

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 March 14, 2024.

- I. The meeting was called to order by Mr. David Caliguiri. Also present were Representative Joseph Preston, Mr. Kenneth Curcio, and Ms. Katie Micco. Mr. William Nunn and Ms. Susan Creighton were excused.
- II. In accordance with applicable law, Notice of Publication of the meeting was advertised in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on February 29, 2024 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 December 14, 2023 were reviewed and approved unanimously.
- V. Financial Report

The Financial Report was presented by Mr. Kenneth Curcio. Mr. Curcio reported that enrollment increased from 71 to 81 but that more students needed to be enrolled. He then indicated that revenue was below budget, primarily due to a lower number of special education students. He then stated that grant revenues were higher and were now being accounted for on a monthly basis. A discussion was then held concerning school districts retaining students that had previously been referred and schooling them at home. The financial report was accepted.

VI. Report of Executive Director

Ms. Kristen Harpster reported that the current enrollment for New Academy Charter School is at 80 students. The number of students with programs for exceptionalities is 34. Below is the breakdown:

Exceptionality	# of Students
Emotional Disturbance	2 students
Emotional Disturbance and Specific Learning Disability	2 students
Emotional Disturbance and Other Health Impairment	2 students
Emotional Disturbance/Specific Learning Disability/Other Health Impairment	1 student
Specific Learning Disability	10 students

Specific Learning Disability and Other Health Impairment	5 students
Intellectual Disability	1 student
Intellectual Disability and Other Health Impairment	1 student
Other Health Impairment	7 students
Autism and Other Health Impairment	1 student
Gifted IEP	0 Students
504 Plan	2 Students

Ms. Harpster then reported on the status of the following Charter School grants:

Awarded & Open Grants

Grant	Amount	Purpose
Highmark Foundation-Supportive Services Health Grants	\$1,000	Personal Care and Hygiene Items for Students
United Ways STEM School Champions	\$10,000	Preconstruction Program
PCPA	\$5,000	Concrete repairs on front sidewalk
USDA School Breakfast Expansion	\$5,165.75	New Grab & Go Breakfast Program
Title I	\$53,768	Curriculum Enrichment
Title II Part A	\$2,683	Professional Development
Title IV	\$10,000	Student Enrichment
School Improvement	\$75,000	Student and Staff Support
ESSER III	\$380,061	School & Safety
Ready to Learn	\$9,277	Professional Development/Incentives
ESSER Fund (ARP ESSER) 7% Set Asides	\$29,560	Learning Loss due to Pandemic
Total	581,514.75	

Pending Grants

Grant	Amount	Purpose
Dr. Squatch	N/A	In-kind donations of soaps and other personal care/hygiene products
In a Heartbeat	\$1,500	AED in-kind donation
Snapdragon Book Foundation	\$2,000	Student Library funding for diverse collection of books
Kids Gardening GroMoreGood 2024	\$500	Raised Garden Beds

Highmark Foundation School-Based Health	\$7,500	Vape Detectors
Ayn Rand Institute	\$142.50	In-Kind donation of Ayn Rand books for Student Library
PA Department of Health	N/A	In-Kind donation of 7 devices to mitigate illness and eliminate viruses, bacteria, and mold
PCCD School Mental Health Grant	\$70,000	Noncompetitive funding for mental health. Would support Phase 1 of Think:Kids training and Hiring of a Licensed Mental Health Worker
PCCD School Safety and Security Grant	\$450,000	Security upgrades, including body scanner, raptor visitor management, access control for doors, cameras, IT upgrades, and door replacements
Total	\$531,642.50	

Ms. Harpster reported that the school continues to work with the assigned School Improvement Facilitators, Holly Pope and Vicki Ryan and that this year's goals focus on Attendance and Graduation pathways. She reported that on March 7, 2024, a quarterly meeting was held and the following data is where we currently stand with our progress in completing the goals for this year's plan.

