

**Piedmont Community Charter School**  
**A Challenge Foundation Academy**  
September 30, 2014 Meeting Minutes

*Date:* September 30, 2014  
*Board Present:* Cathy Broome, Jack Rowe (via phone), Michael Shumate, Sherry McCart, Craig Killen, Cindy Burnett, Ronn Baker, Melissa Williams, Kevin Stewart, Jeff Waldrep, Tereasa Osborne  
*Board Absent:* Cindy Odom  
*Others Present:* Jennifer Purdee, Brian Boone (consultant), Gary Webster (future TeamCFA rep)  
*Others Absent:*  
*Proceedings:* Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM.  
*Next Meeting:* October 21, 2014 @ 7:00 PM Main Campus Auditorium

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The Board of Directors meeting of Piedmont Community Charter School was held on September 30, 2014, in the auditorium at the Elementary Campus with the President in the chair and Secretary being present. It should be noted that Mr. Craig Killen was delayed in arriving for the meeting and Mrs. Cindy Burnett, Vice-president, called the meeting to order. She presided over the meeting until the arrival of Mr. Killen. Mr. Killen officially began presiding over the meeting at 7:23 PM.

**Agenda**

No changes or additions to the agenda.

**Awards & Recognitions**

No awards or recognitions.

**Minutes**

Mrs. Cindy Burnett requested a motion to approve the board minutes for the August meeting. Mr. Ronn Baker made the motion to approve the August minutes as submitted and dispense with the reading. Mr. Michael Shumate made a second to the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously without discussion.

**Public Comments**

No public comments at this meeting.

**Head of School Report**

Mrs. Jennifer Purdee presented the Head of School report to the Board of Directors.

EOG Results: Mrs. Purdee gave an overview of the EOG test scores. She reported that the math scores were erratic overall. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade scored the highest in the county in reading and was very close to being the highest in math. She discussed how the results for PCCS compared with the state and county test scores and presented a handout for comparison.

Mrs. Purdee reported 62.4% proficiency school wide, which reflected an 18.4% improvement. 50.4% College/Career ready score, which reflected a 6.4% improvement.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade math scores reflected some negative scores. MathI improved, but is still behind

for the state and county scores.

Mrs. Purdee also presented grade level reports as compared with all other Gaston County schools. PCCS teachers will be attending a math conference in Greensboro this year for staff development.

Mr. Craig Killen commended Mrs. Purdee and the staff for their efforts and improvements on the test scores.

**Enrollment Report:** Mrs. Purdee noted that it was necessary to increase the number of students in the elementary classrooms to meet the 1200 student budget that was set. The current ADM is 1221 for the first 20 days of school. The budget is based on 1200 students, which should result in an additional \$273,000 dollar surplus due to the increased ADM.

**Personnel Report:** Mrs. Purdee requests approval of the contract for Stephanie Wilson as a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher's assistant.

Mrs. Cindy Burnett made the motion to approve the contract for Stephanie Wilson as 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher's assistant as presented by Mrs. Purdee. Mr. Michael Shumate made a second to the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously without further discussion.

**Physical Therapy Contract approval:** Mrs. Purdee presented a contract for approval by Pediatric Hands on Therapy. This service is required as part of an IEP plan for one student and will provide 10 – 12 sessions per year at a cost of \$61.00 per hour.

Mr. Michael Shumate made the motion to accept the contract from Pediatric Hands on Therapy as presented by Mrs. Purdee. Mrs. Cindy Burnett made a second to the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously without further discussion.

**Modular Installation:** Mrs. Purdee reported that Vanguard absorbed \$16,000 for the siding cost for the modular units. Siding is currently being placed on the existing units. PCCS will be responsible for an additional \$28,100 for incidental fees related to the modular units. There is a need to reallocate funds from the 2013 – 2014 budget to cover the original costs for the modulares and allocate additional money to cover the excess that was incurred.

Mr. Michael Shumate made the motion to reallocate \$37,800 in the 2013 – 2014 budget and allocate \$28,100 to cover additional costs for the modular units. The total allocation from surplus will total \$65,900. Mr. Ronn Baker made a second to the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously without further discussion.

**Awnings:** No current progress on obtaining awnings for the secondary campus. More quotes are needed due to materials restrictions. Metal material, instead of wood, must be used for the awnings according to the City of Gastonia. Mrs. Purdee reports that she is re-evaluating the project and potential costs.

**Homebound Instruction:** PCCS has one elementary student requiring homebound instruction. The school is required to send a teacher to this student and compensate the teacher for this time. A teacher will meet with the student for 2 hours per week.

