



Amy Ferg – CAO
Maria Provencher – COO

La Academia: The Partnership Charter School
Board Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2019

Dr. Aida Ceara President
Carlos Graupera Vice-President
Ted Darcus
Kenneth Hammel
Victor Ramos
Colleen Wagner
Ellen Svrcek
Ommie Rivera
Radames Melendez
Susana Cortina
Joseph Morales
Non-Voting Members:
Salina Almanzar SDOL Rep.
Pam McCartney, IU 13 Representative

Board Members Attending: Dr. Aida Ceara, Mr. Ted Darcus, Mr. Radames Melendez, Mr. Victor Ramos, Ms. Ellen Svrcek, Ms. Colleen Wagner,

Board Members Absent: Mr. Carlos Graupera, Kenneth Hammel, Mr. Joe Morales, Ms. Susana Cortina, Mr. Ommie Rivera

Non-Vote Board Members Present: Ms. Pam McCartney, IU 13 Representative

Non-Vote Board Members Absent: Ms. Salina Almanzar, School District of Lancaster Representative

Non-Board Members Present: Ms. Amy Ferg, Ms. Maria Provencher, Ms. Sandy Strunk, Ms. Rosa Graupera, Mr. David Parry, School District of Lancaster Representative, Ms. Sherry Zubeck, Director of Special Education Services, Lancaster Lebanon IU13, Ms. Christy Helm, Mr. Brandon Nye, Ms. Lissette Colon & Ms. Kristi Baker

I. Welcome - Dr. Ceara welcomed everyone.

II. Approval of December 19, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes

The Board meeting minutes were reviewed. However, they could not be approved since there was no quorum as a few Board members arrived late.

III. Special Education Final Report

Ms. Sherry Zubeck, Director of Early Childhood and Special Education Services at the Lancaster Lebanon IU13 highlighted the confidential Special Education Audit that was completed by the IU13 Team, which conducted a systematic review of La Academia’s special education program per the request of the principal. The team applied criteria contained in federal and state education regulations, specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and PA Chapter 14. The scope of the project was to review the operations and effectiveness of the special education services provided to students and their families. The process consisted of reviewing policies and procedures in the areas of special education, school wide positive behavior support, and parent request for independent educational evaluation, as well as review of student files and professional development opportunities. Recommendations for improvement included the following areas: supervision and oversight of special education, special education staffing, accountability measures established in special education, special education student performance and professional development.

In conclusion, the special education review is a guide for administration and staff to create policies and written procedures to meet the needs of special education students in their school and establish compliance with federal and state regulations. In order for La Academia Partnership Charter School to successfully improve programs and services to students with disabilities, next steps and specific action plans need to be concrete and reviewed quarterly to ensure the plan is completed with fidelity.

A discussion followed Ms. Zubeck's review. She stated that a similar review was conducted six years ago at La Academia and the school did reasonably well when there were only 20 students. However, there are now 43 special education students and things have changed significantly. She highly recommended that La Academia hire a part time Special Education Administrator, which the school is following up with. It was noted that creation of this new position was discussed at the January 15th Finance Committee meeting. Dr. Ceara stated that, "We are moving forward to meet the needs of our students and their families and will do all that we can to provide the best services possible."

IV. President Report

Dr. Ceara stated that, "All personnel issues have been resolved. We are continuing the work of the school and are moving forward to accomplish the mission and vision of the school." She also stated that she is meeting with seniors to do career exploration and that it has been very interesting.