Ms. Harpster further explained that the MTSS- Multi-Tiered System of Support is a standards-aligned comprehensive school improvement framework for enhancing academic, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes for ALL students. See results below:

Graduation Pathways (Act 158)

	Number of Action Steps	Percentage of Action Steps
Not Yet Started	2	7.4%
Behind	5	18.5%
On Time	8	29.6%
Complete	12	44.4%
Percentage of Started Action Steps "On Time" or "Complete"		
80%		

Credit Attainment

	Number of Action Steps	Percentage of Action Steps
Not Yet Started	5	18.5%
Behind	2	7.4%
On Time	3	11.1%
Complete	17	63.0%
Percentage of Started Action Steps "On Time" or "Complete"		
91%		

**PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Attendance**

	Number of Action Steps	Percentage of Action Steps
Not Yet Started	0	0.0%
Behind	0	0.0%
On Time	1	4.5%
Complete	21	95.5%
Percentage of Started Action Steps "On Time" or "Complete"		
100%		

Ms. Harpster further indicated that these facilitators are also assisting with a revamp of the school's curriculum. Vickie Ryan has finished both 8th and 9th English curriculum and continues to make progress on the other grade levels. Holly Pope works directly with our Math department on their curriculum, and has also taught lessons to role model teaching strategies.

Ms. Harpster indicated that both Vickie and Holly also provide professional development to our department heads and do classroom observations to provide feedback to the teachers and that this feedback has had a direct positive effect on instruction in the classroom.

Ms. Harpster updated the Board regarding the school's Student Recruitment and Retention Task Force, which has been established and will meet regularly to discuss initiatives to increase enrollment.

Ms. Harpster further indicate that in addition to the school's strategy of reaching out to our families on a regular basis to retain and recruit students, we feel that meeting with our local magistrate judges is also a possible pipeline of referrals.

She further reported that we explain our school and how it can benefit some of the students that they see for truancy and the Judges have been very receptive to this and have shared the dates that they hold truancy hearings.

Ms. Harpster indicated that the School continues to have strong daily attendance and that this past week, we hit a new high attendance of 63 students. 80 students are currently enrolled so that gave us a daily attendance rate of 79% for the day. She reported that the school has consistently averaged 70% or better since early in the year. We strongly believe that our daily attendance figures show that students enjoy coming to our school and that word of mouth from them will help our recruitment efforts.

Ms. Harpster then reported that the school held the second Open House of the year on March 1st. Ms. Harpster indicated that that hosting events like this continue to be beneficial and are an important part of our recruitment strategy and that we always have a new partner attend along with prospective students. She indicated that all of our current partners were present; YAP (Youth Advocate Program), probation, Wesley Family Services, Café Momentum, HSAO and others.

Ms. Harpster then reported that the Recruitment and Retention Team continues to meet every 2 weeks and are continuing a strategic plan to increase enrollment. She indicated that the Team has previously discussed many ideas and will continue to follow the plan. Some of these strategies include:

- 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
- Assistance payments to families if a new student enrolls
- Meet with local high school principals
- Continuing to define our brand
- Looking at our social media presence
- Simplifying our enrollment process

Ms. Harpster then reported that during the 23-24 School Year, Safety and Security remain a very high priority and that all New Academy drivers are equipped with detailed run sheets and company issued cell phones. She explained that staff members 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 students' ability to remain focused in their classes. She reported that all students enter the school through a designated entrance, and upon their arrival, trained staff members direct each student through a metal detector. Students are then subjected to a pat down to ensure that no weapons and/or contraband enter the campus.

Ms. Harpster then indicated that a threat assessment team consisting of administration, the behavior support team, a mental health therapist, and the EMT has been assembled and fully trained according to the state standards. She stated that this team convenes each time a situation arises and collectively assesses the situation and agrees on further action.

VII. Principal's Report

Mr. Jay Moser indicated that the attendance percentage was very good and that significant attention was being directed toward improving the curriculum. He stated there were rigorous expectations in the classroom. He next indicated that there was a skating party tomorrow. Mr. Moser then reported that Judge DeAngelis and Maria Lopez were working with magistrates and had met with all of them in an effort to improve recruiting. He then indicated that there was an Open House held on March 1 with a fish fry and that 2 new students had been enrolled that day. He concluded his report by indicating that the Recruitment and Retention Team meets every 2 weeks. A discussion was then held concerning marketing efforts and starting a program for 6th and 7th grade students next year.

VIII. Legal

Mr. Norris first reported that there were no new claims. He then discussed the Financial Interest Forms which needed to be returned by May 1, 2024. Mr. Norris concluded his report by discussing an incident with a teacher which had occurred on January 31, 2024. The incident has been Childlined and is being investigated. He indicated that the teacher is currently suspended.

VIII. New Business

The next scheduled meeting of the Board is set for Thursday, June 13, 2024.

VIV. Adjournment

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