

# TACONY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

6201 KEYSTONE STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19135

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

### LOCATION

ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL DUE TO ONGOING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### DATE & TIME

SEPTEMBER 15, 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 6:05 p.m. My name is Barbara L. Saunders. I am the President of this Board of Trustees, and I will facilitate this meeting.

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 and 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 Jennifer Ragen Anita Vega-Kaiser Sandra Farmer Lionel S. Archer, Jr.	Thomas Scheid Ryan Strasko Jessica Harron Stephanie Felder Kevin Gold
<b>Board Members Absent:</b>  Dr. Ronald Whitaker	Ashley Redfearn Kristine Magargee Scott Kramer  Peter Costa  Dean Krebs, Esq. Jessica Bassett

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

*I would like to state, for purposes of the Minutes of this meeting, that on September 15, 2021, the Board of Trustees met in Executive Session for the following purposes under 65 Pa.C.S.A. § 708:*

(X) Consultation with Professional Advisor or Attorney. To consult with its attorney or other professional advisor regarding information or strategy in connection with litigation or with issues on which identifiable complaints are expected to be filed. Specifically, to discuss Resolution R210915.08 below.

**C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION:  
SANDRA FARMER  
  
SECOND:  
LIONEL S.  
ARCHER, JR.  
  
VOTE:  
  
[ X ] PASS  
  
[ ] FAIL

**R210915.01 Approval of the September 15, 2021 Agenda**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby approves the September 15, 2021 Agenda.

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

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

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION:

ANITA VEGA-  
KAISER

SECOND:

JENNIFER  
RAGEN

VOTE:

[ X ] PASS

[ ] FAIL

**R210915.02 Minutes of the August 18, 2021 Meeting**

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School hereby approves the Minutes of the August 18, 2021 meeting of the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School.

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

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

**Dr. Ronald Whitaker joined the meeting.**

**SECTION II: REPORTS**

**A. Community Comment**

NONE

**B. TACONY ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL CEO**

- a. *Thomas Scheid, CEO, Tacony Academy Charter School (“TACS” or the “School”)*
  - i. *Mr. Scheid opened by stating that everyone is happy to be back at school.*
  - ii. *He then reviewed enrollment numbers with the Board. He noted that, while a few families had left the School, the waitlist remained strong.*
- b. *Jessica Harron, Principal, TACS*
  - i. *Ms. Harron then led a discussion on Caring School Community (“CSC”) initiatives.*
- c. *Kevin Gold, Family and Student Liaison, TACS*
  - i. *Mr. Gold noted that the School had been able to reach a number of CSC and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) goals quickly. One future goal, he said, is to work with Stephanie Felder, DEI Coordinator, to create a culture where DEI is part of the fabric that weaves the school community together.*
- d. *Stephanie Felder, DEI Coordinator, TACS*
  - i. *Ms. Felder stated that she is excited about the CSC and DEI work being completed and is looking forward to working with both groups.*
  - ii. *Ms. Felder then updated the Board on the School Garden. The School Garden, she said, ties into lessons on food justice.*
- e. *Thomas Scheid, CEO, TACS*
  - i. *Mr. Scheid then provided the Board with a Human Resources update. Among other things, he noted that the School had recently filled eight positions. Discussion ensued regarding promotions.*
  - ii. *Next, Mr. Scheid updated the Board on the School’s COVID safety and health measures. Among other things, he:*

1. *Explained the make-up of the COVID Response Team;*
  2. *Discussed ongoing meetings and communications regarding COVID-19;*
  3. *Noted that daily reports were made to the Philadelphia Health Department; and*
  4. *Discussed COVID exposure that had occurred in kindergarten some time previously.*
- iii. *Mr. Scheid then reviewed with the Board attendance at the elementary school.*
- f. *Ryan Strasko, Principal, TACS*
- i. *Mr. Strasko described the elementary school academics and activities. Among other things, he discussed:*
    1. *The administration of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment exam (“PSSA”);*
    2. *Student activities, such as Picture Day; and*
    3. *The playground construction.*
- g. *Thomas Scheid, CEO, TACS*
- i. *Mr. Scheid provided the Board with further details regarding the playground construction.*
  - ii. *He then reviewed the high school attendance numbers with the Board.*
- h. *In response to a question from Ms. Saunders, Mr. Scheid explained that there had been three positive COVID cases at TACS. He further explained that schools are required to close if there are six or more positive COVID-19 cases.*
- i. *In response to a question from Ms. Farmer regarding the impact of the school bus shortage on attendance, Mr. Scheid stated that, while attendance is good, there have been some transportation issues with some students. He noted that he did not believe the busing situation would improve and that the City of Philadelphia is offering parents \$300 per month to drive their children to school as opposed to the \$150 per month offered previously. Discussion ensued.*
  - i. *Mr. Strasko added that 70% – 75% of students were being dropped off at the School by their parents.*
  - ii. *Further discussion ensued regarding the bus shortage and reimbursement.*
- j. *Ms. Vega-Kaiser thanked Mr. Scheid for his presentation and for his services to the School.*
- k. *Ms. Saunders asked that the Board be kept updated about transportation issues.*

