



APPROVED 05/20/2020

**Oklahoma Connections Academy
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT**

**Held via teleconference due to State Precautions regarding Public Health and Safety
During COVID-19 Pandemic:**

1(800) 747-5150; 148-8429#

John Tidwell, Board Chair: Via Teleconference
Charlie Daniels, Board Vice President/Secretary: Via Teleconference
Aubrey Lakey, Board Treasurer/Board Clerk: Via Teleconference
Bob Sullivan, Board Member: Via Teleconference
Mike Lapolla, Board Member: Via Teleconference

I. Call to Order

Mr. Tidwell called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m., when all participants were present and able to hear each other.

II. Statement of Compliance with the Open Meeting Act

Mr. Tidwell confirmed the Board Meeting Agenda had been posted in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

III. Roll Call

Board Members Present: John Tidwell, Bob Sullivan, Charlie Daniels, Aubrey Lakey, and Michael Lapolla (via phone);

Guests: Melissa Gregory, School Leader; Rebecca James, Cheryl Puryear, Neva Johnson, Donna Hogan, and Jennifer Dewer, School staff; Brandon Brandt, Sanders, Bledsoe and Hewett CPA LLP; Jolie Rotar, Kristie Clements, Bryce Adams, Kristin DeGross, and Gary Corkran, OBL staff (via phone).

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

V. Routine Business

a. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Tidwell asked the Board to review the Agenda distributed prior to the meeting. He asked whether the Board requested any changes be made to the Agenda. There being no changes requested, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the March 25, 2020 Oklahoma Connections Academy Board of Directors Special Meeting, as presented, is hereby approved.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

VI. Action Items

a. Ratification of Board Counsel Engagement

Mr. Tidwell reviewed the recent engagement of Jones, Gotcher, and Bogan, PC as Board Counsel. He highlighted terms of the engagement, including scope of services and estimated costs, and further advised that the engagement letter had been signed and submitted for the firm to begin review of the school's anticipated renewal Statement of Agreement with Online & Blended Learning. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that Board Counsel engagement, as discussed, is hereby ratified.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Oklahoma Code §25 O.S. 307 – Confidential communications between a public body and its attorney concerning a pending investigation, claim, or action if the public body, with the advice of its attorney, determines that disclosure will seriously impair the ability of the public body to process the claim or conduct a pending investigation, litigation, or proceeding in the public interest

The Board advised of their intent to discuss this item later in the meeting.

VIII. Approval of Action(s) Necessary Based on Executive Session

This item was not discussed.

IX. Audit Committee, Committee of the Entire Board

a. Review and Acceptance of Audit Report for the 2018-2019 School Year

The Board advised of their intent to discuss this item when a member of the audit firm was able to join the meeting.

b. Approval of Contract for Audit of Public Schools and Audit Firm Engagement for the 2019-2020 School Year

This item was not discussed.

X. Oral Reports

a. Principal's Report

Ms. Gregory reviewed the Monthly School Report data with the Board.

i. Update on School Response to Covid-19 Public Health Situation

Ms. Gregory reviewed the school's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. She advised that due to state mandates, the school was currently not in operation. Ms. Gregory further discussed the recent decision by the State Board of Education to allow virtual schools within the state to reopen, pending the submission of various assurances regarding distance learning.

Additionally, Ms. Gregory advised that standardized testing had been cancelled by state mandate, and noted that she would provide further information as it becomes available.

ii. Update on Graduation Plans and End of Year Activities

Ms. Gregory advised the Board of the school's planning for the upcoming high school graduation ceremony on May 17, 2020, and advised that additional information would be made available as the school revises plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

iii. Update on Winter Leadership Retreat

Ms. Gregory advised of her recent attendance at the Winter Leadership Retreat, sponsored by OBL, and discussed the networking opportunities available with school leaders of partnering virtual schools. She further noted that the Summer Leadership Retreat was scheduled to be held virtually in June.

iv. Update on Board Information Requests

Ms. Gregory provided the Board with an update on Board information requests from previous meetings. She discussed students at the school who were currently enrolled in courses at career technical institutions, as well as students in concurrent enrollment programs through local community colleges.

v. Update on Staff Training Efforts

Ms. Gregory introduced Ms. Hogan to the Board, who provided an update on the Math Excel program, as discussed at a previous meeting.

i. Oklahoma Excellence Program

Ms. Hogan reviewed the staff's work with the state to ensure proper programming at the school level, with the goal of increasing mathematics performance in regards to mathematical reasoning and justifications.

