



Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday July 24, 2024
4:00 P.M.

2424 West Peterson

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

John Hrisney	X
Charles Hempfling	X
Michelle Cronin	X
Manuj Lal	Absent
Stephen Moy	Absent
Jyoti Nigam	Absent
Mark Hansen	X
Emiko Ohenhen	X

Guests Present

Rebecca Creighton: Co-CEO
Chris Shue: Co-CEO
Eric Lindstrom: COO
Michael Stewart: Principal, Passages
Anna Falcon: Director of Human Resources

1. Call to Order (M. Cronin)

Discussion: M. Cronin called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm
M. Cronin welcomed the board and expressed appreciation for the leadership at Passages, recognizing their efforts to create a collaborative culture between administration and teachers. M. Cronin also shared how much she enjoyed the 8th grade graduation ceremony and its theme of resilience.

2. Public Comment

Discussion: N/A

3. Ed Council Report (M. Hansen/M. Stewart)

Discussion: M. Stewart shared that focus of Ed Council was on curriculum development as well as articulating a mission and vision for the upcoming school year.

M. Hansen reported that core principles and strategies have been established to support the education of the diverse population we serve. The next step is to seek board endorsement as a priority, which will further support M. Stewart in effectively leading the school. There has been a vision with 3 core strategies attached to it. If the strategies are implemented well they will result in better outcomes for our kids.

M. Stewart presented the Vision and Core Strategies as follows.

Vision: Provided the full and necessary supports unique to their circumstances and lived experiences, every Passages student will

- Master the academic and social competencies fundamental to their future educations, well-beings and livelihoods.
- Demonstrate annual progress towards those competencies
- Meet or exceed rigorous standards for learning

M. Stewart presented the three strategic priorities as follows.

- Robust EL Supports (multilingual supports)
- Standards Based Curriculum/Assessment of Learning
- Competency Based Instruction

M. Stewart shared the commitment to culture/inclusive decision making, as a strong culture is what will drive success.

M. Hansen emphasized the importance of ensuring that our teachers are supported in addressing varying levels of competency within their classrooms, as our students arrive with a wide range of academic abilities.

Board approval of the mission, vision and strategies was added to the consent agenda.

4. Principals Report (M. Stewart)

Discussion: M. Stewart reported out on Charter Renewal. Application will be submitted on July 31st. We are planning on receiving a 2-3 year renewal.

C. Hempfling inquired about the impact of the CPS board transitioning to an elected school board and the current political climate surrounding charter schools. It was noted that there is pressure from the city to reduce or eliminate charters, while parents continue to advocate for maintaining school choice.

M. Stewart reported on the successes and areas for growth in our strategic plan.

Strategic Priorities that have seen improvement.

- Ensure a positive student experience and access to wrap around services.
- Hiring and retaining quality teachers and administrators
- Providing a safe environment for students and employees

Strategic Priorities that are identified as areas for growth.

- Preparing students to be ready for next grade level and ultimately college and career ready.
- Increased academic achievement and growth
- Increase student attendance and decrease in chronic absenteeism average.

M. Stewart provided an update on SPED/ML compliance, noting that SPED is currently 100% compliant across all areas. Since our multilingual services have not been audited since October 2022, we have requested an audit from I&I to assess the improvements we have made.

M. Stewart reported that current enrollment stands at 330 students. Recruitment efforts will continue throughout the summer, with outreach focused on ensuring transitioning pre-k students enroll in kindergarten, which is taking place this week. M. Stewart emphasized that the most effective recruitment tool is having a high-performing school that parents recommend through word of mouth.

M. Stewart reported on the 5-Essentials survey. Results represent 50% of student feedback and 50% of the staff.

M. Stewart presented IAR data from recent years, noting an overall upward trend. However, this year's ELA scores were slightly lower. Anecdotally, the decrease may be attributed to the number of newly arrived students who had to take the test early in the school year.

M. Stewart reported that the year concluded with an 87% attendance rate, which is lower than in previous years. However, it was noted that a significant number of students are living in unique circumstances, such as communal living in migrant shelters, which has impacted attendance.

5. ECE Report (R. Creighton)

Discussion: Due to time constraints ECE report was moved to the Executive Session

6. Passages Finances (C. Shue)

Discussion: C. Shue shared with the Board and guests the budget that was approved. He shared that it reflected additional revenue due to enrollment. He shared that in the future the biggest variability may be with enrollment but also with rates from CPS. On the expense side, C. Shue stated that strategic investments in the learning experience for students were a priority while controlling other costs as much as possible.

7. Parent End of Year Reflections (E. Ohenhen)

Discussion: M. Ohenhen shared how much he has enjoyed serving on the Passages Board and that he is sad to transition his children out of Passages, but he and his family have moved to Chicago Heights. He hopes his children will take what they learned about different cultures and perspectives from their peers at Passages and apply them to life.

8. Planning for Passages (M. Cronin)

Discussion: M. Cronin shared the following: In response to the evolving educational landscape in Chicago, particularly the challenges faced by single-site charter schools, and how that impacts Passages Charter School, the Board of Directors is requesting the formation of a special committee. This committee will be charged with developing three comprehensive sustainability plans aimed at addressing the critical factors currently impacting the school. These factors include the political and regulatory climate around charter schools in Chicago, enrollment, and funding.



Background and Rationale: Charter Schools such as the Passages Charter School faces a set of challenges that necessitate strategic foresight and robust planning to address. These include:

1. **Regulatory and Political Climate:** City of Chicago's changing stance on charter schools can affect the operating model and resources.
2. **Enrollment:** Enrollment changes that are impacted by local and global events and housing stability
3. **Funding:** Resources need to be balanced with changing per-student allocation and capital requirements for the building

Committee Formation and Composition: The committee will be led by Trellus Co-CEO's and shall consist of Board members that sit on the Education Council, school administrators, and advisors with expertise in charter school management and educational policy. The inclusion of diverse perspectives will ensure that all aspects of sustainability are thoroughly considered.

Charge to the Committee: The committee is tasked with developing three distinct plans, each tailored to different potential future scenarios.

Expected Outcomes: The committee is expected to provide a detailed report with the three plans, including implementation strategies and risk assessments for each. This report should also include recommendations for immediate actions to continuously improve the school in the current academic year.

Timeline: The committee will present their initial findings at our September 25th meeting, with a final detailed recommendation for board approval by December 2024.

9. Executive Session

Discussion: Motion to move into exec session at 5:08 made by C. Hempfling and seconded by J. Hrisney

Motion was: Approved-Unanimous by M. Cronin, J. Hansen, E. Ohenhen

Motion to move out of exec session at 5:10 was made by J. Hrisney and seconded by C. Hempfling

Motion was: Approved-Unanimous by M. Cronin, M. Hanson and E. Ohenhen

10. Consent Agenda

Discussion: Motion to move approve consent agenda made by C. Hempfling and seconded by M. Hansen

Motion was: Approved- unanimously by M. Cronin, J. Hrisney, E. Ohenhen

- a. Approval of Minutes- May 2024
- b. Approval of Education Council Calendar
- c. Semi-Annual Review of Closed Meeting Minutes
- d. Approval of Passages Mission Vision and Strategic Priorities

10. On the Horizon

Discussion: M. Stewart shared the following dates

Back to Passages: August 23, 2024

First Day of School: August 26, 2024

Open House: September 4, 2024

11. Adjourn

Discussion: Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:25 made by C. Hempfling and seconded by J. Hisney

Motion was: Approved- unanimous M.Cronin, M.Hansen, E. Ohenhen