

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

Wednesday, September 21, 2022, 6:30 p.m.  
Hybrid: In Person at 1023 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123  
and Via Zoom Meeting (Zoom Invitation posted on website)

**MINUTES**

**Present in Person:** Pooja Agarwal, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Neeta Patel, Allaire Wohlgemuth

**Present via Remote:** Leana Cabral, Nancy Nguyen, Thierry Saintine

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

**Public Present:** Heather Green, Aurelia Bonitatis, Mia Williamson, Sara Mrljak, Gabrielle Wilkinson, Linda Wai, Judy Huynh, Michelle Barton, Lily Cavanagh, Meeka Outlaw

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

Heather Davis-Jones resigned from the Board. She has been the longest currently serving board member. The board expressed appreciation for her service.

**II. Public Comment**

- Heather Green: Homeroom 3rd grade: teachers have asked about the extra hour that FACTS teachers work compared to SDP teachers. It would be a non-monetary form of compensation to reduce teachers' work hours. Added together, FACTS teachers work more than a month of work per year compared to SDP peers. In this time of pandemic hardship and property tax increases, I hope it can be remedied.
- Lily Cavanagh: I'm thinking about the pay scale and salary and would appreciate the transparency of knowing the basis for deciding on the step that faculty start at. What counts in determining years of experience? I question that pre-K teaching does not count.
- Selina Morales: We want people to know that the work of the Salary Scale Committee is ongoing.

**III. Report from the Salary Scale Committee**

Thierry Saintine

We are not at a place to announce any decisions or adjustments, but we are close. David and Ellen have been doing a lot of analysis to help us determine next steps. We are thinking that we will have something more concrete to announce at the next meeting. We have been going through a number of scenarios. We are trying to be careful to keep the school fiscally viable and at the same time recognize and value the work that teachers are doing.

**IV. Principal's Report**

Pheng Lim

- School bus
  - Principal Pheng: Ms. Meeka Outlaw, the parent of a 7th grade student is present. Yesterday two 7th graders were heading home from school. They were assaulted by 6-7 teens at the Fashion District near the entrance to the SEPTA station. There were many bystanders, but most did not help the students. The parents are afraid for their children and want to know if there is a way to mobilize to get the yellow school buses back again.
  - Meeka Outlaw: I have registered to speak at the School District of Philadelphia because of the violence in the city. My son is physically fine, but emotionally he was traumatized. I don't understand why the SDP, knowing the violence that is going on, how they could think that it is good to send more students into this violence. I have a friend that goes to another school and their student of the same grade still has the yellow school bus. I called the SDP and the SDP said that the school has the choice. Why did they say that some schools are still eligible and others not?
  - Selina Morales: As a parent, I'm sending my heart to you and your student. As a board we were all disappointed by the decision of the SDP to take away yellow bus service from FACTS middle school students. I encourage you and am proud to hear that you will be speaking before the SDP. Please let us know where you are at and if there are ways for the school to support you.
  - Neeta Patel: We have empowered our administration to see if there is anything that we can do to support.
  
- Teacher Research and Publication: Teacher Lei had an article published in the *Journal of Folklife Education* about the Tomb Sweeping Festival. From the JFE: *"Using a multiyear vertical curriculum model, this teacher presents the history and traditions of the Tomb Sweeping Festival—清明节 Qing Ming Jie—to engage instructional topics on traditions about death, as well as remembrance, and the worldview values they reinforce."* Teacher Lei was supported in the process by Teacher Linda D.
- K-8 diagnostics for reading and math are going on now
- Folk Arts Program
  - Our folk arts residencies have resumed in person. Residencies are 10 - 12 session experiences taught by a visiting artist and hosted by a classroom teacher (5th and 7th grade Mexican Day of the Dead; 6th grade Liberian storytelling and fables; 4th grade Chinese shadow puppets; 2nd grade West African Dance; 2nd Grade Yoga; 3rd and 4th grade African American Step; K-8 Tibetan Sand Mandala; 8th grade spoken word)
  - Because of scheduling and space issues, we changed our folk arts model this year to have what we call Folk Arts Friday
    - Grades K-2 have Creative Expression Class
    - Grades 3-5 and Stars have Folk Arts Class, a three part rotation so each student gets a third of the year folk arts exposure experience:
      - T. Eric/Art: folk arts class: intro to concepts
      - T. Lindsay/Music: African drumming with Teacher Senfu

- T. Lei/Chinese: Kung Fu/ Lion Dance with Teacher John
    - Grade 6 and Grades 7-8 and Stars have Folk Arts Ensembles, an elective, year long experience: Lion Dance/Kung Fu, Dan Tranh/Vietnamese Zither, Qigong, African Diaspora Drum
- Mid-Autumn Festival: The Faculty Choir performed. The Festival was an extremely successful event, the two block expansion gave it a spacious feel
- New model: Back to School/Open House: October 26 from 3:10 to 4:00.
  - Purpose is for families to tour the school and greet teachers and to gain a visual connection to where and how their child spends their days
  - There will also be many other opportunities for parents to visit the school such as: Publishing parties, Literacy Night, Math Night, Family Folk Arts Night, ELD Family Events, and Special Education Family Events
- Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on October 28th. Will be 100% virtual.

