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# JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

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## REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**In-person Session**

**999 Asylum Avenue, 5th Floor Conference Room, Hartford, CT 06105**

**“Loving Scholars, Nurturing Minds, Empowering Futures”**

**Tuesday, April 16, 2024 - 6:00 - 7:16 pm**

**Meeting ID: 830 9386 8827**

**Passcode: 3XN2pL**

### **Board members present:**

Myron Stewart, Treasurer/Community Representative  
 Smith-Winfree, Community Representative  
 Acosta, Pittola, Teacher Representative  
 Janelle Lester, Community Representative  
 Suzette Debeatham-Brown, Community Representative  
 Thomas Smith, Community Representative  
 Damien Pittola, Community Representative

### **Board members absent:**

James Michel, Board Chair  
 George Sutherland, Community Representative

**Staff present:** Dr. Troy Monroe, Arnel Hines, Dr. Gordon-Hall, Sharron Solomon-McCarthy, Ana Marcil, Kashay Green, Heather Jacobi, Latoya Johnson and Tanisha Whitter.

**Guests Present:** Scholars of the month and families.

The Jumoke Academy Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by the Vice Chair at 6:02 pm on April 16, 2024.

### **i. OPENING**

Welcome & Public Comments

Board member Smith-Winfree shared that the Academy participated in a Water Safety Program at the Farmington Valley YMCA. The program occurred during Spring break Monday through Thursday and focused on teaching water safety to children and adults. Several parents and scholars from the Academy participated. They had full access to the YMCA including rock climbing. Board Member Smith-Winfree thanked Dr. Monroe for his and his team's efforts to ensure that communication went out to families. The goal was to ensure a more diverse population had that opportunity. Pictures will be shared.

### **ii. BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS**

Opening Remarks

The Vice Chair thanked the board for their participation and the faculty/staff for their role during the recent charter renewal process. The Academy received 3 years charter renewal.

### III. CEO/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

#### PART A

- March - Scholar of the Month Recognition
  - Emmanuel Ceres, JAH-TED

Principal Johnson presented the scholar of the month for Thelma Ellis Dickerson's Jumoke Academy Elementary. Emmanuel meets and exceeds expectations. He practices the 3Rs, and his teacher speaks highly of him. He is a role model in the classroom who operates as a leader across campus.

- Damari Shazel, JAH-SMaRT

Principal Green presented the scholar of the month for Jumoke Honors SMaRT Research and Technology. Damari is described as inquisitive and has made a lot of growth. He takes accountability and asks questions which builds his knowledge.

- Taite Evans, JAH-HC

Principal Jacobi presented the scholar of the month for Jumoke Academy at the Hartford Conservatory. Taite is always respectful and ready to learn. He has an organized binder, he assists his teacher with cleaning up and putting things away.

All three scholars received a gift bag with several items including a \$25 gift card. The CEO/Superintendent congratulated the scholars and encouraged them to continue to strive for excellence in all things.

The Vice Chair congratulated scholars and families for their hard work.

#### PART B

- District Updates
  - District Report
    - Charter Renewal Update

Dr. Troy A. Monroe, CEO/Superintendent

The Academy received its charter renewal decision. The senior leadership team attended the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) board meeting on April 3rd. The CSDE board cited 13 areas of strengths and 13 areas of growth. A copy of the Executive summary has been shared with the board. There is some high level work that will be addressed: Chronic Absenteeism, Staff Certification, Academic Achievement and Accounting policies and procedures. The Academy is outperforming Hartford Public School (HPS). The State wants us to see the Academy on par with schools across the State.

Chronic Absenteeism is a major problem statewide with 99,000 students across the State impacted. If a scholar missed 10% of the entire school year that is considered Chronic Absenteeism. The Academy needs to have 100 percent of our teachers certified. The State has extended the Substitute teacher durational certification. The Academy was cited for 5 teachers who are not certified. After taking corrective action we are down to 3 teachers not certified. We are given the next 3 years to be in compliance.

Corrective action plan includes understanding the root cause, and strategy to address this issue over the next 3 years. The leadership team has scheduled meetings tomorrow and next week to address the corrective action plan.

The final draft is due to CSDE on May 6, 2024. A bimonthly focus monitoring will take place as the Academy works towards compliance.

The current board policy will be revised as it already has stipulated requirements prescribed by the State but will need to include specific language. The policies will need to be drafted and approved by the board by the end of this school year.

Two State board members acknowledged the progress and work the Academy has been doing and felt that a 5-year renewal would have the outcome except for the areas for corrective action. There was unanimous support of the CSDE board for the Academy's renewal for 3-years.

Board member Lester asked if this is an internal monitoring and is there a cost. The CEO/Superintendent stated that all charter schools are monitored by the State at no cost.

Board member Smith-Winfrey asked what the level of the support was. The CEO/Superintendent stated that CSDE board members were engaging, the Academy's 13 strengths were highlighted and the tone was that they are willing to work with us.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that a high level overview was shared with the district regarding the outcome and work to be completed. Plans will be shared with the board as they are being outlined.

- Summer Program
  - Overnight Field Trip

The Academy has been working with Goodwin University and Pratt & Whitney to finalize the summer program at Goodwin University which includes an overnight field trip. Engineers from Pratt & Whitney will share their work and experiences with our scholars. We have been in communication to see how we can further use their support to continue the work which includes Next Frontier careers of the future. The Academy received a \$5,000 donation from the Hartford Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

The summer program will include an air show in NY, which will expose scholars to careers in Aerospace. The trip will cost us approximately \$10,000. The Academy's field trip policy on overnight trips was shared with the board. This policy includes preplanning, procedures, and scholar supervision guidelines. We will have 25-28 scholars attending the overnight field trip.

Board Chair Stewart asked how far along are we with financial support. The CEO/Superintendent stated that we received verbal commitments. He further asked if any other financial support has been offered.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that Liberty Bank has extended an offer to the Academy.

Board Chair Stewart asked if the summer program will be for just Jumoke scholars.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if other agencies have been targeted.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that the goal is to expand the program throughout the school year.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if families would pay to attend the field trip. The CEO/Superintendent stated that when the program started families would attend the summer program free of cost, over the years a fee was charged to discourage scholars' absence during the program.

The program cost increased to \$40 as of last year. It has cost the Academy approximately \$30,000 to run the summer program.

Board member Smith-Winfree stated that there should be a fee for the field trip and further recommended a cost of \$100 to each family with a participating scholar. Board member Smith-Winfree believes a reasonable fee should be set and families should be given adequate time to plan. The Academy will provide hotel accommodations, breakfast, lunch and dinner for all scholars.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if the Academy is looking for additional company support. The CEO/Superintendent confirmed this.

Board member Lester asked what the intended purpose of asking families to pay. Vice Chair Stewart stated that families paying will result in their commitment to the program.

Board member Smith-Winfree stated that when families understand the value of the program and recognize the level of work and commitment taken to run the program they can better appreciate it.

Board member Lester asked if there is an application process. The Chief Academic Officer stated that all participants must register to the program. In addition, principals are making recommendations and speaking with families who show interest in the program.

Board member Lester is concerned that families will be deterred by the \$100 overnight field trip fee. She believes the program should include a scholarship to support families who may not be able to afford the cost.

The CEO/Superintendent said the goal of the program is to prepare scholars for their career in NEXT Frontier Industries which includes Aerospace, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing. The overnight field trip featured a Tuskegee F22 air show demonstration. The hope is that scholars will pursue those careers as they are getting those experiences.

## PART C

- Curriculum & Instruction Update Dr. Marie Gordon-Hall, CAO
  - 2024-25 Academic Calendar

The Chief Academic Officer requested consent for the 2024-25 Academic calendar. Two copies were shared with the board. In the copy for approval scholars and 10-month staff received two full weeks break in December and 12-month staff will receive 8 days.

### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- i. Approval of February Revised Minutes
- ii. Approval of March Minutes
- iii. Jumoke Academy Criminal History Record Policy
- iv. 2024-25 Draft Academic Calendar

Vice Chair Stewart asked for a motion for the approval of the items on the consent agenda, board member Acosta moved and board members Lester and Smith-Winfrey seconded.