### **C. AMERICAN PARADIGM SCHOOLS**

- a. *Ashley Redfearn, CEO, American Paradigm Schools (“APS”)*
- i. *Ms. Redfearn opened her presentation by stating that APS’s DEI statement is now included on all Human Resources materials, which communicates to those onboarding that DEI is a priority to APS.*
  - ii. *Ms. Redfearn then discussed the collaborative activities of CEOs across APS schools, including:*
    1. *Sharing renewal processes. Ms. Redfearn explained that TACS’s charter is up for renewal and described how the School is preparing for the renewal process, including working with other APS CEOs. Ms. Redfearn thanked the Board for its engagement with the Charter School Office.*

2. *Discussions about re-opening protocols and COVID-19 research and procedures.*
- iii. *Ms. Redfearn then discussed the appointment of Susan Senek to the position of Director of ELA Curriculum, Instructions, and Assessment. Discussion ensued.*
- b. *Scott Kramer, Chief Talent Officer, APS*
  - i. *Mr. Kramer noted, among other things, that:*
    1. *There had been 85 new hires across APS;*
    2. *A large majority of the Human Resources Department's time has been spent recruiting new staff; and*
    3. *The recent hourly wage increase had made TACS more competitive in the job market.*
  - ii. *Mr. Kramer also discussed, among other things:*
    1. *The APS Referral Program;*
    2. *The Fall 2021 Recruiting Program;*
    3. *DEI initiatives;*
    4. *The School's partnership with Cabrini University, through which Cabrini University would be placing pre-student teachers with TACS starting on September 29, 2021; and*
    5. *The impacts of COVID-19.*
- c. *Mr. Scheid noted that he was excited that Mr. Kramer would be part of the DEI Committee.*
- d. *Further discussion ensued regarding the impact of raising the hourly wage at the School to \$15 per hour. Discussion revolved around the benefits of the wage increase, including the ability to attract high quality candidates.*
- e. *In response to a question from Ms. Saunders, discussion ensued regarding what protocols must be followed should a school be required to close for two weeks due to COVID-19 cases and what steps would be taken should a teacher test positive for COVID-19.*
- f. *Kristine Magargee, Chief Academic Officer, APS*
  - i. *Ms. Magargee began by stating that all new staff had training in programs used by APS and all current staff was given refresher courses in those programs. She then discussed, among other things:*
    1. *The ELA and Math Teams, particularly programs developed over the summer to assist those students falling behind grade level standards;*
    2. *Professional development opportunities in ELA and Math;*
    3. *The Math Intervention Program, which seeks to find out what students need and then teach to those needs; and*
    4. *Standards-based grading.*
  - ii. *Ms. Magargee then provided the Data Team update. She noted that the Data Team was working to ensure all teachers knew how to use various platforms and provided training in the use of programs like EdInsight, Lexia, and Dreambox, among others.*
  - iii. *Ms. Magargee then provided the Coaching Team update. Among other things, Ms. Magargee noted that the large majority of teachers were happy to be back to in-person learning. She discussed various trainings and*

*Professional Development opportunities offered by the Coaching Team, and thanked TACS for helping to make coaching something in which teachers want to participate.*

- g. *In response to a question from Ms. Saunders, discussion ensued regarding the Caring School Community initiative.*
- h. *Dr. Whitaker noted that he had been working on Professional Development opportunities in the DEI space that could be helpful to TACS and other schools across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Board thanked Dr. Whitaker for his work.*

**D. GENERAL COUNSEL**

- a. *Dean Krebs, Esq., General Counsel, Sand & Sidel, P.C.*
  - i. *None*

**E. BUSINESS CONTROLLER**

- a. *Peter Costa, Business Controller, Santilli & Thomson, LLC*
  - i. *Mr. Costa explained that the June financials are not yet complete because the School is still in the earliest stages of its audit. He further stated that he did not anticipate any issues with the audit.*
  - ii. *Mr. Costa then stated that, as of July 2021, the School had \$5.2 million, or 117 days, of cash on hand.*
  - iii. *Next, Mr. Costa discussed various Treasury disbursements for July 2021, focusing particularly on disbursements over \$10,000.*
  - iv. *Discussion then ensued regarding ESSER funds and grant work to be completed.*
  - v. *Mr. Costa closed his presentation by stating that the School District of Philadelphia does reconciliation in October. Therefore, he said, it is important to ensure that the enrollment numbers for regular education students and Special Education students are accurate.*

**SECTION III: NEW BUSINESS**

**A. RESOLUTIONS**

MOTION:  
SANDRA FARMER  
SECOND:  
ANITA VEGA-  
KAISER  
VOTE:  
[ X ] PASS  
[ ] FAIL

**R210915.03 Report of the Business Controller**

RESOLVED, 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:***

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

***Dr. Ronald Whitaker left the meeting.***

MOTION:  
 ANITA VEGA-  
 KAISER  
 SECOND:  
 SANDRA FARMER  
 VOTE:  
 PASS  
 FAIL

**R210915.04 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/POSITION CHANGE</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>
Davis, Ashley (new hire)	Instructional Assistant - ES	9/01/21
Hayes, Ramay (new hire)	NTA - HS	8/30/21
King, Sabrina (new hire)	Grade Teacher - 4th	8/23/21
Kordek, Patrycja (new hire)	Instructional Assistant - ES	9/8/21
Louis, Naomi (new hire)	Building Substitute	8/26/21
Lovenstein, Jennifernifer (new hire)	Grade Teacher - 3rd	8/23/21
Lowry, Regina (new hire)	Instructional Assistant - ES	8/23/21
Morales, Daniela (new hire)	Instructional Assistant - ES	8/30/21
Nicholas, Christopher (new hire)	Instructional Assistant - ES	9/01/21