Ms. Gregory provided additional information regarding the school's current work to secure mobile hot spots for students in need of Internet connectivity, and advised of the grants currently available through T-Mobile. She discussed the anticipated need for Internet connectivity to rise for various student populations as the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic widens.

The Board further discussed the timeline for the school's anticipated re-opening, as well as potential communications with the State Department of Education and the public regarding the school's preparedness to assist the community as many shift to a virtual learning model.

[Ms. Hogan left the meeting at 4:48 p.m.]

b. Financial Report

Mr. Corkran reviewed the financial materials included in the Board materials in detail, highlighting the budget and forecasting areas of the financial statements. He further reviewed the revenue and expense statements and discussed specific line items of interest with the Board. The Board discussed the potential budgetary impacts anticipated to be forthcoming due to the cancellation of state testing and student activities for the foreseeable future.

i. Exam Proctoring Update

Mr. Corkran presented this item to the Board. He reviewed the school's 2019 expenses for state testing, including facilities rentals and testing/technology fees. Mr. Corkran further discussed the planned costs for the 2020 testing season, as well as the anticipated savings due to state testing cancellations. Ms. Gregory advised that further information regarding the school's plans for the upcoming school year would be presented at the Board's next meeting.

Audit Committee, Committee of the Entire Board

The Board advised of their intent to review the Audit Report at this time.

a. Review and Acceptance of Audit Report for the 2018-2019 School Year

Mr. Corkran provided a brief review of the school's audit report.

[Mr. Brandt joined the meeting at 5:09 p.m.]

Mr. Corkran introduced Mr. Brandt, who further presented this item to the Board. He reviewed the audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, as included in the Board materials. Mr. Brandt highlighted key aspects of the report, and related to the Board that the audit firm indicated an adverse opinion with no material findings; he advised that the report was the best result the school can achieve.

He further advised that due to the accounting style required by the Department of Education, all public schools in the state receive an adverse opinion as prescribed by governmental auditing standards. Mr. Brandt discussed that the school also received an unqualified opinion, which is the basis of accounting required by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Board members discussed the audit report, and discussed audit processes in detail with Mr. Brandt. There being no additional discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, as presented, is hereby accepted.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Contract for Audit of Public Schools and Audit Firm Engagement for the 2019-2020 School Year

The Board discussed the proposed contract with Sanders, Bledsoe & Hewett, and advised of their intent to table the item, pending additional discussion with the firm regarding the audit processes currently used within the state of Oklahoma.

This item was tabled.

[Mr. Brandt left the meeting at 5:24 p.m.]

c. POBL Products, Services, and Initiatives Update

Mr. Adams reviewed details within the Pearson Online & Blended Learning's (OBL) 2020-2021 Products, Services and Initiatives memo, as included in the Board materials. He reviewed upcoming program enhancements, planned product roll-outs, and specific initiatives that are high on the priority list of OBL for

deployment to the school both within the next school year, and beyond. Mr. Adams further detailed curriculum changes and alignment initiatives, including all the advantages of utilizing Polaris® for curriculum development and improving the student experience. He reviewed the anticipated timeline for the next generation of the school's learning management system to be available, and highlighted specific enhancements being made to the current platform, resulting largely from what's received positive feedback in beta testing. Board members expressed satisfaction with OBL's ongoing dedication to the school's success, and thanked Mr. Adams for the detailed update.

