



**Frederick Classical Charter School, Inc.
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2024 | 7:00 p.m.**

*Meeting held by video conference
Minutes submitted by Cortney Krauss*

Present: Debbie Shoffner - Chair
Debbie Nnameka
Robert Wells
Aimee Bowersox
Raymond Harne
Cortney Krauss
Jessica Constant
Ed Greenslit
Rachel Hanson

Other Participants: Mr. Conroy
Ms. Olivero
Ms. Grant
Mr. Duke
Ms. Harne
28 total participants joined the web conference

1. Call to Order and Welcome: Called to order and welcome at 7:04 pm.
2. Approve Agenda– Ms. Krauss moved to adopt the agenda distributed on 2/1/24. Ms. Constant made the motion to amend the agenda to add the iReady proposal and request for Valentines’ Day Funding. Mr. Wells seconded. All in favor. Motion approved.
3. Public Comment

Rebecca Harne: I want to thank the Board of Trustees for all that they have accomplished so far this year. Your service and hard work are so appreciated.

I wanted to take a moment to share my perspective as a parent in light of recent conversations around bullying and poor behavior. I have a seventh-grade scholar and it has become at least a weekly conversation around incidents that are happening either to him in the classroom, or to other students during the school day. Some of these things are just poor behaviors that are

repetitive and not being immediately addressed. Other incidents fit the FCPS definition of bullying.

Bullying is defined by FCPS in Regulation 400-48 as “unwanted, demeaning behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or is highly likely to be repeated, over time. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be intentional and include: 1) an imbalance of power (students who bully use their physical, emotional, social, or academic power to control, exclude, or harm others), and 2) repetition (bullying behaviors happen more than once or are highly likely to be repeated based on evidence gathered).

As my husband and I have noted this increase in incidents, we know that it would be impossible for the learning environment to not be negatively affected. We also noted that even if this behavior was not happening TO our scholar, that it was affecting him by increasing fear and anxiety on a daily basis that something he would do or say could make him the next victim of the bullies.

My husband and I, along with a group of seventh-grade parents, have asked that the school review their processes. We look forward to increased conversations within our school community around this topic, as well as clear and intentional changes within the school and classrooms that create a safer environment where our scholars can learn and thrive without the constant chaos, interruptions, and fear of becoming the next victim of a bully.

Thank you.

President’s Report: Presented by Ms. Shoffner

Good evening and welcome to the February Board of Trustees public meeting. The “official” first public meeting of the Board in 2024! The first meeting of 2024 was our Special “Meet the Board” Town Hall hosted by the Nominating Committee where the community was able to get answers to all things related to what it means to volunteer as a Trustee. As you should know by now, there will be many openings to serve on the board and our amazing Nominating Committee is hard at work looking for candidates to fill these critical positions. Anyone who is interested in serving, please submit your letter of interest to the nominating committee as soon as possible. Our Annual Membership meeting will be here before we know it, on April 29th.

The History Curriculum review per the BOE/FCPS is an in-depth review of the proposed curriculum and more information on that will be shared later in the meeting agenda. There are many functions of the Academics and School Improvement Committees that greatly impact the success of the school, so if you are looking for a volunteer opportunity that can be done remotely please contact the committee chair at academics@frederickclassicalcharterschool.org your support is greatly appreciated and needed!

The BOT is scheduled to hold our second in-person training session this coming weekend and the trustees have been diligently working on their Board training virtually through the MD Alliance

onboarding workshops. Much progress has been made on the review of the roles and responsibilities document, org charts and structure, fundraising efforts and future growth strategic planning and information will be sent as the documents are finalized. Soon after our December public meeting, Ms. Tracey submitted her letter of resignation as the secretary on the Board. The number of hours required for the responsibilities of the position, the volume of work needing to be done, and maintaining a work/life balance for her family was challenging. We greatly appreciate her energy and efforts while serving and understand that this volunteer role can be difficult at times. As per our normal procedure, resignations are discussed at the next public meeting following the notification.

I'd like to say Thank you!! To the Trustees and parent volunteers, Ms. Nnameka, Ms. Constant, Mr. Wells, and Ms. Rizzo for their show of support and for taking an active role in the MD Advocacy Day, they brought the voices of the school to the governing bodies that can make the changes we need.