Mrs. Purdee reports that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class will take the MAP test to predict ACT readiness in March. This change is being made because there has been a significant increase in the cost of the ACT for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Staff Development:** Mrs. Purdee gave an update on recent staff development workshops for the faculty. They will be involved in safety training, 5<sup>th</sup> grade Science training, and K – 5 Math training.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Ronn Baker gave a brief financial report stating that they have been working to true up the budget. He reports \$3.3 million in the bank, \$1.68 million ending cash balance and \$323,000 surplus. With the additional ADM, Mr. Baker notes that a surplus of \$500,000 is possible by the end of the year.

Mr. Baker states that the crafting of an investment policy for the school is in the planning phase and more details will be given at a later date.

### **Staff Representative**

No report given at this meeting.

### **Parent Representatives**

No report given at this meeting.

### **Team CFA**

No report was given at this meeting.

### **President**

Mr. Craig Killen introduced Tereasa Osborne as the newly elected board member-at-large.

### **Committee Updates**

Mrs. Melissa Williams, who served as co-chair of the Facilities Committee, presented a summary of their work that occurred over many months last school year. The Facilities Committee gave a very detailed presentation last year as one of the strategic areas of focus for the school.

She presented both long-term and short-term goals and needs for the school. In order to address the long term needs, the committee contacted the owner of the property behind the school for possible purchase of the property. The owner was not willing to sell the property to the school.

The committee also investigated adding more classrooms to the existing secondary campus. The addition of 22 classrooms would cost at least \$5 million dollars and a projection of outgrowing this space in 6 years. No space was given for the arts or athletics. The committee looked at a couple of existing buildings in the area to retrofit, but none were suitable for the needs of the school.

The Facilities Committee began to focus solely on immediate or short-term needs to manage enrollment and programs for the students. They immediately learned that the school does not have adequate space for 2014 – 2015 school year to accommodate student enrollment and program demands. The addition of four classrooms would help to meet some of the needs for the next two years. The committee then began the process of securing the modular units that are now located on the secondary campus. Long-term needs and goals will be investigated upon direction from the board.

Mrs. Cathy Broome, co-chair of the Attrition Committee, presented a summary of their work that occurred over many months last school year. The Attrition Committee gave a very detailed presentation last year as one of the strategic areas of focus. This committee was charged with looking into school attrition for PCCS, with particular focus on high school attrition.

Summer Attrition was defined as attrition from the last school day through the first 20 days of school. School Attrition was defined as attrition from day 21 to the last day of school. Summer attrition for

2013 was 11% and school attrition was 3.08%. Summer attrition for 2014 was 10% and school attrition was 3.94%. There were 117 summer withdrawals for 2014. 35 students from the high school, 35 students from the middle school, and 47 students from the elementary school for the summer of 2014. It was interesting to note that 46% of the students lost in the high school were from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, meaning that these students elected to go to other high schools over the summer. She also reported that PCCS lost 6 senior students last summer and only two of those were the result of relocation.

There is no extensive waiting list to pull from for high school students so PCCS is forced to increase class size in the elementary grades to make up the difference and meet budget requirements.

The Attrition Committee identified specific things that contributed to student loss in the high school during their initial report. This included: limited course offerings, limited extracurriculars, dress code, and athletics. Surveys revealed a need for more advanced core classes and variety in electives, as well as a need for AP and Honors classes. Dress code was a common complaint with high school students, especially the lack of consistency with enforcement. The extracurricular offerings are limited and the athletic program is weak as compared to other schools. The committee clearly understands that athletics at Charter schools do not necessarily compete well with other public schools.

The Attrition Committee identified a lack of student and teacher accountability within the high school. There were excessive absences and tardies that interfere with consistent instruction time. The Committee concluded that our high school students are not being held to our "Portrait of a Graduate".

Mrs. Cathy Broome reported that the reasons for high school student withdrawals for the summer of 2014 were lack of class variety, need for AP and Honors classes, sports program, relocation/moved, attending Highland Technical school, and transportation problems. The reasons for withdrawal were reported by the students and/or their parents.

The recommendations presented by the Attrition Committee included improvement of student transition from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school, improvement of student accountability with the development of a Persistence/Attendance Committee, enhancement of course offering to align with the Portrait of a Graduate, and the development of a 3 year plan after the 2014 attrition numbers are reported.

The addition of the modular units has helped to increase space, but not enough to adequately advance course and elective offerings.

