

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
STEAM ACADEMY OF WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS
OCTOBER 8, 2024**

Directors Attending: Darlene Thaxton, Michele Russell, Belvia Martin, Larry Miller, Edwina Agee, Doxie Jelks, and Stafford Shenett

Guests: Willie Banks, Michelle Wagner, Jesse Williams, Danielle Doksa, Sherree Dillions, Megan Howard, and Becky Scheiman

Ms. Thaxton called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. There was no public comment.

Ms. Dillions then reviewed the Superintendent Report. She noted that she was excited for the month of September report due to the release of the Local Report Card. Ms. Dillions reported that the School received an Overall Rating of 3.5 stars on a 5 star scale. She also noted that the School received 4 stars on Progress, 4 stars on Gap Closing and 2 stars on Early Literacy with a Performance Index score of 66.9. She congratulated the School on a job well done. Ms. Dillions then informed the Board that the School is only a few students away from reaching the budget enrollment goal in September but reached the goal on October 4th. She provided more background on the difficulty with earning high marks on the Local Report Card in an urban school and some of the challenges related to parent and student behaviors. Ms. Dillions then offered another congratulations to Executive Principal Banks.

Mr. Banks presented the Head of School Report. He informed the Board that the School continues to form small academic groups based on the data from the Restart Readiness and iReady tests. He introduced Ms. Wagner as the new Director of Academics and noted that the results of the Restart Readiness test has been interesting to review with approximately 100 more students in the School for this year. Overall, the performance is close to where it was in the previous year. The academic groups will be updated after the next administration of the Restart Readiness test.

Mr. Banks informed the Board that the overall attendance is low and the School is working on a plan to get students back in the building. He discussed the current attendance challenges taking place and noted that he is hoping the students will encourage their classmates. Current enrollment is 351 and the School has additional families inquiring about enrollment. Mr. Banks noted that the focus will have to shift from enrollment to academic gains soon. He then discussed some of the challenges the students are facing outside of school and noted the extra effort that teachers are making including ensuring that a homeless family has the necessary clothes and food. Mr. Banks noted that the School is ensuring that the students social emotional health is also being addressed.

Ms. Thaxton noted the inclusion of the Monthly Report on Verification of Student Residency in the materials.

Ms. Wagner then informed the Board that she continues to review data for small group instruction. She also noted that the students seem to enjoy the small group instruction. The teachers are on point and doing what they need to do but the challenge is the number of new students and the need to ensure the iReady and Restart Readiness tests are administered as students enroll to be placed in the appropriate small group. Mr. Banks informed the Board of other student incentive programs.

The Board noted that the Local Report Card review was completed earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Scheiman explained the Annual Report noting that the Report needed to be delivered to all families by October 31st. She explained that the School has some discretion on what is included in the Annual Report but it is meant to highlight and report out on the School's progress during the prior year.

The Board reviewed the minutes and hearing minutes from September 10, 2024, and there were no changes or corrections.

Ms. Howard congratulated the School on the wonderful results included in the Local Report Card. She noted that very few schools that are sponsored by OCCS received 2 stars on Early Literacy and congratulated the school. Ms. Howard noted that the Sponsor would be providing additional technical assistance on the Early Literacy component and Ms. Blair would be reaching out to the School to schedule the meeting. The School's first period compliance worksheets are almost completed and she would be uploading those to Epicenter. Ms. Howard reported that a walkthrough would be scheduled in the next two weeks and the School had one task that still needed to be completed in Epicenter.

Ms. Gillen reviewed the September financials. She noted that the School had a cash balance of just under \$351,000 at the end of September. She noted that the budget that was included in the budget to actual report still reflected the budget approved in the Spring and had yet to be updated. The information will be updated for the October report. Ms. Gillen reported that the School is pacing behind the budget for federal funds and reminded the Board that the School needed to expend the funds before being reimbursed by federal grants. The School was paid on an FTE of 304 in September and noted that the FTE is still based on the prior year enrollment. The FTE will true up in October. The aged payables were largely within the 0-30 day timeframe. Ms. Gillen also informed the Board that the audit is underway and will be going on for the next few months. She will update the Board on any issues that are identified.

Ms. Gillen then reviewed the Consolidated Funding Application. She explained that the materials included were screen shots from the CCIP or federal grants system. The materials show the funding the School receives for each type of grant as well as how the funds are being allocated for use in large categories.

Ms. Gillen then explained that the discussion regarding Tax Returns is on the Agenda so that she could provide a reminder to the Board. Typically, the 990 Tax Return

is due by November 15th, but the School may apply for a six-month extension. As the audit is not yet finalized, this extension permits the fiscal office time to use the audited figures. There were no questions from the Board.

Ms. Scheiman then discussed the revised Automated External Defibrillator Policy, Prohibition Against Affirming Specific Beliefs Policy, Religious Accommodations Policy, and Cell Phone Policy. She reminded the Board of the new laws that were reviewed in August and noted that the laws are effective on October 24th. The new policies being presented are in response to the new requirements. Ms. Scheiman also reminded the Board that the School would no longer need to present the monthly verification of residency reports. As a result, the recommendation is to repeal the Student Residency and Address Verification Policy.

Ms. Scheiman reminded the Board that the Board has the right to decide to place a cap on enrollment at the School. The Board then discussed the option and noted the impact of having a large contingency of new students enroll on the academic progress. The Board noted the academic progress that was discussed at the beginning of the meeting based on the Local Report Card results and wanted to ensure that the growth continued in a positive direction. The Board also commented that the academics were more important than money. The Board then noted a desire to institute an enrollment cap of 351 students.

Thereafter, upon a motion made by Ms. Agee and seconded by Dr.. Martin, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the following resolutions:

- 24-71 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors accepts the Superintendent Report as presented.**
- 24-72 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors accepts the Head of School Report including the Monthly Report on Verification of Student Residency.**
- 24-73 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the Annual Report as presented and authorizes the Board President to approve subsequent revisions as necessary.**
- 24-74 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the Minutes from the September 10, 2024 meeting as presented.**
- 24-75 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the September 10, 2024 Hearing Minutes as presented.**
- 24-76 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors accepts the Sponsor Report as presented.**
- 24-77 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the financial statements, including the check reconciliation, as presented.**

24-78 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the FY25 Consolidated Funding Application as presented and authorizes expenditures substantially in accordance therewith.

24-79 RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves the revised Automated External Defibrillator Policy, Prohibition Against Affirming Specific Beliefs Policy, Religious Accommodations Policy, and Cell Phone Policy as presented.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby repeals the Student Residency and Address Verification Policy.

24-80 RESOLVED, that the School's enrollment be capped at 351 students for the 2024-2025 school year.

Thereafter, the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.



Dr. Belvia Martin, Secretary
STEAM Academy of Warrensville Heights

STEAM ACADEMY OF WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS

**PROHIBITION AGAINST AFFIRMATIONS OF SPECIFIC BELIEFS
POLICY**

The Board of Directors hereby adopts the following Policy regarding specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements or ideology.

The School is hereby prohibited from doing any of the following:

- I. Soliciting or requiring an employee or applicant for employment or academic admission to affirmatively ascribe to, or opine about, specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, or ideology;
- II. Soliciting or requiring a student to affirmatively ascribe to specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, or ideology;
- III. Using statements of commitment to specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements or ideology as part of the evaluation criteria for any employee or applicant for employment, of any employee seeking career progression or benefit; or
- IV. Using statements of commitment to specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements or ideology as part of the academic evaluation of any student.

Nothing in this Policy shall be construed to prohibit, limit, or restrict any of the following:

- I. The School's authority to require a student or employee to comply with any federal or state law, including anti-discrimination laws, or to take action against a student or employee for violation of any federal or state law;
- II. An educator's academic freedom;
- III. An educator's ability to research or write publications about specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, ideology, or social action;
- IV. The School's authority to consider an applicant for employment's scholarship, teaching, or subject matter expertise in the applicant's given academic field; or
- V. The School's authority to offer an established character education program.

The School administrator shall make publicly available all policies, guidance (not to include any protected legal communications or guidance), and training materials used for students and staff on all matters regarding specific beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles concerning political movements, or ideology. The School administrator has the discretion to determine which policies, guidance, or training materials, if any, meet this requirement and therefore must be made publicly available.