As many have seen on social media or personally experienced with their own family the Board is here to support the Administration and our Membership concerning bullying. Everyone has the right to feel respected and be treated with dignity. FCCS, Inc. supports the statement FCPS has on its website that: FCPS believes schools must be safe, provide an optimal environment for achievement, and be free from violence. If your family is experiencing any kind of bullying, please follow the steps outlined in the policy. Bringing the issue to light will hopefully provide the assistance and support needed to navigate this situation. More discussion will be had in tonight's meeting.

For each of the committees represented in the public meeting on the agenda, we would like to request that a time frame of 3 minutes per person be held and will need to ask for you to keep to the 3-minute time allotted. Ms. Nnameka will be timing these and notifying our speakers when the time is up. Thank you!

Accounting / Finance Report: Presented by Ms. Constant

Financial report: For the 6 months ended December 31, 2023 Frederick Classical had a net surplus of \$42,422. Working capital totaled \$2,181,802 and Net Assets \$2,240,109. Working Capital measures the amount of funds available for expenditure that is not invested in an asset such as facilities. Net Assets is a running total of all surpluses (losses) since inception where the value is not necessarily liquid.

The six months ended with a small surplus due to the majority of educational material costs being incurred in July and August in preparation for the school year. These costs include the purchase of textbooks and classroom materials as well as building repairs. The year-end results are forecasted to be positive albeit lower than budgeted due to recent FCPS revisions to the personnel costs they originally provided. Finally, the financial statements reflect enrollment of 100%.

The Board has five CD maturities to anticipate. Increased FDIC insured investments should be considered as the checking account balance exceeds the FDIC limit.

Finance Committee:

- The Finance Committee met in Dec. to draft comprehensive strategic priorities and action plans.
- Through strategic planning and fiscal responsibility, the committee aims to safeguard the school's financial health and foster sustainable growth and the vision extends to upgrading facilities.
- Hosted an "All About Finance" session for BOT members, which aimed to educate our trustees about the intricacies of our financial strategy (including calculation of the PPA as given by FCPS) and open up channels of communication.
- Actively pursued various fundraising initiatives including meaningful discussions with potential funders as well as submitting a grant application to the City of Frederick's Community Promotion grant.
- Report on participation in the Charter School Advocacy Day to advocate for facilities funding for charter schools and aligning efforts with the broader Maryland charter school community.
- A [copy of the finance strategic priorities and action plan](#) was submitted

Head of School's Report: Presented by Mr. Conroy

- iReady data looks positive and was praised at BOE-level
- Professional learning for teachers included guest speaker on special education and autism, and collaboration in learning groups
- Several Valentine's Day celebrations planned for scholars
- In response to community concerns about the potential bullying and impact on school climate, the following was shared:
 - Any concerned community member is encouraged to schedule an in-person meeting to facilitate open communication;
 - FCCS, Inc. is a public school under FCPS policy and "sending back" or "kicking out" students to their home schools is not a viable option
 - FCCS must follow FCPS Code of Conduct and policies
 - Discipline proceedings are confidential for both the scholars and families
 - Scholars are encouraged to adopt a "See Something, Say Something" mindset and report concerns to a trusted adult, such as Mr. Conroy, Mr. Kenny and/or Ms. Caldwell
 - Staff morning and hallway duties were rearranged for better supervision, as well as additional staffing at lunch and recess; scholar locker visitation times changed to be under supervisory time of staff
 - Discussions regarding hallway behaviors and strategies will be implemented
 - FCCS staff goes well beyond their expected duties, however parent volunteers are needed and necessitated for the school to function; community members are always welcomed and encouraged to be in the building

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, delivered every Friday, will be more targeted in future
- Cell phones and online video games need to be monitored by parents for language; cell phones are not allowed at school and families are encouraged to report usage, if they are aware
- A show of support for Mr. Kenny who was praised as kind, compassionate, passionate about FCCS