<b>TERMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>
None	None	None

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

<i>Who</i>	<i>What</i>
<i>Scott Kramer</i>	<i>Mr. Kramer noted that Tacony Academy Charter has a high retention rate.</i>

MOTION:  
 SANDRA  
 FARMER  
 SECOND:  
 LIONEL ARCHER, JR. S.  
 VOTE:  
 PASS  
 FAIL

**R210915.05 Professional Services Contract/s Resolution**

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

FURTHER RESOLVED, the CEO, Business Controller, and General Counsel are hereby authorized and directed to negotiate contract/s for the professional services described below;

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

Contractor	Amount	Comment: Terms and Conditions
Bustleton Services Inc.	<u>Plowing:</u> 1" - 4": \$875.00 4.1" – 7": \$1,062.50 7.1"-11": \$1,500.00 11"+: \$2,250.00  <u>Shoveling:</u> 1" - 4": \$562.50 4.1" – 7": \$812.50 7.1"- 11": \$1,062.50 \$11"+: \$1,312.50  <u>Salt Application:</u> \$750  Additional hourly rates	Snow removal services  1330 Rhawn St.  Contractor shall inform TACS in writing once Services performed during the Term exceed \$15,000 in total invoices and shall also inform TACS when Services to be performed would result in total invoices during the Term exceeding \$20,000.  2021-22 SY
Bustleton Services Inc.	<u>Plowing:</u> 1" - 4": \$1,250.00 4.1" – 7": \$1,625.00 7.1"-11": \$2,000.00 \$11"+: \$2,500.00  <u>Shoveling:</u> 1" - 4": \$750.00 4.1" – 7": \$1,125.00 7.1"- 11": \$1,625.00 \$11"+: \$2,250.00  <u>Salt Application:</u> \$1,000  Additional hourly rates	Snow removal services  6201 Keystone St.  Contractor shall inform TACS in writing once Services performed during the Term exceed \$15,000 in total invoices and shall also inform TACS when Services to be performed would result in total invoices during the Term exceeding \$20,000.  2021-22 SY
Therapy Source, Inc.	Therapy Services: \$85.50/hour	Therapy services  2021-22 SY

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

Who	What
Board	General discussion



MOOT

**R210915.06 Purchase Contract/s Resolution**

RESOLVED, the Purchase Contract/s and associated report/s listed below are hereby accepted and ratified;

FURTHER RESOLVED, the CEO, Business Controller, and General Counsel are hereby authorized and directed to negotiate the terms and conditions for the Purchase Contract/s described below;

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

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

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

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

MOTION:

ANITA VEGA-KAISER

SECOND:

SANDRA FARMER

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

**R210915.07 Approval of Title I Family Engagement Policy**

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School ratifies and approves of the Title I Family Engagement Policy, as presented.

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

Who	What
<i>Ashley Redfearn</i>	<i>Ms. Redfearn explained that the Title I Family Engagement Policy needed to be re-ratified. The only change, she said, was the addition of language regarding virtual options during the COVID-19 pandemic due to safety concerns.</i>

MOTION:

SANDRA FARMER

SECOND:

JENNIFER RAGEN

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

**R210915.08 Confidential Settlement and Trust Agreement of W.A.**

RESOLVED, the Board of Trustees of Tacony Academy Charter School approves of the Confidential Settlement and Trust Agreement for W.A., as presented.

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

Who	What
<i>Barbara L Saunders</i>	<i>Ms. Saunders noted that the Confidential Settlement and Trust Agreement had been discussed in Executive Session.</i>

**B. DISCUSSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Ms. SAUNDERS THANKED THE TACS AND APS TEAMS FOR HOW THEY HANDLED THE UNPRECEDENTED ISSUES PRESENTED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. EVERY YEAR, SHE SAID, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHALLENGES EVERYONE’S CREATIVE PROCESSES. SHE FURTHER THANKED THE TACS AND APS TEAMS FOR TAKING CARE OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THEIR TIME AND ATTENTION TO SCHOOL MATTERS.**
- **MR. SCHEID NOTED THAT BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT WOULD BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL. THE EVENTS, HE SAID, WOULD BE HELD VIRTUALLY.**
- **MS. REDFEARN THANKED MR. KREBS AND MR. COSTA FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN RECENT SCHOOL MATTERS.**

NEXT BOARD MEETING: OCTOBER 10, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT AT 7:12 P.M.**

MOTION:

SANDRA FARMER

SECOND:

LIONEL S. ARCHER, JR.

VOTE:

PASS

FAIL

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