V. CAO/COO Report

Mrs. Ferg and Ms. Provencher shared their report and highlighted the following:

1. Current enrollment is 213 and four more students are starting on 1/24/19.
They are starting to track when and why students leave.
2. Staffing:
 - * There are currently 2 staff vacancies – MS Science and Special Education.
 - * There are 2 upcoming staff vacancies: Art (1/30) and Spanish (2/1).
 - * A new Art teacher starts on 2/1.
 - * A Behavior Support Assistant started on 1/21.
 - * Interviews are being held for a Special Education Coordinator, Paraeducators and substitute teachers
3. Comprehensive School Improvement
 - * Surveys will be conducted for staff, students and parents and focus groups for staff and students.
 - * A Steering Committee which includes Ms. Ferg, Ms. Provencher & Ms. Strunk will be held on 1/29/19 from 3:00 – 5:00 PM. Ms. Ferg asked for Board representation as well.
4. Facilities – Approval has been given to replace the oven in the cafeteria.
5. LAPCS Esports Team will be receiving a \$3,000 grant for team materials from the Emerald Foundation in Lancaster at an awards ceremony today.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. Finance/Facilities** –Mr. Ramos gave the report. He stated that we expect a year end revenue over expenses of \$50,000. Mr. Ramos reviewed made the following motions as discussed at the 1/16 Finance Committee meeting:

Motion 1 – The Finance Committee moved, seconded and approved to present a policy to the Board for review approval for management to bring to the Finance Committee approval for any one item purchase of \$5,000 or more for approval and any one item purchase of \$10,000 or more will need both finance and board approval.

Motion 2 – The Finance committee moved, seconded and approved for management to replace and/or repair the oven at their discretion.

Mr. Ramos moved that Motions 1 & 2 as stated above be approved as presented. Mr. Darcus seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

B. Personnel – Mr. Melendez gave the following report:

1. Student and Staff Handbooks are being revised.
2. Bilingual teachers are being recruited. Connections are being made with the PA Department of Labor along with the University of Puerto Rico.
3. He is creating an organizational chart to delineate lines of organizational reporting. He will finalize the chart and send it to the Board for review and approval at the 2/27 Board meeting.
4. National search committee for a permanent Chief Academic Officer – Mr. Melendez & Ms. Wagner will co-chair this ad hoc committee. The committee will include Mr. Melendez, Ms. Wagner, Dr. Ceara, Mr. Graupera, Mr. Morales, a representative from Samueli Academy, a student and parent representative. The goal is to have the new CAO in place by June 30, 2019.
 - Ms. McCartney stated that the IU13 does national searches and she offered their assistance.
 - Ms. Strunk stated that the Steinman Foundation will cover the cost of the search up to \$10,000.

5. Development/Public Relations/Communications

Ms. Svrcek highlighted key Development & PR/Communications activities including:

- EITC funds continued to be solicited from past and new donors as well. Ms. Baker & Mr. Graupera are following up with key contacts.
- The annual appeal generated \$570.
- La Academia's website needs to be redone. Request for Proposals (RFPs) have been sent out with a proposal due date of 1/25/19. The website will be done in both English and Spanish. The RFPs will also include rebranding ideas as we are in the process of tweaking our new logo to finalize the colors as we will need new signage for the school, uniforms, collateral materials, etc. It was also noted that different groups at La Academia such as the Esports team, Urban Drummers, etc. want their own logo so all of this must be coordinated together.
- Student recruitment – 2,500 door hangers have been designed and printed for promoting student enrollment.
- The block party which was tentatively set for May 9th with a rain date of May 10th, however it was noted that the school prom is May 10th. A recommendation was made to move the block party to May 23 with a rain date of May 24th. Just to note; SACA's Fiesta is May 16th.

- 6. Governance** – Ms. Wagner has nominated Mr. Chris Boyd for consideration to the Board of Directors and shared a video that he created. His nomination will be taken up for a vote at the 2/27 Board meeting.

7. Old Business/New Business

Dr. Ceara encouraged everyone to attend an upcoming fundraiser for La Academia: The Willie Marble Experience to be held on Thursday, February 7th at 8 PM at Tellus 360. The cost is a donation of \$10 or more. All are welcome. Ms. Baker will share the flyer with staff and all those on our master contact list.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Baker, Development Manager