

# JUMOKE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

Mission: To prepare children to successfully compete in the global marketplace despite the social and economic challenges they may presently face. The academy is dedicated to rigorous academic and social standards achieved by holding high expectations for all students during challenging instruction.

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## “Loving Scholars, Nurturing Minds, and Empowering Futures”

**Board Retreat/Special Board Meeting**  
**Mandell JCC - 335 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford**  
**Saturday, September 7, 2024**  
**9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**  
**Minutes**

### **Board Members Present:**

Sam Gray, Board Chair  
Myron Stewart, Community Representative  
Vera Smith-Winfree, Community Representative  
Suzette Debeatham-Brown, Community Representative  
George Sutherland, Community Representative  
Leticia Acosta, Teacher Representative

### **Board Members Absent:**

Janelle Lester, Community Representative

Staff Present: Dr. Troy Monroe, Dr. Gordon-Hall, Sheryl Deloso, Sharron Solomon-McCarthy, Ana Marcil, Dr. Heather Jacobi, Latoya Johnson and Tanisha Whitter.

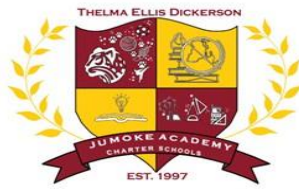
Guest Present: Christine Chinni and Leonard Lockhart.

- Continental Breakfast

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Special Board Meeting - Discussion & possible Action Concerning a Personnel Matter (Discussion proposed for Executive Session)

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The Jumoke Academy Special Board of Directors meeting was called to order at 8:35 am on September 7th by the CEO/Superintendent. The Superintendent turned the meeting over to the Board Chair who requested a motion to go into Executive Session. The motion was made by board member Debeatham-Brown and seconded by board member Stewart. All Jumoke Academy staff were excused from the meeting with the exception of the Director of Finance, Sheryl Deloso.

Board member Debeatham-Brown requested a motion to end the Special Board meeting and this was seconded by board member Smith-Winfree. There were no abstentions or oppositions, and the motion was carried unanimously.

A motion was made by board member Debeatham-Brown to uphold the Superintendent's existing contract to include bonuses and increases based on goals being met. Board member Smith-Winfree made an amended motion to include bonus and increase to be retroactive to July 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by board member Debeatham-Brown. There were no abstentions or oppositions, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Board member Smith-Winfree made a motion to schedule a Special Board meeting to further discuss the Superintendent's contract to ensure that the contractual agreement is followed during the annual review and is aligned to mutually agreed upon established goals. The motion was seconded by board member Debeatham-Brown and there were no abstentions or oppositions, and the motion was carried unanimously.

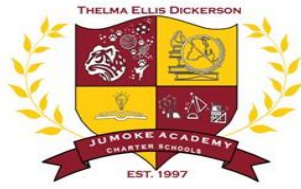
Board member Debeatham-Brown made a motion to conclude the Special Board meeting, this was seconded by board member Smith-Winfree, there were no abstentions or oppositions, and the motion carried unanimously. The Special Board meeting concluded at 8:58 am.

### **Opening**

- Welcome/Board Chair Introduction

The Superintendent welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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- Opening Remarks

Mr. Sam Gray, Board Chair

Board Chair Gray welcomed members of the board and staff to the annual board retreat. He spoke about collaborating and building relationships with members of the board and meeting and interacting with staff & scholars.

## **CEO/Superintendent's Report**

### **PART A**

Dr. Troy Monroe, CEO/Superintendent

- Ice-Breaker Activity

Members of the board and staff were asked to work in pairs to color a pair of shoes reflecting their life's journey. Everyone had an opportunity to share, and this was an eye-opening experience.

## **State of the Academy**

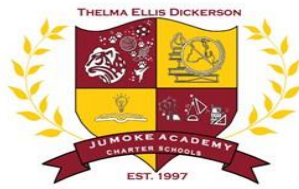
- District Improvement Plan
- Corrective Action Plan
  - Strategic Roadmap Review

The Superintendent spoke about the State of the Academy and how the District Improvement Plan served as the overarching umbrella for the Strategic Roadmap which together compliment and align to improvement strategies in the Corrective Action Plan and our efforts to move forward as an organization. Additionally the Academy has focused on mastery of grade level standards in Math, ELA & Science and well-rounded scholars in an ever-changing world. The Board Chair asked if there is a progression as to how the District Improvement Plan cascades to accountability. The Superintendent responded stating that the team has taken the big ideas and placed them on a roadmap to show the progression of the daily work being accomplished.

