

# **Board Minutes**

## **The New Academy Charter School**

Minutes of the general meeting of the Board of Directors of The New Academy Charter School held on September 14, 2023.

- I. The meeting was called to order by Mr. William Nunn. Also present were Representative Joe Preston and Mr. Kenneth Curcio. Mr. David Caligiuri, Ms. Susan Creighton and Ms. Katie Micco were excused.
- II. In accordance with applicable law, Notice of Publication of the meeting was advertised in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on February 23, 2023 and the meeting was conducted at the 900 Agnew Road facility.
- III. Comments were requested from the public but there were none.
- IV. Minutes from the meeting of June 15, 2023 were reviewed and approved unanimously.
- V. At the onset of the meeting a motion was made to approve Mr. Jay Moser as the new Principal for the New Academy Charter School. After reviewing and discussing his experience as principal at Riverview High School, The Allegheny County Jail and Shuman Center, a motion appointing him as principal effective August 1 2023, was made, seconded and approved unanimously.

VI. Financial Report

The Financial Report was presented by Mr. Curcio. He indicated that the audit for the year ended June 2023 had commenced and it was anticipated that the audit would be completed prior to December 1, 2023. He next indicated that there was a decrease in assets but that the current school year had a projected enrollment and revenue increase. He concluded his report by indicating that more students were present at the beginning of the school year than last year and that the first day of school was August 22<sup>nd</sup>. A discussion was held concerning the decrease in assets and it was agreed that a plan to increase enrollment was a high priority.

VII. Report of Executive Director

Ms. Kristen Harpster reported that there are currently 69 students enrolled in the 23-24 school year. She further reported that of those students there are a total of 28 in Programs for Exceptionalities as follows:

<b>Exceptionality</b>	<b># of Students</b>
Emotional Disturbance	5 Students
Emotional Disturbance and Specific Learning Disability	0 Students
Emotional Disturbance and Other Health Impairment	2 Students

Emotional Disturbance/Specific Learning Disability/Other Health Impairment	1 Students
Specific Learning Disability	7 Students
Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment	2 Student
Intellectual Disability	1 Students
Other Health Impairment	7 Students
Gifted IEP	1 Student
504 Plan	2 Student
Under Review	0 Students

Ms. Harpster further reported on the multiple grants being utilized to enhance the learning experience at New Academy Charter. The grants awarded are listed below:

<b>GRANT</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
Title I	\$53,768	Curriculum Enrichment
Title II Part A	\$2,683.00	Professional Development
Title IV	\$10,000	Student Enrichment
School Improvement	\$75,000	Student & Staff Support
ESSER II	\$188,031	School & Safety
ESSER III	\$380,061	School & Safety
Ready to Learn	\$ 9,277	Professional Development/Incentives
ESSER Fund (ARP ESSER) 7% Set Asides	\$29,560.00	Learning Loss due to Pandemic

Ms. Harpster then presented the Board with copies of the School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan was then discussed and unanimously approved by the Board. The Board also reviewed and unanimously approved the Board Affirmation Statement and the K-12 Guidance Plan.

Ms. Harpster then reported on Edgenuity, the online standards-based curriculum that is available for students K-12. She explained that it provides blended learning opportunities for instructors to utilize curriculum resources within their classroom and students to recover missing credits on the platform. Edgenuity strongly believes that each student is unique and acquires information in his or her own way. She further indicated that The New Academy Charter School utilizes the Edgenuity program in a variety of ways, as follows.

- 1) Students wishing to remain enrolled through graduation at the New Academy Charter School may use Edgenuity program to make up missing credits from previous school years. The intention is to allow students to remain on their projected graduation track while allowing self-paced attainment of missing credits from previous courses taken.
- 2) Teachers may utilize Edgenuity curriculum both virtually with students in their classes working on student computer or print online curriculum to provide supplemental resources with curriculum instruction. Additionally, Edgenuity provides a prescribed course sequence for teachers to follow.
- 3) Edgenuity also allows students the opportunity to learn and prepare for post-secondary opportunities. For instance, students who are interested in the military may take a test-prep ASVAB course or students who may be interested in Engineering can take an introductory course to help inform their decision.

Ms. Harpster explained that Edgenuity can be accessed both in school and outside of school and that students and staff receive a unique login which can be used on school issued computers during designated credit recovery times or can be utilized after school on a cell phone, personal computer, tablet, etc. Edgenuity allows students an opportunity to take their own education and graduation track into their own hands.