XI. Consent Items

Mr. Tidwell asked the Board members whether there were any items from the Consent Items that they wished to have moved to Action Items for discussion, or tabled. Ms. Gregory provided a brief review of the revisions included within Consent Item (d) Approval of Revision(s) to the 2019-2020 School Year State Specific School Handbook: General Revisions. There being no changes made and no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the January 15, 2020 Regular Board Meeting;
- b. Approval of Staffing Report;
- c. Approval of Pearson Online & Blended Learning Invoices for January and February;
- d. Approval of Revision(s) to the 2019-2020 School Year State Specific School Handbook: General Revisions;
- e. Approval of Revision(s) to the 2020-2021 School Year State Specific School Handbook: Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers;
- f. Approval of School Calendar for the 2020-2021 School Year;
- g. Approval of Staff Compensation Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year;
- h. Approval of Revision(s) to Employee Handbook;
- i. Approval of Board President as Board Designee to Approve Summer Staffing Decisions for the 2020-2021 School Year; and
- j. Approval of Revised Board Policies: Fiscal Controls Policy and Board Delegation Policy; are hereby approved.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

XII. Action Items

- a. Consideration of Renewal of Statement of Agreement with Pearson Online & Blended Learning

Mr. Adams advised that Board Counsel was currently reviewing all Statement of Agreement documentation, and requested that this item be tabled to a future meeting.

The Board tabled this item.

Board members held additional discussion on recent legislative activities in Oklahoma, which may impact the school.

- b. Consideration of School-Funded Summer School Scholarship Offering to Students

Ms. Gregory presented this item to the Board. She reviewed the need of various students to enroll in summer school courses in order to remain in a cohort of their peers. Mr. Adams discussed the Deficit Protection Credit offered to the school through OBL, and advised that the programmatic offerings would not affect the school's budget. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the school-funded summer school scholarship offering to students, as presented, is hereby approved.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

c. Consideration of Service Agreements for the 2020-2021 School Year with Municipal Accounting Systems, INC for Software Services and Student Information Services Systems

Mr. Corkran presented the Service Agreements to the Board. He reviewed the services to be provided, and the background to the school using this particular provider. Ms. Gregory further indicated that the costs to the school are similar from the current school year to the proposed for next year. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Service Agreements for the 2020-2021 School Year with Municipal Accounting Systems, INC for Software Services and Student Information Services, as presented, are hereby approved.

A roll call vote was conducted; the motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Information Items

a. State Account Relations (STAR) Update

Mr. Adams advised the Board of the recent renaming of his department to STAR (State Account Relations); he related that the support of STAR would remain the same to the Board and school. He further provided an update on the recent legislative activities in Oklahoma, which may impact the school.

b. Partner School Leadership Team Update

Ms. Clements presented to the Board on behalf of Online & Blended Learning's (OBL) School Leadership Team. She thanked Ms. Gregory for her leadership at the school during an unprecedented time in the nation's history, and additionally thanked the Board for their advocacy of virtual learning. Ms. Clements discussed the webinars provided by OBL regarding virtual learning for general and special education, and advised that the resources are available on Pearson's website for public consumption.

c. Outreach Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

Ms. Rotar presented this item to the Board. She reviewed the school's proposed Outreach Plan for the upcoming school year, as included in the Board materials. Ms. Rotar highlighted current and projected enrollment numbers, as well as planned activities for student recruitment. Board members had discussion on the outreach plans and specific activities.

d. Board Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year

Ms. DeGross discussed the planning for the 2020-2021 school year that POBL has been working on with the school.

i. Board Support Update

Ms. DeGross reviewed the current support personnel provided to the Board through OBL.

ii. Proposed Meeting Schedule

The Board confirmed their support of maintaining the current meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. Ms. DeGroff advised that the consideration of the Board meeting schedule for the 2020-2021 school year will be included on the June Annual Meeting agenda.

iii. Board Composition

Ms. DeGroff discussed with the Board the current composition, including board member terms that would be up at this year's annual meeting, and encouraged Board members to discuss their intentions regarding terms and renewal with the Board Chair.

XIV. Extended Public Comment (limited to agenda items only)

The Board advised that an Executive Session was not necessary at this time.

XV. Adjournment and Confirmation of Next Meeting Date – May 20, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT

The Board confirmed the next Board Meeting is to be held on May 20, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT. The Board, being at the end of its agenda, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the next meeting to be held on May 20, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by



Name: Kristin DeGroff
Board Minute Clerk

Approved by



Name: John Tidwell
Board President