

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

1023 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123  
Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m.  
Via Zoom Meeting (Zoom Invitation posted on website)

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Pooja Agarwal, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

**Board Members Absent:** Heather Davis-Jones, Xu Lin, Kenzo Sung

**Staff Present:** David Brown, Heather Green

**Public Present:** Liu Xiong Biao, Ray Huang, Lizhen Lin, Ride Zhang, Li Zhen Zhuang, Qinghua Lin, Mason Liu, Qiuxian Ou, Yang Hui Li, Jinsil Kim, Saiping Lin, Yangang Zhuang, Haiyan Wu, Mei lin Wang, Zhen Zhang (and 13 other members of the public)

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

**II. Public Comment**

Parent 1: Speaking on behalf of parents (same as email sent earlier): Worried about rising COVID cases and the Delta variant transmission. Want to preserve remote instruction as an option for those with health concerns or transportation issues.

Parent 2: Agree with previous speaker. In FACTS school,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of students are under 12 so we have a major concern. Hybrid mode in the spring was successful, but only half of school was attending in-person days. Risk would double with increased attendance.

Parent 3: Have two children at FACTS. Can FACTS offer online education like we did before? Children under 12 have a hard time practicing social distancing. Online classes had problems, but safety and health should be prioritized.

Parent 4: Want FACTS to offer a hybrid mode for the school year. Have elderly and young at home; worry about the child bringing COVID back to the home.

Parent 5. Request hybrid mode so students can stay home and be safer.

Parent 6: Kids above 12 have a chance for the vaccine, so they could go to school. Only offer the remote option to students under 12. Also 6-8 grade students have more self control and going to school is more critical for them. For younger children, if parents can make sure student focuses they can learn from home. Requests FACTS do a survey of parents.

Parent 7: Parent of young child. Want school to offer online class. Hard for young ones to maintain social distance. Hard even for the parent to make the child keep the mask on. The Delta Variant brings higher risk to younger people.

Parent 8: Parent of a special needs child who can't keep their mask on at school all day.

Parent 9: Want to continue remote learning because it is a safer route. Within school, we don't know who is vaccinated. Even with mandatory masking, it's hard for children to maintain masking. The risk is too high. Reading articles about parents sending children to school who are COVID positive. In person learning is best, but with unknown vaccination status and not knowing who people are in contact with, it is too risky. School is a portal for transmission. Remote learning is stressful on administration, staff, students, and parents. It isn't ideal and the quality does not compare. Trade off is people may get the infection and die versus not risking the infection. Without the remote option, our family will keep our children home regardless of the ramifications. Lucky we can telework at home; other parents have to work. To keep kids alive, remote learning is best.

Parent 10: Suggest school offers an online option. Wants her student to study at home.

Parent 11: Suggests that No. 1 is safety concern, No. 2 is academic achievement concern. Can FACTS offer after school education for people who need it? Would be willing to pay for it.

Parent 12: It is a hard year. Online class is hard. But more concerned about safety. Sixth grade going to seventh grade is an important year. Want optional tutoring. Want child to go to school, but worried about it.

Parent 13: Even students who have been infected and healed can still suffer from long term impacts of COVID.

Parent 14: Recently the news of schools that opened already had outbreaks and many students and teachers were infected. Some teachers died. We are facing the new variant and we don't know what other new variant is coming. In the next three months we are facing a high risk challenge. We are facing unknown post-infection problems that may impact a child's whole life. In own experience, online classes were okay and child was happy with it. Want everyone to work together to overcome the challenges. Safety should be the number one priority.

Parent 15: One person I know lost their hearing forever. Does the school have any protection for teachers and students?

Selina Morales: I want to appreciate the parents who came and spoke tonight. The Board is not in a position to speak to each of you, but we have heard your concerns. You are welcome to stay. This is a public meeting. As a member of the school community and a parent of a FACTS student, I understand the concerns that you raised tonight.