#### **Executive Director's Report**

Ellen Somekawa

- COVID-19 Positive Cases:
  - Staff Training Week: Four positive staff cases
  - From the start of school to the present:
    - 3 staff cases
    - 4 student cases
  - So far we have had no clusters of cases and no evidence of spread within the school
- Easing our COVID strategies has helped us focus on teaching and learning and allows the Principal to be in the classrooms, observing and supporting teachers and students much more frequently
- Staff Vacancies:
  - We are still trying to fill and ELD teacher or teaching assistant position and a building sub position

#### **V. 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 August 17, 2022.

Moved: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Thierry Saintine

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeff Koung, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

Abstained: Xu Lin

#### **VI. Finance Report**

Finance Committee Report

Neeta Patel

Thank you to David for the narrative report. We are early in the 2022-23 School Year. There are no surprises, but there are some adjustments. We expect to present a revised budget in October. We are learning what the expenses are this year. Our student enrollment numbers are fluctuating. We are below capacity and the per pupil amount was lower for this year, so our operating revenue is slightly reduced. ESSER funding is off setting these deficits, but we do have a structural deficit. Costs of everything are rising, but we are early into the year. We will have more to project in October. We are in a good position. We have a healthy reserve. In the midst of getting the school up and running, we were also in the middle of the audit.

Discussion:

- There was a note about salaries for August of this year compared to August of last year; why is this?
  - There was a correction made to the accruals for ten month employees as part of the audit process.
- Our July, August, September income was based on June's enrollment. It will be adjusted to reflect this year's enrollment
- We are still down in enrollment. Our income is very different from the approved budget.

**2. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the financial statements of August 30, 2022.

Moved: Neeta Patel

Seconded: Xu Lin

Yes Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koug, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry SaintineAllaire Wohlgemuth

**VI. Policies**

**Ellen Somekawa**

**3. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School amends the following section of the Anti-Bullying Policy as follows [changes are highlighted in red]:

The FACTS Board of Trustees requires the principal and/or the principal's designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, the principal and/or the principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within ~~three~~ **seven** school days after a report or complaint is made. . .

**4. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School amends the following section of the Employee Handbook as follows [changes are highlighted in red]:

## Personal Leave Policies

~~Full-time~~ 10-month and 12-month employees are eligible for three days of paid personal leave per school year. ~~Part-time and t~~ Temporary employees are not eligible for personal leave. . . [p. 30]  
. . . Each ~~full-time-eligible~~ staff member shall be granted three personal leave days per contract year upon request . . . [p.31]

Moved Resolutions 3 and 4: Pooja Agarwal

Seconded: Xu Lin

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgermuth

- VII. 5. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the submission of the Emergency Instructional Time application to the PA Department of Education.

Moved: Allaire Wohlgermuth

Seconded: Nancy Nguyen

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgermuth

- VIII. 6. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School signs on to the Save Chinatown Organizational letter, reading:

*"We demand that the 76ers immediately abandon their plan to build an arena next to Chinatown. The 76ers proposal is a threat to the continued existence of a diverse and vibrant Chinatown. Historically, big developers have offered "community benefits" that we know translates into community destruction. Our community is not for sale. Once again, we will fight for our survival. We call on City officials to embrace a vision for our City that recognizes that the true source of economic vitality comes from strengthening our neighborhoods, investing in helping our residents thrive, supporting small businesses, community groups and welcoming immigrants."*

Moved: Xu Lin

Seconded: Neeta Patel

Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgermuth

- IX. Committee Reports**

- Development Committee

Allaire

Good news. We are doing well on 5K sponsorships. It has been a team effort and has required persistence. We are already more than halfway to our fundraising goal. Letters are going home to families now. The committee is in the process of getting prizes donated.

- Nominations Committee

Selina

We need a secretary.

Kenzo Sung and Heather Davis-Jones exited the board unexpectedly. We will have to be on a more aggressive search again. We need one or more new members. In general, we have a preference for having people join the board in July.

Allaire and Leana will join the nominating committee. Allaire will consider being Secretary if needed.

## **X. Other Action Items**

**7. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with BTC Foods, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for the provision of vended meals for the National School Lunch Program.

**8. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Creative Development Partners. in an amount not to exceed \$24,000 for the provision of pre-development services.

**9. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Gen3 Construction Company in an amount not to exceed \$5000 for the purpose of replacing interior door lock cylinders.

**10. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with MACCS in an amount not to exceed \$24,000 for the provision of student health compliance services.

**11. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves payment to Ho Wong Real Estate Investment in an amount not to exceed \$9,000 for the replacement and repair of HVAC equipment.

**12. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Studio27 in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 for the provision of a feasibility study for building expansion.

**13. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves entering into an agreement with the University of the Arts to serve as a placement site for work-study students.

**14. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Nhan Thanh Ngo in an amount not to exceed \$6,700 for the provision of folk arts education services (dan tranh ensembles).

**15. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with John Testino in an amount not to exceed \$12,500 for the provision of folk arts education services (lion dance ensembles and Friday folk arts classes).

**16. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Senfu Stoney in an amount not to exceed \$12,500 for the provision of folk arts education services African Diaspora Drumming ensembles and Friday folk arts classes).

**17. 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 \$7,700 for the provision of folk arts education services (Qigong ensembles and multiple Qigong residencies).

**18. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves contracting with Veronica Ponce de Leon in an amount not to exceed \$7,700 for the provision of folk arts education services (multiple Mexican visual arts residencies and development of their sharable curricula)

**19. BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Trustees of the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School approves the hiring of the following staff members:

Kenny Song, Building Substitute, \$35,000  
Janice Prevail, Long Term ELD Substitute, \$28/hour

Moved #7-#19: Pooja Agarwal  
Seconded: Thierry Saintine  
Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth

**XI. Adjournment**

Moved to Adjourn: Neeta Patel  
Seconded: Jeff Koung  
Voted Yes: Pooja Agarwal, Leana Cabral, Jeffrey Koung, Xu Lin, Selina Morales, Nancy Nguyen, Neeta Patel, Thierry Saintine, Allaire Wohlgemuth