A very lengthy discussion ensued following the presentations by the two committees. Mr. Ronn Baker initiated the conversation by stating that the high school is not sustaining itself and is not sustainable in its existing condition. He cited multiple reasons for concern including low test scores as compared with other schools, lack of appropriate class/elective offerings, lack of space and faculty, and lack of public demand to attend high school at PCCS. The school is losing a large volume of high school students each year and we are forced to load the elementary school with students to make up the difference in numbers for the budget. The high school is very expensive to maintain and it is not sustaining itself financially. He also voiced concern about our high school students not meeting our "Portrait of a Graduate". The funds to build a high school are not available and the demand for such a school is not evident at this time. Mr. Baker noted that the strength of the school is in the kindergarten and middle school grades and that the focus should be placed on those areas and consider becoming a K – 8 school.

Mrs. Cathy Broome voiced concerns regarding the high school after serving on the Attrition Committee last year noting the high volume of withdrawals. The surveys clearly indicated a lack of course/elective offerings and accountability among the high school students. The "Portrait of a Graduate" is not being displayed in our high school program and merits serious consideration and actions.

Many board members discussed the issues surrounding the high school and that we are not serving our students well currently. The students, taxpayers, and teachers deserve much better than we are able to offer according to numerous board members. Our students deserve the best high school program that can be offered and we are currently unable to do that.

Mr. Craig Killen offered three possible options to deal with the high school concerning space and curriculum problems. The construction of a third school building, leave the existing secondary facility and build a new one, or request from the Department of Public Instruction to become K – 8 school. These options were discussed extensively among board members. The financials of constructing a new building, problems with the addition of a third building, and financial matters surrounding changing the status to a K – 8 school. Board members concluded that there was benefit to becoming an excellent K – 8 school and feeding into the existing high schools.

The following statements are placed in the minutes at the request of Mr. Jeff Waldrep. These statements are Mr. Waldrep's words and are not reflected in the secretary's notes from the meeting.

Mr. Waldrep asked about the amendment process, specifically what is involved in the process) and his suggestion was to not commit to any irreversible process until we are sure the action was necessary. He also made a suggestion about avoiding the closure until the terms of the existing lease that Mr. Baker mentioned was up, which would allow the upcoming seniors to graduate and allow time for the board to study the situation more closely, which was acknowledged by board members. Mr. Waldrep commented and pointed out significant time was taken to accumulate the data from the focus groups and that sufficient time is needed to evaluate the data and search for alternative solutions if possible.

Mr. Waldrep suggested several times that we needed to develop a detailed plan to address a grade reduction process before committing to an irreversible process. He suggested several times that the plan needed to involve extensive and detailed communications with the parents, teachers and ultimately the students. He recommended finding a way to assist with placement, if possible, into other programs if electing to go through with this decision (he also believes this was acknowledged by board members). This concludes notes added at the request of Mr. Jeff Waldrep.

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There was a discussion of whether becoming a K-8 school would in any way impact the Affiliation Agreement that PCCS has with TeamCFA. Mr. Jack Rowe confirmed that the Affiliation Agreement would not impact any such action.

After much discussion of the options, Mr. Ronn Baker made the motion to present the application to the Department of Instruction, prior to the October 30<sup>th</sup> deadline, to reduce grade levels to become a K -8 school. Mr. Michael Shumate made a second to the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously without further discussion.

Mr. Killen noted that the action taken was in a public board meeting and was thus a matter of public record. Board members were reminded that the PCCS bylaws contained a communications policy regarding authorized spokespersons for the school and board members were requested to abide by same should questions arise.

President's Report (continued)

Mr. Craig Killen addressed the Consultant Contract for Mr. Brian Boone. Mr. Boone excused himself from the board meeting at the beginning of this discussion as it was held at the end of the board

meeting.

Mrs. Jennifer Purdee spoke in support of Mr. Boone stating an obvious need to retain his services until the end of the school year. He is needed for assistance with the completion of writing policies, public relations, and the ongoing committee work.

After much discussion concerning Mr. Boone and his many contributions to the school and the need for retention, Mr. Jeff Waldrep made the motion to retain Mr. Boone's services until the end of the school year. Mrs. Cathy Broome made a second to the motion. Motion was adopted unanimously without further discussion.

**Governance**

No report was given at this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for:

Date: October 21, 2014 Time: 7:00 PM Location: Elementary School Auditorium

UPDATE: The date of the next board meeting was subsequently changed to October 28, 2014 at 7:00 PM.

Prepared by:

Cathy Broome

Signed & Approved by:

Board Member:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Member:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_