## **The Corrective Action Plan**

The Academy's focus area is chronic absenteeism, improvement in Math and ELA scores and one hundred percent certification for all teachers. A copy of the Corrective Action Plan has been shared in the board packet. This is a very detailed document which will take some time to

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review. Members of the board are asked to review and become familiar with these documents which will be discussed over the next few months.

The Superintendent reviewed the State of the Academy plan; literacy for grades 3-8 is in progress and the Science of Reading which is Phonics based has been implemented. The Academy is in the 3rd year of Algebra I being offered to middle school scholars which now consist of a full class. The Next Generation Science Standards will be maintained across the district and serve as a basis of our curriculum while promoting alignment across the district. The Academy's World Language program is being offered to grades 5-8, and next year 4th grade scholars will be exposed to this program as well.

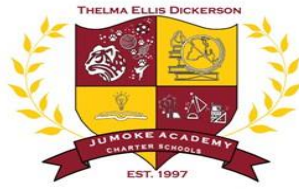
A Theatre Teacher has been hired to support the Arts program at the Hartford Conservatory. The Academy's centralized curriculum and material is available to parents and scholars in the curriculum HUB.

The Human Resources Department filled 23 of 25 open positions. 80% of our classrooms have authorized staff. The shortage of teachers is a nationwide problem, and positions are now being filled as authorized staff. A memo from the state is available in the board packet. Authorized staff include Long Term Substitute Teachers, DSAP, CSEP, and Resident Educator staff.

The Academy's Pathways to Teacher Certification program began in 2023 after the leadership team applied for and competed for a one-million-dollar prize through the YASS Prize Foundation and received funding support for the PTC/Grow our Own Initiative. Cohort I started with 6 staff and 4 remain in the program to date with an expected certification of 2025. It was noted that cohort 2 began this fall.

The renovation of the 325 Blue Hills property adjacent to JAH-SMaRT is 32% completed. The Academy received a grant to repurpose the house to address professional development, community development and engagement, JAPA, and after-hours community usage. The

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The academy experienced some delays, but the property is coming along well and is expected to be completed by October 2024.

The consolidation plan for the Academy has been tabled. Additional conversation needs to occur with the board and at the community level.

Stakeholder engagement continues to be a priority for the Academy. The leadership team is working on more parent involvement and engagement through JAPA. The Board Development continues, and our hope is to have a super board with members that help support the Academy's fund-raising efforts. New ideas are welcome.

Our Charter school renewal process took place in 2023, and the academy will have another renewal in 3 years.

Board member Smith-Winfrey asked if the Academy is still in need of a new partnership. The Superintendent stated that we are seeking people and organizations that can add value to the academy. The leadership team will work with Board member Smith-Winfrey and a sub-committee to support this venture.

Board member Sutherland added that partnership is really about relationship building as small donors can turn into large scale donors. The Superintendent added that it is about relationships and measuring outcomes.

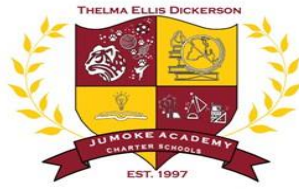
### **PART B**

- Guest Speaker - Mr. Leonard Lockhart, CABE President/Board Secretary and Finance Committee Chair, Windsor Public Schools

The Superintendent introduced Mr. Lockhart, a Hartford native who serves on Windsor Board as Secretary and Finance Chairman and a volunteer Firefighter in Windsor.

Mr. Lockhart spoke at length about the role of the board, their duties and responsibilities and the reason they serve. Board members' duties are bound through the State constitution and are responsible for adopting policies, curriculum, approving budget, and to appoint the

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Superintendent. Board members are voluntary and cannot receive compensation for their board responsibilities.

It is the obligation of the board to attend meetings and be responsive. Members of the board will never agree on everything; conflict will occur, but the work of the board must continue. He further stated that it is okay to be emotional and passionate about the students, but respect and trust must occur in the meeting room. Stability and collaboration and respect are important aspects of the board's relationship with the school being governed.