### III. Principal's Report

Pheng Lim

- On September 2 there will be a family meeting where families can learn more about our health and safety plans. Hope that parents here tonight can join on September 2; invitations have gone out. There will be simultaneous interpretation in several languages.
- The FACTS Health and Safety Plan (translated into several languages) was also sent to families' homes for their review. Parents should have already received this year's Welcome Packet with this information.
- Next week teachers and staff will return to prepare for the reopening.
- The Professional Development will be two weeks long. It will include
  - Health and safety training
  - Concurrent teaching will be used if students need to quarantine or isolate
  - Returning to school comes with emotions, so we will be preparing for welcoming students back to school
  - Also Anti-Bias training on racism by Debbie Wei (founding principal)
  - Anti-Bias training on LGBTQ issues by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
  - Restorative Practices in Action: FACTS was selected for training and coaching in Restorative Practices and emphasize student agency in their own learning

### Executive Director's Report

Ellen Somekawa

#### Discussion

- Is there a structure for distancing students in recess? This fall will be different from the spring. This will be discussed during the PD weeks. There will be guidance on what can be done in recess, lunch, etc. We will have to be more creative about what is allowed. We will be bouncing ideas off of teachers as well.
- From hearing parents' concerns, what do we do if a significant percentage of parents don't send their children to school? What will happen to the students? We don't know how representative of parent opinion was of those testifying earlier in the meeting.
- If the students don't attend school and unenroll in FACTS, they would attend other schools to pursue online learning. If they select not to attend FACTS. It will have financial impacts and instructional impacts.
- Pheng: This board will process what families shared. Please give them time to process what they heard.
- There is not a resolution on the agenda about shifting our instructional model. The Board cannot be asked to make such a big decision having just heard from parents.
- Parent: Would a student lose their seat if they don't attend? 2020-21, 2021-22 is a lost year.
  - Admin Response:
    - It's a family decision to keep your child home
    - The law says that if your child does not attend for ten consecutive days, a charter school is to drop them from the school rolls. Also truancy laws would take effect.

- Charter School Law says that once a student enrolls in a different school, they are no longer a FACTS students and would lose their seat at FACTS.
- The resumption of online learning may be possible if a student contracts COVID.

**IV. 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 July 21, 2021.

Moved: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Neeta Patel

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

**2. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2021.

Moved: Thierry Saintine

Seconded: Alan Phan

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Selina Morales, Alan Phan, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Abstained: Neeta Patel

**V. Finance Committee Report**

Finance Committee Report

Neeta Patel

Finance Director Report

David Brown

Appreciation to the Finance Director for the helpful narrative report. The Financial Statements are for the 2020-21 year-end close-out. We ended in the black but would have ended in the black even without COVID relief funding. The larger than normal surplus is due to the ESSER grants. (a third of the surplus was budgeted, a third of the surplus was due to a reduction in expenses from operations due to school closure; a third of the surplus was due to the ESSER funding. One intention of ESSER III funding is to help schools save for coming hard times when COVID impacts are felt and revenues decline). But we lost revenue due to the reduction in the per pupil allocation and a reduction in enrollment. We have a healthy reserve. However moving forward, we expect a drop in per pupil allocation in future years and have uncertainty about the impact of COVID on enrollment. We will constitute an Audit Committee in the fall. We expect a budget revision in the fall.

**3. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the June 30, 2021 Financial Statements

Moved: Thierry Saintine

Seconded: Neeta Patel

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

## VI. COVID-19 Policies:

**4. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the following masking policy:

Due to the increased transmissibility of the Delta Variant and to the rise in COVID-19 spread in the Philadelphia area, masks must be worn by all people (above the age of 2) while inside at FACTS. Individuals working alone in their own offices may remove their masks while in their offices.

