

Board Meeting Minutes - June 18, 2024
2714 W. Augusta Blvd, Room 121, Chicago, IL 60622
APPROVED AT SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

Welcome / Call to Order / Roll Call

5:33pm meeting called to order by Duffie Adelson. Roll called by Mike Przygoda.

Board members present: Duffie Adelson, Carlos Azocotia, Carmen Echevarria (virtual), Peter Fidler, Karen Fishman, Christine Gallagher, Sabrina King, Kay Mabie, Michelle Pierre-Farid, Yulinda Rahman

Others present: Tina Boyer Brown (executive director), Douglas DeJong (Finance, Quatro), Pavielle Driver (principal), Kanika Glover (assistant principal), Mirja Haffner (Foundation Board President), Johnny Merrifield (Foundation Executive Director), Mike Przygoda (Communications), Greer Reed (artistic director)

Approval of Minutes of April 24, 2024*

Duffie Adelson

Motion to approve minutes made by Carlos Azcoitia, seconded by Sabrina King. Motion carried.

Presentations & Reports:

Executive Director's Report

Tina Boyer Brown

- Preliminary director of finance interviews have taken place. Also considering retaining Quatro. There will be an update soon.

Principal's Report

Pavielle Driver

- CIWP update.
- Math department transitioning into new curriculum.
- ELA Department Vertical/Horizontal alignment
- SAT going away next year, ACT implemented next year
- School links implementation was successful
- Dual Enrollment Launch with City Colleges of Chicago in partnership with CPS.
- Graduation rates
- MTSS Implementation Draft Plan
 - Assigned to Daniel Dwyer
- 6 teachers working towards their ESL endorsement
- DL department: 100% compliance on IEP Reviews/Endorsements
- Culture and Climate Survey: 5 essentials survey came back
- Reviewed vacancies and hiring
- Post Secondary
 - Do we have a system for tracking them? Yes, School Links will follow the students as long as they use their ChiArts email. They can switch it out with a personal email too.

- Highlights from Department Heads from the school year.

Report from ChiArts Foundation

Johnny Merrifield

- Kerfuffle numbers update
- New funder, the Vevo Foundation
- Acknowledgement of the Chicago philanthropic community
- Review of 5 years of fundraising
- Foundation budget review.
- Follow the ChiArts Alumni page on Instagram. It has really taken off and formed a sense of community. Excited to think about social media. Just hired a content marketing manager. He'll be involved in social media videos and presence to reach new audiences.
- Tik Tok ads were filmed in Chicago schools. Might this be a possible funding source?
- One of the reasons the school came into existence was because public schools were cutting the arts out. Must keep pushing the message of how important the arts are in the world.

Committee Reports:

- Program Excellence Committee Tina Boyer Brown
 - Paused for the summer. Looking to develop the Strategic Plan to go forward.
 - Looking for student input on topics.
- Governance Committee Duffie Adelson
 - Working on putting together a Board of Directors Slate for the September annual meeting.
 - Asking current board members to look for possible new board candidates who want to support the school. Particularly anyone who has a background in education, law, or finance. Please contact Duffie Adelson with any ideas for possible new board directors .
 - Is there a way to have people who can serve as advisors instead of board members?
 - Yes. It's important to discuss when finding good candidates what their role could be.
- Parent Support Organization Michelle Pierre-Farid, Ph. D
Yulinda Rahman
 - Fundraising review.
 - Looking at a hybrid model for meetings for next year.
 - How can PSO help to fundraise to help support? Looking at a fall fundraiser. Would like to work with the Foundation more.
 - Would like to have the board speak to the PSO and families more directly.
 - Will figure out a communication team over the summer to figure out messaging. PSO is an important vehicle to deliver that message to families.
- Finance Committee Peter Fidler
 - Presentation of draft budget that will be sent to CPS on June 21, 2024.
 - Have been in contact with I & I and CPS about the budget. Tina Boyer Brown has

- meetings with CPS officials throughout the week.
- There will be staff cuts. First step will be to inform the union of those. Holding out hope that CPS will present more money.
 - Current draft budget is with staff cuts in academics.
 - Have not addressed needed cuts in the arts budget yet because we were just notified of the drastic reduction from the Foundation for FY 25. School leadership will present to the Union.
 - Costs in the arts have been flat for a number of years.
 - We are reacting to CPS's number, but it is a significant blow. CPS is redistributing funding.
 - Our leadership was able to deliver a surprise surplus for SY 23-24.
 - Acknowledgement of Foundation funding.
 - The reason why we were able to close the funding gap in SY 23-24 was because of a lot of advocating and financial discipline from school leadership.
 - The school is at an inflection point. In many ways, the school has never been stronger. Stronger leadership team than ever. It's a disconnect between that and the headwinds from the financial challenges.
 - When Principal Driver was talking about new positions needed, is that accounted for with the deficit?
 - Yes
 - Have to think about the school day and what that looks like?
 - 2-5pm is in the contract. We will put a proposal and take it to our Union and impact bargain. If the Union is willing to have a conversation about a shorter conservatory day, it's worthwhile.
 - Arts deficit is going to involve program or staff cuts.
 - Seniority is not the only consideration for cuts.
 - What are we doing as far as enrollment?
 - Enrollment is strong.
 - Having auditions throughout the summer for the waitlist.
 - We may have a larger than usual 9th grade class.
 - Students are choosing to come here.
 - To maintain and grow enrollment, it is very important that we keep our programs robust.
 - First semester payment is based on the 20th day of attendance. In the third quarter, ChiArts will receive adjustment from CPS.
 - Budget to be approved will have footnotes to describe the plan to bring the deficit down when this goes to CPS.
 - Based on what we're sending to CPS will this look like we're on a better track financially?
 - No. We proposed to I & I to put this off until we receive the final number. I & I said it needed to be submitted. We believe this is a talking document that CPS can respond to.

- We are on track to get out of financial remediation this upcoming year, for one year. We will need additional funding from CPS and careful financial stewardship to meet our allocation for the arts with a stable environment for the students to continue that.
- There is a deadline to submit this to CPS but we will come back to the board when we have more visibility about what we have.
- We this started in March focused on direct student cost. Engaged every leader about every expense. Bottom up budget. Personnel side dictated by what Union requires. Every line item for the past three months we've been looking at very carefully. No conceivable way without CPS funding to not be in a deficit.
- We received confirmation on Friday that we would not get any relief on occupancy fees.
- How many students are we serving in the Humboldt Park area?
 - More than other areas. The largest populations are closest to the school.
 - Is that reflected in the summer camp population?
 - We don't know.
- What is CPS's expectation of the school?
 - They expect us to be economically sustainable but we cannot do it without them.

Sabrina King offers motion to approve the budget with the acknowledgment that it is a work in progress. Seconded by Karen Fishman. Motion carried.

Public Comment

- Megan Pietz (Union Chair, Teacher at ChiArts)
 - Surprised to hear this news after less than a year of the contract. Students, teachers, and families will be disappointed.
 - Believes we can work toward a solution.
 - Will be working on this during the summer.
- Mark Bracken (Director of Production)
 - Has worked on over 500 productions at the school.
 - Over his time at ChiArts, his budget has continued to decrease.
 - Tours and donor engagement has not reached the level when the Foundation was created.
 - Asked for more donors.
- Patrick Lentz (Visual Arts Department Assistant)
 - Had more students than ever before last year.
 - Discussed current student who has blossomed at ChiArts
 - This is a really special school and everyone here believes in it deeply.
 - To do these things we need concrete support. Budget cuts hurt the sustainability of our ability to do this.
 - Teachers feel this but students more so.
 - ChiArts has to do what they can to keep growing and provide an abundance of opportunities.

End of the year wrap-up from Duffie Adelson.

- Should have pride and admiration for everything accomplished in the last year.
- Appreciation for Tina Boyer Brown's leadership over the last year. New level of stability and momentum to ChiArts.
- Appreciation for Mike Przygoda and Mark Bracken for support.

- Appreciation for Board Members, in particular board officers.
- Appreciation for committees.
- Appreciation for teachers, parents, and students.
- Appreciation for every Board member for participation in the board and school events/performances.
- Acknowledgement of Carlos Azcoitia's tenure on the board.
- Next full board meeting will be in September. Will receive information soon on Board dates.

New Business

None.

7:19pm: Kay Mabie made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Yulinda Rahman. Motion carried.