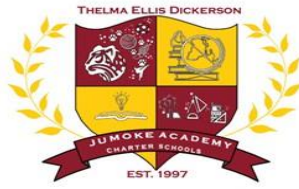
The Chairman's responsibility is to broker relationships with the board and Superintendent. Create public will to succeed, the best plans in the world will not succeed without the community. A split board is problematic, it is not the superintendent's job to babysit the board. Members of the board must read and understand their role, be in the meeting and be present. A Board Chair or superintendent must never be surprised going into a meeting as that creates a hostile environment. It's okay to tender your resignation to the Board Chair if you are not prepared to do the work. Members of the board must be able to deal with abjection and problems that will arise; but the board must stand strong as a collective group.

The board represents Jumoke Academy, it is your job to read, know and implement the Jumoke Academy charter. Board Meetings should be data driven. All meetings must be posted and noticeable to and open to the public.

Board member Stewart asked if we are required to provide both a virtual and in-person meeting for the public. Mr. Lockart responded that the Academy has the right to have hybrid meetings as an option but must at least provide reasonable access to the public.

Board member development is available through CAFE, Mr. Lockhart will work with the Superintendent to make this a reality. The Superintendent asked about charter schools' access to CAFE as previously we were historically denied access as a Charter. Mr. Lockhart advised the

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Superintendent to reach out to Miss McCarthy as there is some training offered under State grant. Attorney Chinni added that this is high level training that will be helpful for the board. The Superintendent asked if board members can have roles on multiple committees. Mr. Lockhart advised that this is the norm with smaller boards.

### **PART C**

- Legal Briefs

Attorney Christine Chinni

- School Law Updates

A number of legal updates were reviewed. Of specific note, there has been a change in law regarding school suspensions. Prek-2 scholars may only be suspended if a behavior results in physical harm to someone. The Superintendent asked for clarification on whether that harm involved scholars and staff. Attorney Chinni confirmed.

The rule of thumb is that you do not have to suspend a Prek-2 grade scholar for physically harming someone, but any suspension must be for this reason only.

Additionally families must be given a minimum of 5 days' notice prior to an expulsion hearing being scheduled not including the hearing date. School districts must notify parents if a child is repeatedly engaging in disruptive behavior and must include a behavior plan discussion with the parent even if the child is not a Special Education student.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings must be scheduled with a minimum of 5 days advance notice to parents. Language must include parents' right to support from different paraprofessionals including Psychologist or Social Worker.

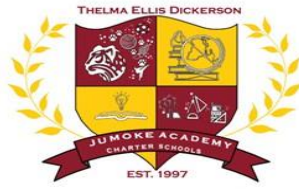
- Fiduciary Roles/Responsibilities

Mr. Lockhart covered a lot of information regarding the role of the board and their responsibilities.

- Title IX Compliance

A Title IX Toolkit will be provided by the State. Legal Counsel will work with the board sub-committee to discuss this in detail for implementation.

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The Superintendent asked if another district has this policy predefined can that policy be adopted. Attorney Chinni confirmed that this practice is fine. This work will be a major effort on the part of the Academy and the board.

- Responding to the media

The board's responsibility is to not comment on questions from the media.

The Board Chair asked if the Academy has a written document in response to the media. It can be a simple language that is consistent across the district for the board and the entire leadership team.

There has been a change in provision regarding paid sick leave. Attorney Chinni will work with the Human Resources Manager on these updates. FMLA can now be used by staff to transport an immediate family member to a healthcare appointment.

### **PART D**

- Department Updates

- Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Marie Gordon-Hall, CAO

The Chief Academic Officer shared a comparison of the Next Generation Accountability results between Jumoke and our host district Hartford Public Schools from 2019 through to 2023. The Academy has consistently outperformed the host district in ELA, and Math. The draft copy of the Corrective Action Plan was also shared and reviewed.

Board member Smith-Winfree asked if the Academy also makes comparisons with other districts across the state. The Chief Academic Officer stated that comparisons have been made with some districts within Hartford County.

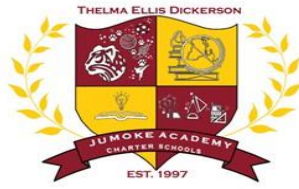
- Finance & Operations

Mrs. Sheryl Deloso, Director of Finance

The Director of Finance reviewed the financials and expenditures for the 2023-24 fiscal year. This includes highlights of federal grants and their usage. The Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) grant expenditure was broken down and the Educational Financial System (EFS) report updates were shared. The 2024-25 approved project was also reviewed.

