

**FOLK ARTS-CULTURAL TREASURES CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

1023 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Via Zoom Meeting (Zoom Invitation posted on website)

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

**Not Present:** Kenzo Sung

**Staff Present:** David Brown, Heather Green, Pheng Lim, Ellen Somekawa

**I. Call to Order:** Selina Morales

**II. Principal's Report** Pheng Lim

- Focus has been on the reopening [sharing a video clip]
  - Successful as an opportunity for students to reconnect
  - An opportunity for us to learn new things about how to operate during the pandemic
  - It took all of FACTS staff to reopen; every member of our staff worked together to make the goal happen
- Time for parents who want to share about how in person went for their children
  - Kids wanted more in person days; had a good time
  - The best day ever; wish to go every day. Glad to meet teacher in person and make new friends
  - Because of the cohort and who chose to go in person, broadening the circle of friends and doing different activities
- Xu, Ellen, and Pheng were guest speakers in Social Studies
  - Xu shared a powerful message on the importance of listening to each others' stories
- Black Heritage Day celebration was in March
  - Guest speakers included a program of stories, music, drum and dance by Oni Lasana Productions, in consultation with Keepers of the Culture for lower grades.
  - Kelly Starling Lyons, author of "*Sing a Song: How Lift Every Voice and Sing Inspired Generations*" did an author talk and also donated copies of the book to our second and third graders.
  - Ayesha Imani from Sankofa Charter School made a powerful presentation to the upper grades, including videos made by Sankofa students.

**Executive Director's Report**

Ellen Somekawa

- Learning about COVID contact tracing and positive cases
- Having a second nurse during in person days is a big help

**III. Approval of the Minutes**

**1. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2021.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Alan Phan

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Abstain: Heather Davis-Jones

#### **IV. Finance Report**

Finance Committee Report

Neeta Patel

Not many changes since last time we met. We will end the year with a small surplus. FACTS is saving money for rainy days that we are pretty sure are coming. We do have some flexibility to think about priorities and needs for next year.

Report on the Financial Statements

David Brown

Discussion:

- Will FACTS be getting stimulus funding like the School District?
  - Yes, FACTS is getting our own allocations. There are three rounds of COVID relief funding.
  - There is little guidance as of yet and the forms we need to fill out have not yet been released.

**2. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2021.

Moved: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Xu Lin

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

#### **V. Presentation of the Draft 2021-22 Budget**

Presentation of the Draft Budget

David Brown

This is a draft budget for discussion purposes. The Board will need to approve the 2021-22 budget at the May or June meeting. We need to submit our budget to the state by June 30.

Bottom Line: In 2021-22 we are budgeting for a surplus. Often what drives our surplus is that we don't know what the per pupil allocation from the SDP will be; we base our budget on a guess. But for the past few years, the per pupil allocation has been going up more than the 1% that we budget for. Our cash reserve is now healthy with about 4 months of operating expenses. Our draft budget assumes that the per pupil allocation from the SDP will remain flat (assuming hard times coming up). In 2023-24, our projections show us starting to go into the red.

Budget Process: David and Ellen meet to talk about the big picture. David talks with Pheng about instructional needs, meets with the departments and gathers all of the needs from the departments so the budget is in tune with where we want to go educationally. We start by putting in the wish lists, and then prioritize.

#### Questions and concerns from the Board

- What was the per pupil this year for SPED and regular ed? Is there additional allocation for Stars students?
  - There is no additional funding to support the needs of ELD students with the exception of a small Title III allocation which doesn't even cover our costs of translation.
  - FACTS and AAU have at times advocated on this issue. There were increases in the new state funding formula, however this funding formula only applies to new funding, so the vast majority of state funding is not guided by this or any other funding formula. And although the funding formula directed increased funding to districts with a large number of students in poverty and ELD students, the funding formula does not make the funding follow the students. This means that the School District may receive more funding due to its high percentage of ELD students, but this does not mean that the SDP allocates increased funding to schools serving a higher number of ELD students.
- Does the budget include funding for students whose needs we can't meet at FACTS, who may need an Alternate Private School Placement?
  - Every student of our is our responsibility, but if FACTS cannot meet the needs of the student because they may benefit from a more therapeutic setting, then we may need to place them in a private school setting. Then we pay their tuition.
  - Yes, we budget for two students in APS. This is the most that have been in APS at any one time
- Local funding: What is the cause of the big drop in funding?
  - Local funding could include school fundraisers like the 5K, but also grant funding. We didn't get the Math Grant this year.
- Why is salary decreasing between 2021-22 and 2022-23?
  - Will look into it.
  - Why are benefits going up while salary is going down?
- How math grant funding impacts program planning for next year:
  - A lot of questions about summer programs, after school programs, etc. will be part of the discussion of ESSER III.
- We will have the opportunity to amend the budget when we get new information such as our per pupil allocation. We typically approve a budget in May or June and find out what the per pupil allocation is after that. In the fall we may revise the budget and have the board approve it in the fall.
- Curious about the folk arts program.
  - We have to evaluate the modality of teaching folk arts; how has it been going virtually.
  - The ensembles program is challenging because it brings together students from different grades and clusters
- We are 130% over on IT budget; are these one time expenses? How will we budget for the future?

- Introduction of technology into the school is new and has been covered by COVID relief grants.
- Admin will get a report on CB damage and replacement costs. We don't even have a year of experience. For the next three years this will be covered by stimulus grants, but we have to figure out how we will stand on our own.
- More than the devices, it's the cost of bigger IT staffing, upgrading infrastructure, subscriptions, and increased security needs

## VI. Stars Program

In light of the Draft Budget just presented, does the Board want to reconsider the decision to put the Stars Program on pause?

- We had talked about revisiting our decision to put a pause on the Stars program
- Possibilities of changes to the refugee program
- How many students do we need to break even?
  - 10 to 12
- Recruitment? Are programs like Migrant Ed referring to us?
  - We have made outreach efforts but other than HIAS, organizations have been making referrals to us. This includes community groups like Migrant Ed, other refugee organizations, and other charter schools, all of whom we reached out to.
- This is hiring season
- Partly budget risk and also mission
  - We didn't fill all of our vacant slots in 6,7,8. Stars students would fill in those grades.
- Could we use stimulus funding to see us through this year of under enrollment?
  - Likely yes. We are still waiting for guidance on ESSERIII.
- Having the committee to steward the program will be important.
- The connection between our mission, our strength and its impact on Philadelphia would make this a worthy investment.

**3. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the continuation of the Stars Program.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

## VII. Submission of the ESSER II Grant Application

**4. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the submission of an application for ESSER II funding in the amount of \$1,719,337.

[Note: the final grant award will be based on revised student enrollment and Titles funding]

Moved: Alan Phan

Seconded: Thierry Saintine

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

### **VIII. Committee Reports**

- Development Committee

Alan/Allaire

The Committee is in the process of expanding the committee. A friend of FACTS at Price Waterhouse Cooper is running a workplace fundraising program. Alan is going to be doing a workplace fundraising program at CHUBB in support of Asian Heritage Month.

- Policy Committee

Pooja

The Committee is discussing FACTS filtering and monitoring of school issued devices. How active do we want to be in monitoring internet content in student and staff users. It raises philosophical (respect for privacy and emphasis on teaching students good cyber citizenship skills) as well as liability issues. The target would be to change for the 2021-22 school year.

### **IX. Other Action Items**

**5. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Nyman Associates for the supplemental provision of the services of a nurse in an amount not to exceed \$6,000.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Thierry Saintine

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

### **X. Adjournment**

Moved to Adjourn: Heather Davis-Jones

Seconded: Alan Phan

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth