

TACONY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
6201 Keystone Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19135

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

LOCATION

ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL DUE TO STAY AT HOME ORDER BY THE GOVERNOR

DATE & TIME  
APRIL 21, 2021  
**6:00 P.M.**

**Minutes**

**SECTION I: CALL TO ORDER**

*Opening Colloquy*

This meeting of the Tacony Academy Charter School Board of Trustees is hereby called to Order. The time is 6:13 p.m. My name is Barbara L. Saunders. I am the President of this Board of Trustees, and I will facilitate this meeting.

As we know, Governor Wolf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has declared a state of emergency in response to the global Coronavirus pandemic. In order to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the school community, this meeting is being held via teleconference. This is a public meeting that was properly advertised in the Philadelphia Daily News, pursuant to the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. The public notice included instructions for how the public could participate in tonight's meeting.

All members of the public are welcome to sit and listen to the Board of Trustees conduct its business tonight. Members of the public who have registered with the Administrative Office to participate in public comment by 5:00 p.m. on the day before this scheduled meeting may participate in public comment. At this time, I would ask that the executive administration submit the list of commenters to our general counsel. Comments will be limited to three minutes unless the Board decides to grant additional time.

At this time, I will ask that Roll Call be taken.

**A. Roll Call**

<b>Board Members Present:</b>	<b>By Invitation: Non-Board Members:</b>
Barbara L. Saunders Jen Ragen Anita Vega-Kaiser Sandra Farmer Lionel S. Archer, Jr.	Thomas Scheid  Peter Costa  Dean Krebs, Esq. Jessica Bassett
<b>Board Members Absent:</b> Dr. Ronald Whitaker	

**B. DISCLOSURE: EXECUTIVE SESSION BY BARBARA L. SAUNDERS**

*I would like to state, for purposes of the Minutes of this meeting, that on April 19, 2021, the Board of Trustees met in Executive Session for the following purposes under 65 P.S. § 708:*

*(x) Certain Employee Issues. To discuss any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the agency, or former public officer or employee, provided, however, that the individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected may request, in writing, that the matter or matters be discussed at an open meeting. The agency's decision to discuss such matters in Executive Session shall not serve to adversely affect the due process rights granted by law, including those granted by Title 2 (relating to administrative law and procedure).*

*(x) Discuss Confidential Matters. To review and discuss agency business that, if conducted in public, would violate a lawful privilege or lead to the disclosure of information or confidentiality protected by law, including matters related to the initiation and conduct of investigations of possible or certain violations of the law and quasi-judicial deliberations.*

### C. Approval of Agenda

MOTION:

JEN RAGEN

SECOND:

ANITA VEGA-  
KAISER

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

#### **R210421.01 Approval of the April 21, 2021 Agenda**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby approves the April 21, 2021 Agenda.

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

### D. Approval of Minutes

MOTION:

ANITA VEGA-  
KAISER

SECOND:

LIONEL S.  
ARCHER, JR.

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

#### **R210421.02 Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Meeting**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby approves the Minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting of the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School.

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

## **SECTION II: REPORTS**

### A. Community Comment

*Community Comment Colloquy (General Counsel)*

None

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

### B. Tacony Academy Charter School CEO

- a. *Thomas Scheid, Tacony Academy Charter School CEO*
  - i. *Referring to materials provided to the Board in advance of the meeting, Mr. Scheid reviewed the CEO report.*
  - ii. *Mr. Scheid described the kindergarten in-person "Welcome" event, held on April 19, 2021. He stated that it was a small group, and both parents and students were excited to be at the*

- building. He noted that the school would be bringing more students back on May 10, 2021.*
- iii. *Mr. Scheid then reviewed enrollment at the school with the Board*
  - iv. *Next, Mr. Scheid discussed average daily attendance with the Board. He noted that average daily attendance at the elementary school decreased slightly, while high school attendance increased. He stated that progress was being made with high school attendance.*
  - v. *Mr. Scheid then discussed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) initiatives. He noted that:*
    1. *DEI initiatives continue in conjunction with American Paradigm Schools (“APS”).*
    2. *APS staff and the deans, principals, and assistant principals of First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter School, Tacony Academy Charter School (“Tacony”), Memphis Street Academy Charter School, and Lindley Academy Charter School (“Lindley”) (together, the “schools”) finished Part III of a DEI training program.*
    3. *A DEI event with Dr. Ronald Whitaker was to be held the following day. The event was expected to have over 400 attendees, 50 or more of whom were from Tacony.*
    4. *Barbara L. Saunders, Dr. Whitaker, and Mr. Scheid met and discussed sponsoring an event with Cabrini University.*
  - vi. *Mr. Scheid then reviewed Human Resources updates with the Board. He noted that there were five vacancies, with two staff members planning to return to Tacony. He explained that none of the vacancies were for teaching positions. Vacancies, he said, would be filled as needed.*
  - vii. *Next, Mr. Scheid updated the Board on the elementary school. Among other things, he noted that:*
    1. *Eighth grade students would complete their Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (“PSSA”) testing online. The PSSA would be administered in May.*
    2. *Springboard Collaborative offered both virtual and in-person reading programs.*
    3. *The school was preparing for the summer session. He further described the summer session schedule.*
  - viii. *Mr. Scheid then discussed the high school with the Board. He reviewed, among other things:*
    1. *Technology support;*
    2. *Professional development opportunities;*
    3. *Student activities, noting that the Tesla Science Club had been meeting;*

4. *Event for parents and families about student mental health during remote learning; and*
  5. *Students will be brought back for AP and Keystone testing*
- ix. *Mr. Scheid described Tacony's work with alumnus Jessica Martinez-Woodward. Ms. Martinez-Woodward, he said, reached out to the school and wanted to share how Project Lead the Way ("PLTW") helped her succeed. He described the topics she touched upon, including family and being a first-generation college student.*
  - x. *Mr. Scheid noted that student Oyindamola Akanbi, a Tacony student who would be attending Pennsylvania State University in the fall, received the Bunton-Waller Scholarship. He noted that the previous year's recipient also attended Tacony.*
  - xi. *Mr. Scheid then reviewed the March 2021 Students of the Month with the Board.*
  - xii. *He further described the 12th and 8th grade graduation ceremonies and informed the Board he would keep them updated as details developed.*
  - xiii. *Mr. Scheid provided a Facilities update with the Board, noting, among other things, that:*
    1. *The permit for the kindergarten – third grade playground was approved. Construction would begin in May. Kindergarten students would be able to choose the color scheme for the playground.*
    2. *ESSERS II funds would be used to extend the cafeteria, pending zoning approval.*
    3. *ESSERS II funds would also be used to install new windows and HVAC system at the school.*
  - xiv. *Mr. Scheid concluded his presentation with the school's mission statement.*
  - xv. *In response to question from the Board, Mr. Scheid further explained Human Resources matters, such as vacancies. Discussion ensued.*
  - xvi. *In response to further questions from the Board, Mr. Scheid discussed PSSA testing:*
    1. *He noted the conditions under which parents could opt out of PSSA testing*
    2. *He explained that the school will not be judged on participation or test scores*
    3. *He noted that the school was going to try online testing. While the School District of Philadelphia would be testing all grade levels in the spring, Tacony would conduct its testing of the lower grades in the fall.*

### **C. American Paradigm School Report**

- a. *Barbara L. Saunders, President of the Tacony Board of Trustees*
  - i. *Referring to materials provided to the Board in advance of the meeting, Ms. Saunders reviewed the APS report with the Board.*
  - ii. *Ms. Saunders first discussed APS's DEI statement.*
  - iii. *She then reviewed CEO collaboration across schools. Ms. Saunders stated that CEOs can ask if staff has been vaccinated against COVID-19, but not when or why staff members were vaccinated. Discussion ensued. During discussion, Mr. Scheid related that the information collected was primarily being used for quarantining purposes.*
  - iv. *Ms. Saunders noted that facilities updates had already been discussed during Mr. Scheid's presentation.*
  - v. *Ms. Saunders then reviewed APS's Human Resources update. Among other things, she noted that:*
    - 1. *APS had been participating in virtual job fairs.*
    - 2. *Mr. Scheid added that the DEI statement had been distributed to Tacony's staff and reiterated that no teachers or administrative staff had resigned.*
    - 3. *Discussion ensued regarding how many staff members were planning to return to school and how many staff members would continue to work remotely due to health or other issues.*
  - vi. *Next, Ms. Saunders reviewed the Academic Team report. She noted:*
    - 1. *Steps APS was taking to support the schools, including the continuation of learning walks;*
    - 2. *APS's support of the math curriculum;*
    - 3. *That academic coaches were preparing teachers for the return to school by holding DEI trainings and reviewing how to administer the curriculum. Ms. Saunders added that she had attended sessions and found them to be useful.*
    - 4. *Mr. Scheid noted that Tacony had purchased new curriculum materials for the school, including those that would help assess progress students had made.*
    - 5. *Ms. Saunders referred the Board to materials previously disseminated regarding pupil services.*
  - vii. *Ms. Saunders then noted that DEI training had been consistent and that APS had stated its commitment to such training. She listed some of the consultants and materials being used for DEI training.*
  - viii. *Ms. Saunders then explained that many students had been participating in college and career tours and that many had already begun receiving acceptance notices from colleges.*

#### **D. General Counsel**

- a. *Dean Krebs, Esq., Sand & Sidel, P.C.*
  - i. *Mr. Krebs noted that Financial Interest Forms (“FIFs”) were nearly completed. He stated that the FIFs would be submitted to Epicenter the following week.*

**E. Business Controller**

- a. *Peter Costa, Santilli & Thomson, LLC*
  - i. *Referring to materials provided to the Board in advance of the meeting, Mr. Costa discussed the March financial report with the Board.*
  - ii. *Mr. Costa first provided a financial summary report and discussed, among other things:*
    - 1. *Enrollment and budget;*
    - 2. *Cash holdings, which shows 128 days of cash on hand;*
    - 3. *Disbursements, noting those disbursements over \$10,000.*
  - iii. *Mr. Costa then reviewed, in more detail, Tacony’s revenues and expenditures, noting that revenues exceeded expenditures by approximately \$1.5 million.*
  - iv. *Finally, Mr. Costa discussed the draft budget and draft budget sheet with the Board. Among other things, he described:*
    - 1. *How the draft budget was being written and calculated;*
    - 2. *Savings (for example, budgeted for an 8% increase in the cost of health insurance and negotiated a 4% increase);*
    - 3. *Stipends and bonuses for staff;*
    - 4. *Expenses for the next year, which takes into account a 3% increase for inflation.*
    - 5. *ESSER II and ESSER III grants, which had not yet been factored into the draft budget.*
  - v. *The Board and attendees then discussed the most recent Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Saunders noted that the Finance Committee had approved a \$1,500 bonus for staff who have remained committed to the school throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Scheid added that the Finance Committee also discussed distributing a \$500 end-of-year bonus. The Board expressed its approval of the bonus, with Anita Vega-Kaiser noting that such a bonus shows how much the school values and appreciates its staff.*

**SECTION III: NEW BUSINESS**

**A. RESOLUTIONS**

MOTION:  
SANDRA FARMER

**R210421.03 Report of the Business Controller**

SECOND:  
LIONEL ARCHER, JR. S.

VOTE:  
[ X ] PASS  
[ ] FAIL

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School accepts the Financial Report of the business controller and all documents submitted thereby, which shall be incorporated into the record of this meeting.

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

MOTION:  
JEN RAGEN

SECOND:  
ANITA KAISER VEGA-

VOTE:  
[ X ] PASS  
[ ] FAIL

**R210421.04 Uniform Human Resources Resolution**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School ratifies the Human Resources changes, modifications, and additions, as presented.

<b>HIRES/RATE CHANGE</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>
None	None	None

<b>TERMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>
Nimar Cumberbatch (resignation)	Administrative Assistant @ HS	3/17/21
Yesinnette Morales (resignation)	Instructional Assistant @ ES	3/26/21
Shaniece Allen Harris (resignation)	Instructional Assistant @ ES	4/9/21
LizMarie Lopez (resignation)	Instructional Assistant @ ES	4/9/21
Dorothy Doughty (resignation)	Non-Teaching Assistant @ HS	4/15/21

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

MOTION:  
SANDRA FARMER

SECOND:  
ANITA KAISER VEGA-

VOTE:

**R210421.05 Uniform Professional Services Resolution**

RESOLVED, that the Professional Services Proposal/s and associated reports listed below are hereby accepted and ratified;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CEO, business controller, and general counsel are hereby authorized and directed to negotiate the terms and conditions of those contract/s based upon these Professional Services Proposal/s;



[ X ] PASS

[ ] FAIL

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President is authorized to execute any document or delegate any task necessary to effectuate this resolution.

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comment: Terms and Conditions</b>
Independence Blue Cross of Pennsylvania	4% increase in premiums	Health insurance renewal
Springboard Collaborative	\$60,000	Literacy workshops for Summer 2021
Blackney Hayes (POSTPONED)	Phase 1: Due Diligence: \$5,760 Phase 2: Zoning & Design Development: \$13,200 Phase 3: Construction Documentation: \$39,780 Phase 4: Permit Filing: \$2,240 Phase 5 Bidding: \$5,680 Civil: \$9,950-\$12,800 Structural: \$13,800 MEP: \$9,430 Total: \$99,840 – \$112,640	Architecture Services Phase II Cafeteria Expansion ESSERS Funded
Blackney Hayes (POSTPONED)	Phase 1: Due Diligence: \$11,680 Phase 2: Schematic Design: \$9,040 Phase 3: Design & Documentation: \$19,280 Phase 4: Permit Fling: \$2,240 Phase 5: Bidding: \$7,920 Structural: \$2,875 Total: \$53,035	Architecture Services Window Renovation ESSERS Funded

***Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:***

<b><i>Who</i></b>	<b><i>What</i></b>
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<i>Board</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>General discussion</i></li> <li>• <i>Extensive discussion ensued about two proposals presented by Blackney Hayes Architects for the cafeteria expansion and window installation. Discussion involved the use of ESSERS grant money for these projects, the bidding process, and the Board approval process. It was decided that the Blackney Hayes proposals and the bidding process would be reviewed in more detail before putting to a vote. All agreed that an emergency Board meeting could be held if necessary.</i></li> <li>• <i>Based on these discussions, the Board voted to postpone voting the above described proposals by Blackney Hayes.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Mr. Scheid</i>	<i>Reviewed:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Health insurance savings discussed above;</i></li> <li>• <i>Springboard approval.</i></li> </ul>

MOOT

**R210421.06. Uniform Purchases Resolution**

RESOLVED, that the Purchase Proposal/s and associated reports listed below are hereby accepted and ratified;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CEO, business controller, and general counsel are hereby authorized and directed to negotiate the terms and conditions of those contract/s based upon these Purchase Proposal/s;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President is authorized to execute any document or delegate any task necessary to effectuate this resolution.

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comment: Terms and Conditions</b>
None	None	None

***Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:***

<b><i>Who</i></b>	<b><i>What</i></b>
<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>

MOTION:

JEN RAGEN

SECOND:

LIONEL ARCHER, JR. S.

VOTE:

**R210421.07. Approval of 2021-22 Academic School Year Calendar**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby approves of the 2021-22 Academic School Year Calendar of Tacony Academy Charter School, as presented.

***Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:***

PASS

FAIL

MOTION:

LIONDEL S.  
ARCHER, JR.

SECOND:

SANDRA  
FARMER

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

**R210421.08. Approval of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Grant II**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby ratifies and approves the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Grant II fund grant application, as presented;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby ratifies and approves the expenditures contemplated therein;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President is authorized to execute any document or delegate any task necessary to effect this resolution.

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

MOTION:

ANITA VEGA-  
KAISER

SECOND:

JEN RAGEN

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

**R210421.09. Resignation of Trustee Kelly Lorah**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School honors Kelly Lorah for her service as a Trustee of Tacony Academy Charter School;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School accepts the resignation of Kelly Lorah from the Tacony Academy Charter School Board of Trustees, effective April 16, 2021.

*Notes of Discussion / Advance Regulatory and Financial Comment:*

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Board</i>	<i>General discussion</i>

**B. DISCUSSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**DISCUSSION ENSUED REGARDING GOING INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AFTER THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE PUBLIC MEETING.**

NEXT BOARD MEETING: MAY 19, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT AT 7:28 P.M.**

MOTION:

210421

TACS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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JEN RAGEN

SECOND:

LIONEL S, ARCHER, JR.

VOTE:

PASS  
 FAIL

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