Facilities report: Presented by Mr. Harne

- The warehouse renovation, which will provide new classroom space for art and music classes, is in progress; all items in storage need to be inventoried with opportunity for FCCS staff to claim items before being sent to FCPS surplus
- Issues with security and fire alarm identified and resolution is in progress with Vector; FCPS SSOs given key fobs to access building; all key fobs are up-to-date and accurately monitoring building access
- Soccer goals were delivered and installed on playground
- Cafeteria Door #4 maintenance issues resolved; however Ms. Shoffner responded that the door is still not ideally working
- Appreciation shared for crews responsible for snow removal during January snow day
- Spring/summer maintenance and project timeline is in development

PTC report: Presented by Ms. Olivero

- Committee met in January
- Reports on following activities were provided: K-2 social event snowed out; Dec. and Jan. Prospective Family Nights were well-attended, two additional prospective family nights schedule in Feb. and March; K-4 social activity will be hosted by grade liaisons on 2/10; Staff Appreciation Lunch will be hosted on 2/15; International Day will be hosted on 2/17; Talent Show will not occur this year; no volunteers to support the event; Book Fair scheduled for March 2024; donations and/or volunteers are needed for all events
- PTC will recruit volunteers at upcoming events, including April's membership meeting
- Website is updated with PTC activity reports
- Next PTC meeting will be held on 2/20

Nominating Committee report: Presented by Mr. Duke

- The Nominating Committee is working to prepare for the annual membership meeting scheduled for Monday, April 29, 2024
- By-laws are restrictive in terms of who can serve on BOT as President and Vice President, which complicates recruitment
- Reaching out to anyone referred to the committee for their interest in the BOT
- Extended deadline for interested candidates to Feb. 15, 2024
 - Election preparation activities are underway and the committee sent an interest letter to the FCCS community seeking candidates to apply.

Academic Committee report: Presented by Ms. Shoffner

- Letter from the committee read by board liaison, Ms. Shoffner, during business item related to Academic Committee's work on history curriculum review

Staff/Board liaison report: Presented by Mr. Duke

- Appreciation for the new soccer goals
- SGA is looking for chaperones for the Valentine's Dance on 2/16
- Staff is appreciative of BOT's reception to questions, suggestions and concerns

Unfinished Business

- Ms. Krauss indicated that she brought the item forward as unfinished business from the Dec. 2023 BOT meeting, however did not plan to make a specific motion on adopting the use of a Google Drive with public access to house documents; a discussion occurred with suggestions for a trial-run, however BOT needs to be conscious of requirements for documentation to be posted on the school's website; Ms. Nnameka suggested this item be moved to closed session for further discussion; however later amended her statement because it does not qualify for closed session. No motions made.

New Business Items

- Secretary appointment: Mr. Wells made a motion to appoint Ms. Krauss as the BOT secretary; Ms. Hansen seconded. All in favor; motion passed. Ms. Krauss will fill the unexpired term that expires June 2024 forgoing her trustee position; trustee position is vacated and can be filled by appointment
- 12/5/2023 BOT public meeting minutes: Ms. Krauss made motion; Mr. Wells seconded. All in favor; motion approved.
- School climate: Ms. Nnameka expressed that it was discussed in the President's and HOS reports, as well as in public comments. No further discussion took place.
- History curriculum: Academic Committee submitted written statement on history curriculum review report read by Ms. Shoffner:

The purpose of the academic committee's History Curriculum review is to determine what History curriculum we recommend to replace the current Story of The World curriculum for all K-4 level grades as required by FCPS. We are aware that FCCS administration has already put forth a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for the Core Knowledge curriculum to replace all History curriculum from K-8th grade. It is necessary to mention that our review committee was only given seven and a half (7 ½) weeks to complete our review process. On January 29th, we ended our review process, but were unable to perform a thorough review of the recommended curriculum, or other potential curriculum.

As a result of these limitations, and as the History Curriculum Committee set up for this purpose, we did not have the requisite time and resources to make a definitive recommendation of Core Knowledge to be the best curriculum for our school to replace the existing curriculum for all

grades. However, we do not disagree with the Administration's recommendations at this time to adopt Core Knowledge given the time constraints and need to communicate a decision to the BOE. Thus, we do approve the Board of Trustees proceed with implementing the Core Knowledge curriculum for all K-8 students, as recommended by the administration, as long as the newly implemented history curriculum follows our school's current sequential learning of 1st and 5th grades learning ancient history, 2nd and 6th learning medieval history, 3rd and 7th learning early modern history and 4th and 8th learning modern history and government, as laid out in our charter. This will ensure continuity for all our scholars and remain in line with our charter, and as we believe, will help to ensure the best classical learning experience for each of our scholars through this transition.

