Jumoke Academy district scholar of the month for the Hartford Conservatory was presented by Principal Jacobi. Katrina is always ready to learn and comes to school completely prepared. She listens attentively and contributes productively.

The scholars were presented with gift bags, gift certificates for excellence and other items for their hard work.

PART B

District Updates

Dr. Troy A. Monroe, Executive Director

1. District Report

○ Pathway to Teacher Certification Program Update

The Executive Director announced that we are excited about the initiative to "Grow Our Own" teachers. A meeting was held with representatives from Central Connecticut State University and Capital Community College. The purpose was to provide updates on the application process. A total of eight staff have been invited to apply. They have been scored with a rubric to narrow down the core group with a goal to ensure a successful cohort. A Memorandum of Understanding was received prior to moving forward.

Program orientation is expected to take place in the next couple of weeks.

Mr Pittola asked what kind of academic credentials will the Academic Assistants gain after participating in this initiative?

Dr. Monroe responded that this varies and is based on where each Academic Assistant is currently in their education. Some will receive a Bachelor's degree and others will start with their Associates degree and finally end with their teacher certification.



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Mrs. Leticia Acosta asked, “Of the group, how many will be chosen?”

The Executive Director stated that we are targeting 5-6 staff for the initial cohort. The Board Chair asked, “How long will it take?”

The Executive Director stated that it will take approximately 1-3 years depending on where they are in their educational career.

- **Health & Wellness**

Plans are on the way for the March 24 Wellness Fair at JCC in West Hartford. Several activities are planned to support our district.

Some of the activities include yoga, fitness, screenings for COVID-19, representatives from MetLife will speak on additional benefits available to Jumoke staff and scholars. Additional information will be shared with the board.

The Board Chair asked if the wellness fair is for staff only. The Executive Director confirmed.

There were no additional questions from the board.

- **Enrollment Campaign Update**

Over the past year we have seen some success running Billboard advertising through April. We have started the Billboard campaign which will continue through to April 9th. We also have yard signs available for parents and staff to mount on their property. We are working on new pamphlets available for promotional advertising as well.

The Jumoke Academy Lottery is scheduled for March 30th.

Mr. Stewart asked if we have current applicants.

The Executive Director responded that we do have applicants but the exact total is not available at the moment.



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PART C

○ District Staffing Update

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

The Human Resources Manager shared that we have a number of strategies to address the staffing shortages.

She attended a meeting with Education Week to discuss staffing shortages.

The focus was to address the national shortage of teachers and paraprofessionals.

Education week interviewed several educators and paraprofessionals in an effort to garner data on strategies to address staffing shortages.

The meeting was impactful in that it showed how widespread the shortage is and we were able to take some of the information to provide additional support for our district. Many of the ideas and solutions discussed were already in place at Jumoke Academy.

Some similarities include long term substitute teachers authorized to teach our scholars.

Academic Assistants serve as teachers in the absence of certified teachers due to the severe teacher shortages. The data referenced Para-professionals which is equivalent to our Academic Assistants.

Under the Finance Director's supervision we increased staff pay where possible. Working with granters we increased support to provide additional incentives for staff. Improved benefits for employees by reducing cost to employees. Increased the life insurance policy by \$25,000 at no cost to our employees keeping cost low for employee benefit.

We recruited and trained teachers under a flexible schedule through curriculum instruction under the leadership of Dr. Gordon-Hall. We are providing training for our Academic Assistants to gain their teacher certification to increase our certified teachers ratio and subsequently improve our scholars' learning experiences. The education and para-professional shortage is a national issue and our "grow our own" initiative is useful in helping to improve the learning environment.

Our next step is to conduct surveys. We have been conducting stay interviews on all three campuses. We will continue to outreach to other states in finding certified teachers.

We will work with board members such as Mr. Damien Pittola on strategies and ways to improve in hiring and retaining more qualified staff.



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The Board Chair asked Mr. Pittola if he had anything else to add to the presentation. Mr. Pittola responded that he has a scheduled meeting with the Finance Director and Human Resources Manager next Wednesday focusing on retention, hiring process and a deep dive into the process to provide additional support to the district.

The Board Chair reiterated that this is a national challenge but other schools are much worse than we are. He stated that we are deep into the school year and teaching is very difficult and teachers are not paid enough for the work they are expected to perform.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

i. Approval of January Minutes

The Board Chair requested a motion for approval of the consent agenda. Mr. Stewart made the motion which was seconded by Mrs. Acosta. The motion was carried unanimously.

V. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Arnel Hines, Finance Director

i. November and December Financial Statements Review

The Finance Director stated that we are up to date with the Financials. November revenue exceeds the expenses and we do not expect this to change. Expenses will not exceed revenue.

We have additional supply of revenue coming in, revenue will not be less than our expenses once we end the year.

We received the first installment of our PCLB funds.

For December the total revenues received included an installment of per pupil funds. This is favorable for the year.

The Board Chair asked. "How do we plan to spend the excess funds?" He reiterated that we should not end the year with a large surplus.

He asked if there were any questions or comments from the board, none were asked.

The Board Chair requested a motion for the approval of the November and December Financial Statements, the motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Acosta and the motion was carried unanimously.



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ii. **EFS Update 2020-2021**

The auditors are working on finalizing the 2020-2021 EFS report to the State. The Finance Director has been keeping the Finance Committee up to date on what needs to be finalized to submit to the State.

iii. **Audit Update**

The senior auditor will be in this week. The Business Office has been working on items requested which will be submitted tomorrow. The due date has been extended to February 28th and this was approved. The Finance Sub-Committee will be updated. Mr Stewart asked for an update by Friday of this week.

Ms. Lester asked, “What are we giving as a buffer to finish early instead of February 28th?” The Finance Director stated that the work being done this week will provide better detail.

iv. **Van Purchase Update**

We have made our purchase of a 2022 Mercedes Sprinter, 12 seater, fully equipped. It will be outfitted with the Jumoke Academy logo. We will be looking at the opportunity to work with Verizon on outfitting the vans with cameras, we will also add signage for carrying school children.

We will be taking delivery on Thursday for a preowned, 2019 Ford transit , 15 passenger which offers more room. We are now up to two out of our three fleets. We are currently looking out of State for the third vehicle. We hope to have a logo rendering for both vans soon.

The Finance Director thanked the Finance team for their work within the department and expressed his appreciation for their efforts.

VI. SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

There were no Sub-Committee reports.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive session.



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VIII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

The below items will remain on the agenda as future items for another board meeting.

- i. **Curriculum and Instruction Update**
- ii. **Social and Emotional Learning(SEL)**

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Board Chair requested a motion for the adjournment of the meeting. Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn and this was seconded by Mr. Stewart, and the motion carried unanimously at 6:42 PM.