

FINAL APPROVED BY UCCS BOARD JANUARY 25, 2024

Minutes
November 9, 2023 Regular Meeting
UChicago Charter School Board of Directors
November 9 at 4:58 p.m.
In-Person

Attendees

Board of Directors Members attending in person: D. Abebe (presiding), D. Gorman-Smith, C. Mitchell, K.Y. Lee, P. Ziegler

Also in attendance: UCCS Staff (D. Gordon, T. Island-Childress, A. Sergeant, S. Woods) and UEI staff (C. Epstein, A. Hull, U. Mardyla)

- I. **Welcome:** President Abebe welcomed the attendees. He expressed appreciation for the hard work of MF McCourt, a former Board member and CFO of the university. He was happy to introduce two new Board members, C. Mitchell and KY Lee. C. Mitchell is a former state legislator and currently Vice-President for Civic Engagement at the university. KY Lee is the former Provost and currently Executive Vice-President of Strategic Initiatives at the university. Later in the meeting, T. Island Childress will share good news about philanthropy.
- II. **Minutes:** D. Abebe asked for a motion to approve September 7, 2023 UCCS Regular Board of Directors Meeting minutes, D. Gorman-Smith made a motion, P. Ziegler seconded, and all approved.
- III. **Public Participation at 6:20-6:25:** Michelle Bonsu stated that she currently has child at NKO. She is very disturbed as a parent by the data presented at this meeting. She asked how can parents get involved? How can the FTCO get involved? Her 2 oldest graduated from NKO, one now in 10th and other in 11th without so many changes at NKO. However, her youngest has seen 2 directors and multiple teachers leave between 3rd and 4th grade so how can we keep our good teachers? His teacher left then the TA who replaced the teacher left. D. Abebe thanked Ms. Bonsu for taking the time to attend the meeting and share her experiences with the Board. T. Island Childress stated that she can share the data dashboard at FTCO meetings and share techniques to help students at home.
- IV. **CEO's Report:**

T. Island Childress welcomed the 2 new Board members and will give them swag bags after the meeting. She reminded members of our mission. Several students will soon speak about their outdoor experience. She restated our network priorities: data driven culture, constructive and aspirational environment, MTSS, and partnerships.

 - a. UCW Yellowstone Presentation by D. Gordon and UCW Students: D. Gordon gave a brief introduction about the students' trip to Yellowstone National Park. 12 students went and four will speak today. He thanked the donors, who could not attend today, for paying the entire cost of \$35,000. All 4 students mentioned that they had to rise early because animals rise early. They went on a hike, saw Old Faithful, spent a day in the park, saw a black wolf and buffalos, visited the Grand Canyon, started a campfire with someone's help, and witnessed the beauty of the stars (because there was no light like in Chicago).

- b. Enrollment Report by T. Island Childress and A. Sergeant: total 1401 which is 65 over budgeted amount with NKO at 303; DON at 498; MS at 260; and HS at 340. DONKO and MS are offering seats from waitlist as space permits. MS admissions is closed. Recruitment already underway: 2024-25 applications became available late September. D. Abebe asked if the University Communications office can help with our recruitment efforts. T. Island Childress that we are already working with them.
- c. ISBE Accountability Measures by T. Island Childress and A. Sergeant
 - i. Data Dashboard

NKO, MS, HS: commendable per ISBE

DON: targeted due to subgroup of students with disabilities. Increase in caseloads for 2023-24. NKO increased from 22 to 35 IEPs; DON from 28 to 39; and UCW from 81 to 89. U. Mardyla stated that we do not receive funds for these increases the year that we experience the increase but rather we receive funds the next year. KY Lee asked if students have enough help and T. Island Childress replied “no”. Also, parents do not always inform UCCS if their child needs help and it takes a while to determine that they need help. A nationwide shortage for SPED teachers exists and we no longer get reimbursed for SPED teachers. We use our own metrics to track our students because ISBE accountability measure given in the fall after the spring tests so by that time too late because new school year has begun.

Example from A. Sergeant about improving student test scores on IAR: sometimes testing item appears on test before taught at UCCS so we are moving our curriculum around (like math at DON) to teach that item before the IAR. Attendance: NKO at 93.5; DON at 94.5; MS at 91.7; and HS at 87.4. NKO and DON have 0 suspended students. D. Abebe informed the new Board members that the Board does not decide on suspensions but they do about expulsions.

- d. Financial Report by A. Hull and U. Mardyla: \$400 million deficit for CPS next year per Aaron because ESSER ending. We received a clean audit. U. Mardyla stated that we had \$273,000 in profits for Operations last year but a loss of \$617,000 in restricted funds due to endowment payouts exceeding investment income. We had high security costs and high substitute costs. Total private support: \$3.5 million (2.5 from university + 1.0 recurring endowment payouts). 12% increase in facility revenue for UCW with higher costs expected. Paid enrollments decreased by 27 students as compared to FY23 with FY23 enrolment payments based on FY22 enrollment levels. For FY25: ESSER funds will be eliminated; 4% increase in health insurance costs; 4% increase in annual raises; and 5% increase in non-payroll expenses. D. Abebe asked if we are assuming private support will remain the same next year? U. Mardyla responded that it depends on how we move funds around. A. Hull stated that 1st quarter financials appear in the Board Book. UCCS still has open positions.
- e. Safety and Security by T. Island Childress and C. Epstein. T. Island Childress stated that our new weapons detection system detected one weapon. Parents and staff have raised safety issues about Wadsworth migrants. C. Epstein thanked C. Mitchell and his team for their assistance. She met with 2 representatives of the Mayor’s office with D. Gordon and T. Island Childress raising quality of life issues. We have made some progress despite push back. For example, the trash pick-up did improve. She learned that the city plans to continue housing the migrants at Wadsworth for a second year from this December and from the police commanders what they can and cannot do. D. Gordon agreed with C. Epstein that trash pick-up had improved but had reverted backwards a bit. He stated that students are very excited about construction of the

athletic field. D. Gorman Smith stated that Krystal McDoom of University Facilities is helping us tremendously in the field construction. T. Island Childress shared the good news to which D. Abebe referred earlier: UCCS secured a STEM grant of \$600,000 grant. We also received a gift for the College Graduation Office as part of a bequest. A. Sergeant shared that later this month UCCS will meet with Argonne faculty members to discuss opportunities with them.

V. New Business by D. Abebe: none.

VI. Adjourned at 6:25 pm.