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Board member Smith-Winfrey asked if the audit was completed. The Finance Director stated that the 2023-24 audit is in progress. The Board Chair asked what financial systems the Academy uses, the Director of Finance confirmed that Abilia is the financial system used.

The Board chair asked about the Superintendent's vision for a super board, and what it meant for the Academy and how will that funding be invested back into the academy?

The Superintendent stated that it is his hope that the board will be much larger and consist of people with different areas of expertise that can collaborate, plan and execute fundraising efforts. Board member Smith-Winfrey asked who in a leadership capacity from the Finance/Business Department will accompany the Superintendent in prospecting partnerships. The Superintendent stated that the vision is for the Grants and Operations Manager to serve as the key person to work with the Superintendent to engage with community partners to discuss funding support.

Board member Smith-Winfrey suggested that the Academy set goals for incremental funding. The Board Chair advised that it is important to speak to the strategy surrounding a super board. Additionally individual giving should be discussed at a board meeting and the Academy must be able to account for funds raised.

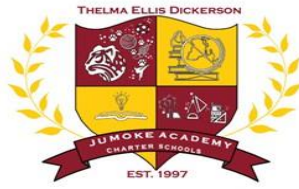
- Student Support Services

Mrs. Sharron Solomon-McCarthy,  
Director of Student Support Services

We have seen a decline in enrollment due to scholars moving out of state, back to their Nexus district and some families have opted to homeschool their scholars. This started after COVID-19 and continues to increase.

Attendance - over 30% of scholars have been chronically absent. A scholar who missed 2 days per month is considered chronically absent. The state requires the academy to reduce the chronically absent to 7% in three years.

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Board member Smith-Winfree asked if there are districts that have brought their chronic absenteeism down that low. Attorney Chinni stated that the state requiring the academy to focus on addressing chronic absenteeism means less focus on academics which can be harmful.

The Student Support Services Department is working on helping parents understand that school is here for families. Support is being offered as Informed trauma and mental health aid. Board Chair Gray served on Hartford Hospital board and invited the Student Support Services Director to reach out regarding additional support services.

The Board Chair asked about student recruitment status. The Superintendent stated that the Community Engagement and Recruitment Specialist has been working to bring in additional scholars.

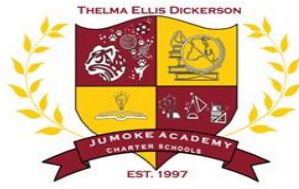
The board chair spoke about the importance of staying ahead and keeping up with technology to reach our targeted audience. He asked about the impact of our alumni. The Superintendent stated that we are seeking a marketing student and asked members of the board to share information on anyone within their network who can be brought on board to manage our Social Media platform. Board member Smith-Winfree suggests hiring a college intern or a recent graduate who can be more accessible.

- Principal Presentations/Working Lunch
  - School Goals & Alignment
    - TED

Latoya Johnson, Principal

Principal Johnson shared that Thelma Ellis Dickerson's Elementary School developed and hosted campus tours for prospective families. They have increased recruitment efforts by collaborating with all campus leaders. In an effort to retain staff there has been a shift in focus on adult culture and climate and building staff morale. Additionally, professional development and staff reflective surveys are taking place.

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The elementary school has also taken steps to align academic data such as HMH reading program and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness program for kindergarten and first grade. Curriculum alignment for grades kindergarten through 4th grade includes AVID and Illustrative Math. Teacher support is happening in the form of professional development, modeling and co-teaching as well as district focus instructional walkthroughs.

■ HC

Heather Jacobi, Principal

The Hartford Conservatory is focused on building capacity. The focus is on attendance, academic achievement, enrollment, scholar and staff retention. There is an in-depth focus on developing the Arts theme to better serve our scholars; this includes Visual Arts, Dance, Theater and Band.

■ SMART

Kashay Green, Principal

Principal Green could not attend the retreat due to circumstances beyond her control but submitted updates for review in the board packet.

- Q & A
- Board Chair Closing Remarks

The Board Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Jumoke Academy Board Retreat concluded at 1:10 pm.

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