### Discussion:

- Voting on these policies feels dismissive of the parent concerns that were raised. Keeping the agenda that we put together prior to hearing parent concerns seems like disregarding parent concerns.
- If we are to vote on these policies, does it preclude discussion of issues that parents raised? [no]
- Need to remind us that teachers are returning next week.
- The Welcome Packet came out and made parents aware of the plan. Parents who were fine with the plan did not show up to the Board Meeting. It doesn't mean that it is a consensus of FACTS parents that remote school should be offered. School starts in a few weeks. The other hundreds of parents who were not at the meeting are assuming that the plan for returning to school is happening.
- The parents who spoke today shared their concerns. They want options. Parents who feel comfortable sending their students to school should be able to, but some are looking for other options. We need to try to honor both. Parents were not advocating for 100% remote learning.
- There is an emotional response to tonight's public comments. Without proper briefing and time to think, I am not prepared to vote on a decision. As a governing body, we don't make policy or determine practices without consultation and advice of Admin Council. There is a need for discussion with the school's leadership team.
- Parent: When we received the packet in the mail two or three weeks ago, I thought that the school might pivot as we get closer to opening as the trends in COVID change. Staying alive is a better decision as a family. Respect other parents' decisions. Kids go to daycare or school when they are sick. Vaccination does not guarantee immunity. Hearing of breakthrough infections.
- We are being asked to approve resolutions that are appropriate to the moment. If we need to pivot, we will continue to have these discussions that we have had for the past year and a half.
- As of now, CDC is recommending that school is in person. As in the past, we will pivot as CDC recommendations change.
- Two parents said that their children would not wear masks. Could we have some procedures to guarantee that students wear masks at all times?
- We need a better understanding of the percentage of parents who feel similarly to those that raised concerns tonight. It doesn't make sense that parents have to choose between their concerns and their student losing their seat. I know that it's August, but don't feel comfortable forcing families to choose.

- This resolution is appropriate no matter what modality of learning we are in. We should have mandatory masking if we are in person, remote, or hybrid.
- The Board had voted to allow unvaccinated staff to go without a mask in the summer. This resolution undoes that earlier resolution. As a staff person, I want to be protected.

Moved: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Neeta Patel

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Alan Phan, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Abstained: Thierry Saintine

**5. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the following COVID-19 vaccination policy.

FACTS has a duty to protect the health and safety of our staff, students and families. In light of the increased transmissibility of the Delta Variant, the rising incidence of COVID-19 in Philadelphia, and the lack of eligibility for COVID-19 vaccines for our students under the age of 12, FACTS is implementing a new COVID-19 vaccine policy. Vaccines have been proven to protect against serious illness from the novel coronavirus, as well as lessen the rates of transmission. Therefore:

- All FACTS employees must show proof of COVID-19 Vaccination or submit to weekly COVID-19 testings.
  - Employees must forward a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination card (front and back) to: nurse@factschool.org during the week of August 23-27 or submit to weekly onsite COVID-19 testings.
- All FACTS Related Services Providers, folk arts educators, work-study students, visiting educators, and vendors regularly working in our school building must show proof of COVID-19 vaccination in order to work in our school.
  - Individuals must forward a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination card (front and back) to: their FACTS supervisor.
- FACTS is putting into place an onsite COVID-19 testing program
  - Employees who are not fully vaccinated must submit to weekly (or more frequent) on site testing.

Discussion:

- Would FACTS be paying for this testing?
  - FACTS is participating in a program with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia that provides us with free testing kits, training, access to a reporting portal, and technical assistance.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Neeta Patel

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

## VII. On-Site COVID-19 Testing

**6. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Education Plus Health to support the operation of a COVID-19 Satellite Testing Program at FACTS.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Alan Phan

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

## VIII. Moving FACTS Bank Accounts

**7. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves of opening bank accounts at WSFS Bank.

**8. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School authorizes Ellen Somekawa, Pheng Lim, David Brown, Selina Morales and Heather Davis-Jones as signatories to all accounts at WSFS Bank.

Discussion:

- We will get to have the services that we had at TD Bank and there are improvements in services as well.
- They will set up each account with its own FDIC insurance limit, unlike what TD Bank was willing to do.

Moved Resolutions #7-8: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Thierry Saintine

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

## IX. Executive Session

Considering the purchase or lease of real property.

## X. Return to Public Session

## XI. Reports

- Development Committee

Alan/Allaire

Virtual 5K; flyers and materials are ready to distribute and the registration is live on the website and on Run the Day. Now is the time to promote the 5K, especially to get sponsors. Some materials are being translated.

