

FINAL APPROVED BY UCCS BOARD MAY 11, 2023

Minutes
March 14, 2023 Regular Meeting
UChicago Charter School Board of Directors

March 14, 2023 at 5:00 pm
In-Person

Attendees

Board of Directors Members attending: D. Abebe (presiding), T. Island-Childress, K. Callow-Wright, MF. McCourt, P. Ziegler

Board of Directors Members absent: D. Gorman-Smith

Also in attendance: UCCS Staff (D. Gordon, E. Hughes, T. Pajakowski, C. Scott, A. Sergeant,) and UEI staff (A. Hull, U. Mardyla)

- I. **Welcome:** President Abebe welcomed participants and reminded them that the Board had last met on December 1 of 2022. He said that he would share details later in this meeting about the Chicago Board of Education (CBOE) Charter School Renewal meeting that D. Gorman-Smith and he attended.
- II. **Approval of December 1, 2022 Minutes of UCCS Regular Board of Directors Meeting:** D. Abebe asked for a motion to approve the minutes, K. Callow-Wright made the motion, and P. Ziegler seconded the motion. Approved by all.
- III. **Public Participation:** no participants signed up for public comment.
- IV. **CEO's Report**
 - a. Charter Renewal: per T. Island-Childress, our renewal application was approved for 3 years with contingencies. We reached all academic and financial requirements but we did not reach these operational requirements: teacher licensure, lottery deadlines, and Woodlawn facilities. No schools in our cohort of 15 charters received more than a 3-year renewal. We did not know the metrics of the other schools in our cohort. About teacher licensures, she is meeting with Operations Managers to find out who is not licensed, why, and how we can help. Going forward, we will only hire teachers who are already certified. M.F. McCourt asked about the process of teacher certification and A. Sergeant responded it depends on the teacher's educational background. D. Abebe shared that he was informed that contract schools received more than 3 years because they provide specific services Chicago Public Schools (CPS) so it would be unusual not to renew their contracts. Per A. Sergeant, we are offering our math and science teachers the opportunity to obtain licensure via the Relay program. After these teachers complete the program, we ask them for a 3-year teaching commitment. Regarding the Lottery, we were unaware that we did not meet these requirements and the CBOE gave us different due dates. Per C. Scott, we will submit our data well before the deadlines in the future. Per T. Island-Childress, the CBOE held onto their report about our Woodlawn facilities for a year and then sent us the report 3 days before D. Abebe and D. Gorman-Smith attended the renewal meeting at the CBOE. We are now addressing all the issues listed in the report. Per A. Sergeant, we hired a Special Educator (SPED), started having a SPED talk at every Directors meeting, and our case managers now have higher accountability implemented by E. Oros. We have reduced our disciplinary action by more than 50%, M.F. McCourt inquired how we accomplished that reduction, and A. Sergeant responded that we have implemented restorative practices and we no longer suspend students in Pre-K through 2nd grade. Also, UCCS leadership is meeting with each campus team every other month on action steps pertaining to Renewal. Per D. Abebe, we have a 6-12 grade model but most schools in CPS are K-8 so sometimes

that works to our advantage and sometimes not. The UCCS Board must approve any expulsion but suspensions only need the approval of T. Island-Childress, A. Sergeant, and D. Gordon.

- b. Enrollment Updates / Strategies: per C. Scott our current student enrollment figures are 316 for NKO, 474 for DON, 228 for Woodlawn Middle School, and 333 for Woodlawn High School for a total of 1351. Our projected total capacity enrollment for next year (2023-2024) is 1525 with NKO at 355, DON at 540, Woodlawn Middle at 270, and Woodlawn High School at 360. Key dates: by March 15 families must confirm that they intend their child to return to UCCS and on March 23 we have our lottery for all grades except for 9th grade which is done through GoCPS. Per U. Mardyla, we have a deficit in the budget because NKO hired 3 more SPED people to support more diverse learners there and we received money from CPS based on last year's student numbers of diverse learners. To recruit students for the next academic year, C. Scott used radio ads, especially since we had lower numbers at DON, and reached out to our partners Ounce of Prevention and EduCare which are Pre-K organizations that feed their students into our Kindergarten. K. Callow-Wright suggested that we ask the university to post about UCCS accepting applications on their social media platforms and D. Abebe will provide T. Island-Childress with a university member's email address who can help in this regard.

- V. **FY23 Mid-Year Budget to Actuals**: per U. Mardyla, we expect to break even despite a loss assumed due to SPED expenses at NKO. About possible funds for facility work, we might receive \$400 per students from the State of Illinois. If we do, we would receive it this month, have to spend it by June 30, and might spend it to paint NKO which will cost \$100,00 but she does not know if this type of work is allowed. She did not include these funds in the budget shared at this meeting because these funds are not guaranteed. We are spending less on regular teachers' salaries because we have fewer of these teachers but more on substitute teachers. Across the nation, schools are having difficulty finding teachers so we are not an exception.

- VI. **Data Dashboard**: Per T. Pajakowski our campus attendance year-to-date numbers are 91.5% for NKO, 91.3% for DON, 91.3% for Woodlawn Middle, and 86.5% for Woodlawn High School. Our campus GPAs for the 1st semester are 3.3 for NKO, 3.2 for DON, 2.8 for Woodlawn Middle, and 2.7 for Woodlawn High School.

VII. **New Business/Updates**

- a. Student Code of Conduct: Board Chair reviewed and signed.
- b. Bullying Policy for ISBE: we approved the policy at the last meeting, submitted to ISBE, it is now in pending approval status, and only the year has been updated from 2020 to 2022. ISBE now requires us, and we are voting today, that we inform our parents, students, and new hires. It was in our handbook but ISBE did not know whether we were sharing it properly. All agreed.
- c. Key dates per D. Gordon: Middle School graduation June 12 at the Logan Center; High School graduation June 5 at Rockefeller Chapel; Staff Appreciation Week May 1-5

- VIII. **Adjourn**: 6:14 pm.