



JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

REVISED REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

In-person Session

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

“Loving Scholars, Nurturing Minds, Empowering Futures”

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 - 6:00 pm

Meeting ID: 850 6644 3311

Passcode: 9s89cs

Board Members Present:

James Michel, Board Chair
 Myron Stewart, Treasurer/Community Representative
 Vera Smith-Winfree, Community Representative
 Suzette Debeatham-Brown, Community Representative
 George Sutherland, Community Representative
 Leticia Acosta, Teacher Representative
 Janelle Lester, Community Representative
 Damien Pittola, Community Representative
 Thomas Smith, Community Representative

Staff Present: Dr. Troy Monroe, Arnel Hines, Dr. Gordon-Hall, Ana Marcil, Sheryl Deloso, Leslie Rosemond, Kashay Green, Dr. Heather Jacobi, Latoya Johnson and Summer Myles.

Guests Present: Jordyn Mendize, Brianna Mullings, Joel Bewry and family.

i. OPENING

Welcome & Public Comments

II. BOARD CHAIR COMMENTS

Opening Remarks

- Appointment of CEO/Superintendent Performance Review Committee

The Jumoke Academy Board of Directors meeting was called to order on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:04 pm by Board Chair Michel. There were no public comments.

Board Chair Michel requested a motion for the appointment of a committee for the CEO/Superintendent's annual performance review. The committee members will consist of board members Myron Stewart, Janelle Lester, George Sutherland, Suzette Debeatham-Brown, faculty member Principal Green and parent representative Asha Hargrove-Duroche. Board member Stewart will serve as Chair of committee. The motion was moved by board member Debeatham-Brown and seconded by board member Sutherland.

- Appointment of New Board Member

Board Chair Michel shared that there are several vacancies on the board that will need to be filled. He stated that the board will need to vote to appoint new board member Sam Gray. Board Chair Michel met with Mr. Gray along with legal counsel and the CEO/Superintendent. Mr. Gray is committed to growing young people and serves as the president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Hartford (BGCH). Board Chair Michel requested a motion for the appointment of Mr. Sam Gray as member of the board, board member

Debeatham-Brown motioned for his appointment and this was seconded by board member Sutherland. There were no abstentions or oppositions and the vote carried unanimously.

III. CEO/SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

PART A

- April - Scholar of the Month Recognition
 - Jordyn Mendize, JAH-TED

Thelma Ellis Dickerson's scholar of the month is presented by Dean Myles. Jordyn is an exemplary scholar, role model and leader. She is on point, maintains a smile and exemplifies the 3 R's. She has integrity and does the right things at all times.

- Brianna Mullings, JAH-SMaRT

Jumoke Honors SMaRT scholar of the month is presented by Principal Green. Brianna started the Academy in 8th grade. She has an outstanding work ethic and exemplifies the 3 R's.

- Joel Bewry, JAH-HC

Jumoke Academy Honors at the Hartford Conservatory scholar of the month is presented by Principal Jacobi. Joel has shown significant improvement in the 3R's. He strives to complete assignments to the best of his ability.

The CEO/Superintendent congratulated each scholar and their family and presented them with a certificate and gift bag for their hard work and pursuit of excellence. Board Chair Michel congratulated the scholars and their families.

PART B

- District Updates
 - District Report
 - Charter Renewal Update

Dr. Troy A. Monroe, CEO/Superintendent

The Jumoke Academy Corrective Action plan was due to the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) as a draft on April 29th. The focus was on chronic absenteeism, certification compliance and academic improvements in ELA and Math. The Academy met the April 29th deadline, the state acknowledged receipt and we are awaiting feedback. The Plan is under internal review by CSDE. Thanks to the Human Resources Manager, Ana Marcil we have met our certification compliance.

- Legislative Updates

CT legislative branch met on May 8th one of the discussions stems from efforts to bring charter schools in line with other public schools. \$150 million was to provide a scheduled increase for the education fund. Charter schools don't get the same funding as regular public schools. We will see funding increase starting at 56.7% and weighted funding will be phased in starting 2024-25 with an increase in funding starting in 2025. Some funding includes air quality system improvement and seat growth. Charter schools previously did not have access to this fund. The academy is limited due to lack of space to accommodate seat growth funding at this time.

- Marketing & Enrollment Campaign Updates

We are in open enrollment season. The Academy's commercial on NBC 30 is being aired on Spanish channels as well. We received feedback from the community. Tours are being booked by prospective families and taking place. This Saturday at 10 am we have a scheduled PreK and kindergarten enrollment fair. NBC Live will have two segments on enrollment. The second segment will focus on middle school programming. It will be aired on June 4th. Additional information will be shared with the board.