Discussion

- Appreciate the new materials, rebranding the sponsor levels, fun
- We will make regular updates for how board fundraising is going with the 5K

- Nominations Committee

Heather/Selina

Have received five strong nominations for Board members. The most ever received in one season. The Committee will be discussing the optimal size of our board and the ideal number of board members we would like to invite. Continue to nominate people; it's important to have a good list of people who can be cultivated and engaged on committees if not the board. Still looking for someone with non-profit finance/school finance experience.

## **XII. Other Action Items**

**9. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves applying for a \$25,000 Price Waterhouse Cooper Reimagine Grant for the purpose of increasing the integration of digital literacy and digital citizenship into FACTS's curricula.

**10. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves applying for a \$45,000 grant from the National Endowment of the Arts for the purpose of strengthening and magnifying our folk arts education program.

**11. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Innovageous in an amount not to exceed \$11,000 for training, planning, and consulting services.

**12. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with A-One Asphalt Paving in an amount not to exceed \$8,000 for the paving of Shamokin Street up to the fenceline.

**13. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Gen3 in an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the installation of two classroom exhaust fans/air purifiers.

**14. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Evosia Wellness in an amount not to exceed \$12,000 for the provision of remote Qigong classes.

**15. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with School Outfitters in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 for the purchase of classroom bookshelves.

**16. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Rugged Protection in an amount not to exceed \$7,000 for the purchase of Chromebook cases.

Moved Resolutions #9-16: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Thierry Saintine

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

## Discussion:

- Parent testimony was moving
- Want a sense of what other parents are thinking
- Need to highlight that we can't do two models. We are one school. I don't know how we do two models.
- It isn't unexpected that families would bring up concerns because there are different levels of risk tolerance and fear in our community and in our country. Vaccination changes the risk of severe illness and death. I haven't heard of any school districts that have opened in hybrid or all remote. We aren't in a financial position to offer multiple models. It wouldn't be right to pivot to an online model because of the concerns of a group of parents. We have gone to lengths to put in place mitigation measures and prepare to pivot to online learning. The school has had a cautious and thoughtful approach. There are other choices for families if they are not comfortable. It isn't that easy for us to offer multiple options.
- There are some schools that have opened virtually in the past few weeks but these are mainly in areas with low vaccination rates.
- Concurrent teaching could be effective. Innovageous says that there has been so much learning that this could be successful. Invite Board members to attend the concurrent teaching training. We could offer options.
- Concerned that concurrent teaching compromises the quality of teaching for everyone. We have said we are following public health guidelines. Our responsibility is to safeguard our standing as a school.
- We have to stick to the plan. We spent a lot of time discussing and preparing. If things change, we will revisit the topic. There has been enough thought and discussion, put effort into making the best decision we could. Know that new guidance could lead us to pivot at any moment. Feel that we have taken parents' concerns into consideration.
- Trying to tease apart my desires as a parent and my responsibilities as a board member. Hard to listen to parents; their concerns resonated. Schools are not being given more choices than parents are. It's important to acknowledge. Would appreciate coming up with criteria for when we might reevaluate this decision. Do we follow CDC guidance period? Or do we have decision points? Guidelines and timelines for when the Board would reconsider our decision.
- Pheng mentioned teachers being comfortable with concurrent model. Concurrent teaching sounded impossible when my spouse was doing it.
  - Our staff are not comfortable with concurrent teaching because they have no experience and have not had training yet.
- If this were a decision, what would the conversation be? Would it be possible to start the year like that?
- If we were to want to offer two options, it would be like running two schools. We would have to delay the start of school. School starts in two weeks. We are running at full speed just to open. The amount of communication that would have to happen with parents; changing all of the busing. There would be enormous ripple effects.
- Reflecting that everyone is working with different sets of data. Hearing points of view grounded in very different sets of data and analysis that I have been grounded in. There were 20+ people at the meeting tonight,

many of whom said they don't want to send their kids to school. It doesn't mean that they all would choose not to come.

- There is a FACTS Chinese WeChat community.

### **XIII. Adjournment**

Moved to Adjourn: Allaire Wohlgemuth

Seconded: Pooja Agarwal

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