### V. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Arnel Hines, CFO

- i. February Financial Statement

Expenses exceeded revenue. Projection column is annualized and leveraged on expenses. The Academy will end this year with a surplus of \$62,000.

Vice Chair Stewart asked for a motion for approval of the February Financial Statement, board member Lester moved and board members Acosta and Smith-Winfrey seconded.

- ii. Audit Update
- iii. Budget Update

- Revised 2023-24 Budget

Recommendation called out by CSDE, Finance team asked to revise the budget to reflect 620 scholars enrolled. The Academy budgeted for 703. and added the ARP ESSER funds. This is a balanced budget. No questions were asked. Vice Chair Stewart asked for a motion for approval of the revised 2023-24 budget, Board member Lester moved and this was seconded by board member Acosta.

- 2024-25 Budget

The Finance department believes we will reach 650 enrollment. A line by line summary has been provided in the budget document. Total revenue of 11.1 million. Salary step and wage increase has been factored in and an additional \$105,000 has been budgeted for the renovation project.

Board member Stewart asked if we can hold off on approval. The CEO/Superintendent stated that as long as the Finance Sub-Committee wants to wait, the budget will need to be approved by the end of the fiscal year. Board member Debeatham-Brown asked what was the overall percentage increase over last year's budget. The CFO stated \$896, 000.

Board member Stewart asked for clarification on the increase. Board member Debeatham-Brown stated that she believes most of the increase was wages. The CFO confirmed that most of the increase was attributed to wages.

Board member Debeatham-Brown asked if teachers are unionized. The CFO stated that teachers are non-unionized.

CEO/Superintendent stated that the Academy's resources are fixed for charter schools while general public schools have access to other resources. The Academy depends on philanthropy for operational support. We desire to be competitive, but are challenged in that area. Teachers salary are tiered and dependent on where they started at in the district.

Vice Chair Stewart stated that he is concerned about the wage increase.

The CFO stated that teachers' salary scales are very different, a 3-4% increase with an added amount of up to 5%.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that we have not had to layoff teachers or administrators in the last 10 years.

Vice Chair Stewart requested a motion for approval of the 2024-25 Budget board member Debetham-Brown moved and this was seconded by board member Lester.

iv. Review of Accounting Policies & Procedures Manual(APPM)

Regarding personal use of facilities, everything cited and recommended by CSDE have been put in place.

Vice Chair Stewart stated that a committee should be established to meet with the attorney and review the Accounting Policies and Procedures on a yearly basis. He further asked board members to reach out to him directly.

Board member Smith-Winfrey requested an update on the Academy's fundraising efforts. She further asked for a monthly or quarterly report.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that the Academy is partnering with a bank to underwrite funding for the gala. The Academy will apply in 2025 as the current deadline has passed.

**VI. SUB COMMITTEE REPORT**

i. 325 Renovation Update

Thomas Smith, Building Sub-committee Chair

Arnel Hines, CFO

Board member Smith stated that the Building Sub-Committee met with the contractor for the 325 property renovation. They spoke briefly about their proposal. Smith's major concern is the sprinkler system which the contractor stated is not required by the State . He believes that we must avoid any issues similar to what we experienced at 852 Asylum Avenue. We must meet ARP-ESSER funds requirements before moving forward with this project.

The Academy received an email from the city of Hartford for a permit. We want to ensure everything that is done on the property is coded for classroom use and this must be put in writing.

The CFO stated that we should receive the contract by next Tuesday.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that the contract must include language concerning requirements for use of ARP ESSER funds.

Vice Chair Stewart stated that we must ensure the Academy's edits are done in red; if anything is crossed out it must be in red. That way we know exactly where that language is written. CFO stated that another Building Sub-Committee meeting will take place to finalize.

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

i. N/A

**VIII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

i. Teacher Leadership Evaluation Model

ii. 2024-25 Board Retreat

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chair Stewart asked for a motion for adjournment, board member Smith-Winfrey moved and board member Acosta seconded, the Jumoke Academy board meeting concluded at 7:16 pm.