- Campus Enrollment & Reconfiguration

For several years the Academy has had consideration for reconfiguration of our campuses. Each year we have a waitlist for the elementary school. During our charter renewal CSDE board inquired about our waitlist given that we have openings at the middle school. A draft survey that will go out to our stakeholders for feedback. The goal is to move 4th grade to middle school, SMaRT will become an intermediate campus with 4-6th grade and JAH-HC will consist of all 7th and 8th grade scholars. Once we move 3 classes of 4th grade to SMaRT this will open up spaces for waitlisted scholars. We currently have 4 kindergarten classes but no

space to house them. The elementary school would become a Pre4 to 3rd grade campus. Both middle school campuses will have access to Arts and Science. All content areas will be focused on at both middle schools. World Language will expand to 4-6 grade scholars and the opportunity for advanced Math will be extended to include all middle school scholars. The CEO/Superintendent requests feedback.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if the survey will be available as hard copy and electronically, the CEO/Superintendent confirmed. The survey will be shared with faculty/staff, board members, families and community partners. Board Chair Michel asked if this requires board approval. CEO/Superintendent has discussed this with CSDE and was informed that board approval is not needed as the reconfiguration of the campuses is not a policy change. This shift will give us the ability to access scholars from the waitlist due to greater interest at the elementary level. The Academy has had to create space for an additional kindergarten class.

Board member Smith asked why we think that making this move does not require board approval. The CEO/Superintendent stated that it is not a material change. Board Chair Michel stated that it is in fact a material change and the board approval is required. He asked what is the timeline for implementation. The CEO/Superintendent stated that the draft survey alluded to 2024-25 school year, this is dependent on stakeholder feedback. Board member Smith asked who the stakeholders were. The CEO/Superintendent responded that the stakeholders are parents, staff, board and community partners. Board Chair Michel asked that this information be presented to the board at the June meeting for a vote.

Board member Smith-Winfree stated that for the survey question # 5 should be a multiple choice option. She believes that the Academy should offer examples of some kind to survey participants that they may not have considered. Question #5 is currently written as "Is there anything that you think the leadership team should consider that will improve the reconfiguration of our campuses?"

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if moving students will put us at capacity. The CEO/Superintendent stated that it will address the need for additional space at the elementary school. Board member Smith-Winfree asked if we have adequate staff to accommodate the additional scholars.

Board Chair Michel stated that the question to be addressed is do we have the staff support for the reconfiguration. Board member Debeatham-Brown advised that the board should be asking tough questions to get all information necessary to funnel through the survey prior to completion. Board Chair Michel stated that it is his hope that the leadership team would have done all the background research before the information goes public. Board member Smith believes the time to ask those hard questions is after the leadership team has done the necessary fieldwork.

Board member Sutherland asked the principals for their feedback. Principal Johnson sees the benefits to the reconfiguration. She believes it will provide an opportunity to properly plan for the future. Principal Green stated that a scheduled leadership team meeting took place and her greatest reservation was about the community response. One concern she shared is that some middle school scholars are responsible for bringing their younger siblings who attend the elementary school to and from school and the reconfiguration could become a challenge for those families. She is also concerned about the relationship built overtime with scholars and having to lose those scholars. Principal Jacobi echoed the sentiments of her colleagues. Based on her conversations with parents they want their scholars to have the STEM experience which will set them up for success.

The CEO/Superintendent stated that some information was shared with parents at the JAPA meeting. The idea of the reconfiguration was well received with those who attended. He further stated that the leadership team is doing the fieldwork and the final decision will not be made before getting the board approval. Information will also be shared with families during Monthly Minutes with Monroe and also during coffee talks. The goal is to ensure that feedback is received from all stakeholders.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked for an updated version of the survey before it is sent out. She appreciates that conversation is taking place with the families, faculty/staff and the community at large.

Board Chair Michel asked what are the communication strategies involved in this process to get information out to parents. He further stated that given the decline in enrollment numbers this can impact low numbers. Board Chair Michel asked for a creation of a resolution for the board to vote on. Board member Smith-Winfree stated that the survey should outline specific changes to avoid confusion. Board member Sutherland stated that the communication must be strategic to get parents to buy in. The CEO/Superintendent thanked everyone for their feedback.

- Promotion Ceremonies
 - 8th Grade | 5:30 - 7:30 pm | June 10th (Goodwin University)
 - PreK | 9:30 - 10:30 am | June 10th (T.E.D.)
 - 4th Grade | 5:30 - 7:00 pm | June 6th (JAH-SMaRT)

Board members were encouraged to attend the promotional ceremonies for PreK, 4th and 8th grade. Ms. Whitter will reach out to confirm who will be in attendance.