Ms. Harpster then indicated that a Student Recruitment and Retention Task Force had been established and plans to meet regularly to discuss initiatives to increase enrollment. The current initiatives include:

- The First Open House was held on August 16, 2023. We welcomed a number of guests including potential students and their parents, CYF, the Juvenile Public Defenders office, and 2 local District Judges. It was a high energy event with tours being conducted by administration and teachers. Additional Open House sessions are planned for the remainder of the year.
- The Recruitment and Retention Team met in early September, 2023 to discuss strategies for increasing enrollment. Some of the ideas are:
  - Information in local newspapers (The Home Page, serving Greenfield, Hazelwood and Squirrel Hill)
  - Reaching out to the 412 Youth Zone
  - Geofencing – location based ad placement through smart technology

- Referral bonus to families if a new student enrolls
- Meet with local high school principals
- The RAR Team meets every 2 weeks throughout the year to discuss what is working and what new ideas will help increase enrollment.
- Some additional strategies that will be considered are:
  - Continuing to define our brand
  - Looking at our social media presence
  - Simplifying our enrollment process

She then indicated that previous initiatives have been used by the Task Force. These will be evaluated as to their effectiveness and implemented again based on that analysis.

Ms. Harpster further reported that during the 23-24 School Year, Safety and Security will continue to remain a very high priority. She indicated that all New Academy drivers are equipped with detailed run sheets and company issued cell phones. They are trained in van safety and there are strict transportation protocols. She further reported that students are prohibited from bringing cell phones to school, which not only helps with safety on the way to and from school, but also impacts the students' ability to remain focused in their classes. All students enter the school through a designated entrance. In addition, upon student arrival, trained staff members direct each student through a metal detector, then then subjected to a pat down to ensure that no weapons and/or contraband enters the campus. She further indicated that the school has applied through a PCCD safety and security grant for a one panel body scanner to upgrade the current metal detector.

She then reported that a threat assessment team consisting of administration, the behavior support team, mental health therapist, and EMT had been assembled and fully trained according to the state standards. She indicated that all staff are trained in First aid/ CPR, Suicide Prevention, Narcan, Safe2Say Something, Mandated Reporter, and Trauma Informed Care. In addition, On October 20, 2023, all staff will be trained by our in house trainer on Emergency Training Drills. Training will exceed the mandatory hours and topics set by Act 55.

Ms. Harpster then reported on the following "School Happenings":

**Monthly Newsletter** – The school will continue to communicate with parents. We know that parents and their children feel more connected to the school when they are informed of what's happening. The monthly newsletter will include the Principal's Corner, Student Highlights (perfect attendance, honor roll, student of the month), school counseling information (college tours, financial aid), mental health tips, and upcoming events. Other topics that may be included are a faculty showcase, alumni success stories, a technology tip section and an occasional piece on how to get and stay involved. The newsletter will be sent via email to all families and staff, probation, magistrates and local community members.

**Student Incentives** – Ms. Harpster indicated that recognizing students who are committed to their growth educationally, socially and emotionally is a foundational piece of The New Academy Charter School. Our “Pride Pays” initiative will continue to be integral to the recognition again this school year. She indicated that the committee has some fresh ideas about how to continue to support our students. Some of the ideas discussed are adding new items to the school store, opening the store every day instead of every two weeks, and clearly defining how we determine who gets rewards. Students will continue to use their Live School points to ‘purchase’ these items. She indicated that students will also continue to earn entries into the monthly raffle for the grand prizes.

**Graduation Ceremony** – She also reported that planning will begin in the second semester for our graduation ceremony. We understand the importance of the ceremony, the symbolism of change and the culmination of hard work, time, dedication and passion.

**Summer School** - New Academy Charter will continue to offer summer school after the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year.

#### VIII. Legal

Mr. Norris reported that there were no new claims. A resolution was then presented permitting Kristen Harpster to execute all contracts, agreements, grants and licenses electronically for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. It was also approved that Mr. Kenneth Curcio and Mr. Salvatore Costanzo had check-signing authority. Mr. Norris concluded his report by thanking all Board members for completing their charter school training requirements.

#### VIII. New Business

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2023.

#### VIV. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.