- Information shared on typical curriculum review process, in that it usually starts and not ends with the Academics Committee, however due to terms of probation, the order of events was amended. It was also noted that FCCS administration was considering a recommendation to amend history curriculum because teachers already supplement the curriculum and/or use Core Knowledge because *Story of the World* did not provide the framework needed for a main text. No intentions of changing curriculum sequencing/alignment and the formal adoption provides teachers with Core Knowledge textbooks.
- The Academic Committee considered options available for charter/classical curriculum, as well as met with FCCS administration to collaborate; final step is for BOT to approve the curriculum recommendation, so it can be sent to FCPS for final review and approval.
- History Committee's recommendation is for the new history curriculum to be moved to FCPS for final approval
- Ms. Shoffner requested assistance with financial costs for the new curriculum, however it was not provided by FCPS; ESSER grant which expires in June 2024 has remaining funds (\$33,491.35); the quote for the curriculum will be fully covered by the grant. Mr. Wells made a motion to approve the History Committee's recommendation for the new history curriculum to be moved to FCPS for final approval, in addition to the cost of \$31,382.46 to purchase the books using the ESSR grant funds Ms. Krauss seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- Ms. Shoffner will forward the information to FCPS, as well as sharing with the BOT members the expectations for curriculum review, as needed in the future.
- Fundraising consultant contract: Ms. Constant provided an overview of the Marketing Management Group's contract; current contract will be for time period of Jan. 2- June 30, 2024; original contract expired in Oct. 2023. Contract can be re-evaluated, as needed. Ms. Hanson asked for clarification about the transfer of information and training provided to trustees, especially as BOT members turnover; Ms. Constant responded that to account for knowledge transfer, there are documentations and manuals, as well as a transition plan will be created. Ms. Constant indicated that all members will receive training, especially as it relates to succession planning. Ms. Constant made a motion to approve the contract with TMMG for the amount of

\$6,000/month to expire in June 2024. All in favor. Motion passed. Mr. Greenslit was not present for the vote.

- Handbook updates: Ms. Bowersox shared updates to the FCCS Handbook that were made in collaboration with Mr. Kenny. Most edits were related to formatting and alignment with the current calendar. Information on K-4 PE uniforms was added. Discussion regarding K-2 uniforms took place, in particular current handbook states gray polo shirts are to be worn with the pants option; gray or white is not stated as an option. Ms. Shoffner suggested that language needs to be consistent in regards to electronic watches. Ms. Shoffner recommended that the conversation be tabled until updates are complete and the finalized document can be considered for approval. Motion suspended.
- Volunteer hour “requirement”: Suspended.
- iReady Proposal: Ms. Constant shared proposal for IReady, which totals \$23,202.40; approved budget does not cover the cost of the proposal. FCPS offered for FCCS to be a rider on their contract, instead of subsidizing; meaning FCPS paid for certain number of iReady reading license, however FCCS uses more features than FCPS (personalized pathways); Ms. Krauss noted that in her experience in FCPS middle school, students use personalized pathways and that may be a point of further negotiation for future budgets. Ms. Constant made motion to apply the remaining balance of the ESSER grant (\$2,108.89) to the unfunded portion of the cost of iReady, to offset iReady purchase as well as to approve the difference between the budgeted amount, \$7,719, and the iReady quote, \$23,202.40, not to exceed \$14,000. Ms. Nnameka seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- PTC request for funds for Valentine’s Day Event on 2/10: Ms. Nnameka made a motion to donate \$200 to the PTC for the Valentine’s Day event. Ms. Constant seconded. Ms. Bowersox sought clarification as to whether these funds would be considered SAF; did not qualify. All in favor. Motion passed.

Adjournment

- Mr. Wells moved to close the regular session and move to closed session to discuss personnel matters and board housekeeping items. Ms. Constant seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Closed Session

- Personnel Matters - Admin
- Personnel Matters - Board Housekeeping item (Sans Admin)

Closed session adjourned at 10:01 p.m.