- Board Retreat | September 7th

The CEO/Superintendent proposed September 7th for board retreat and would like to lock in the date. He asked for confirmation of attendance for board members at the June meeting.

PART C

- Curriculum & Instruction Update Dr. Marie Gordon-Hall, CAO
 - Academic Update
 - State Testing

The Academy's Spring Smarter Balanced testing is almost complete. We have approximately 10 scholars who have not yet completed testing. The Smarter Balanced testing is for 3rd through 8th grades and 11th grade scholars at Achievement First.

- Summer Program Update

The Academy has seen an increase in numbers for home based camp. We currently have 11 scholars confirmed for the Goodwin Summer STEM Program

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- i. Revised 2024-25 Academic Calendar
- ii. April Minutes
- iii. Special Board Meeting Minutes
- v. Increasing Diversity Plan
- vi. June 2023 Final Financial Statement
- vii. March 2024 Financial Statement

Board Chair Michel requested a motion for the approval of the items on the consent agenda, board member Debeatham-Brown moved to approve the consent agenda and this was seconded by Board member Smith-Winfree.

V. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Arnel Hines, CFO

- i. Accounting Policies & Procedures Manual (APPM)

APPM was shared with the board at the last board meeting for review. The department requested its approval. The Academy complied with the CSDE request. Board Chair Michel asked if the audit firm requested the manual. The CFO stated that it was discussed at the meeting with the Finance Sub-Committee. He further stated that the operations manual suggested by the audit firm is separate from the procedures manual. The APPM focuses on accounting procedures and has to be approved by the board annually. Board Chair Michel asked board member Stewart if he had any questions. Board member Stewart asked for the document to be sent back to the board for the next meeting.

- ii. Fiscal 24/25 Budget Revision

The fiscal year 2024-25 budget was revised as the state requested a revision to reflect the 650 scholars enrolled in the Academy. The 28 scholars currently at Achievement First have been added. We already budgeted the net change which is \$1,000. This is a difference between \$7,000 and \$6,000.

Board Chair Michel requested a motion for the approval of the revised budget, board member Debeatham-Brown moved for the approval and this was seconded by board member Acosta.

There were no abstentions or extensions and the motion carried unanimously.

iii. EFS Audit Update

The CFO stated that the EFS audit is being worked on for completion. He further stated that it was never required for the completion of the annual audit. He stated that a member of the audit firm who had been working on supporting its completion left the firm. He stated that he has more items to complete and will turn this around within the week.

Board Chair Michel asked what year is being submitted. CFO stated that is for FY22. He also stated a few requests for FY23 were received. Board Chair Michel asked for clarification on whether the EFS audit is always a year behind. Board Chair Michel stated that staff turnover should not prevent its completion, he further stated that Walter O'Connell will need to attend the next board meeting to provide an update. Board Chair Michel asked what was the due date for completion of the EFS audit. The CFO stated that it was due 12/31/2023.

Board member Smith asked if we have satisfied the state requirements for choice of auditing firm. The CEO/Superintendent confirmed that the Academy has satisfied the state requirements. The CFO stated that the Academy has Request for Proposals (RFP) templates from at least 3 educational organizations. Board Chair Michel asked what is the delay for moving forward with the RFP. The CFO stated that he has draft copies. Board Chair Michel stated that the meeting with the audit firm will go into executive session at the next board meeting. Board member Smith-Winfree advised that no personnel matter should be discussed during the board meeting.

Board member Lester stated that the Academy should recognize the urgency of bringing in alternate auditors. Board Chair Michel believes that we will have to work with the current firm for another year unless we can use the state list that has been audited already. In this case we will not need an RFP. We can negotiate with them but keep in mind that by June 30th any audit firm will want to begin looking at records.

iv. Finance Operations Manual Plan

At the request of the board and the suggestions given by the audit firm the Business Office is working on putting together a Finance Operations Manual. The plan has been shared with the board and the goal is to complete the draft copy by August 2024.

VI. SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

i. 325 Renovation Update

Thomas Smith, Building Sub-committee Chair

Arnel Hines, CFO

The CFO stated that the Academy received the contract from the construction company for the renovations at 325 Blue Hills Avenue property. The contract has been reviewed and approved by Attorney Chinni. The CFO will meet with the contractor to sign off on the contract. Board Chair Michel asked if the completion date for the project will occur September 2024. The CFO stated that the state provided an extension through to January 2025 but he does not believe that extension will be needed for completion.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

i. N/A

VIII. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

i. Teacher Leadership Evaluation Model

ii. 2024 Gala

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Michel requested a motion for the adjournment of the board meeting. The motion was made by board member Debeatham-Brown and seconded by board member Acosta. The Jumoke Academy Board of Directors meeting concluded at 7:15 pm.