



Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 4:00pm

CICS Network Office | 11 East Adams Street, Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60603

Board Members Present: David Chizewer, Doresah Ford-Bey, Venkat Maddila, Brian Novelline, Katie Reilly, Evan Sharp

Board Members on Zoom: Mark Morgan, Crystal Stonewall

CICS Staff Present: Claudia Beltran, Pelin Deniz, Meaghan Jennings, Luke McShane, Beth Purvis, Allison Sussna

Guests Present: Erin Lanoue, Mike McCarthy, Jacob Morgan, Katie O'Connor, Kelly Smith, Joanne Tanner, Vicki Tsirtsis

Meeting Notes

Welcome Evan Sharp called the meeting to order at 4:06pm. No public comment was made.

Voting Item: A motion was made by Evan Sharp, seconded by Venkat Maddila and agreed upon unanimously to approve the August 9, 2024 Board of Directors meeting minutes.

Evan shared that due to an abbreviated schedule, the Board meeting would begin with its closed session. The remaining items on the agenda would be discussed once in open session. The closed session would be used to discuss personnel and a student disciplinary case.

Voting Item: A motion was made by Evan Sharp, seconded by Venkat Maddila and agreed upon unanimously to move to closed session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c).

Voting Item: A motion was made by Evan Sharp, seconded by David Chizewer and agreed upon unanimously to move to open session.

Beth first shared that Civitas Education Partners has rebranded to Meridian Charter Schools. Their decision to rebrand was guided by feedback from their community.

Pelin shared an overview of Marva Collins, a property owned by CICS that is close to CICS Ralph Ellison. The property was purchased in 2010 for \$600,000. The current valuation of the property is \$700,000 and we listed the property on the market at the same time as the Irving Park Church. Over the last few months, we had only one offer at \$250,000. However, we now have an interested party who has made an offer of \$950,000. They are an early child operator out of Frankfort; they are hoping to relocate by December.

Voting Item: A motion was made by David Chizewer, seconded by Evan Sharp and approved upon unanimously to delegate approval to management for sale of Marva Collins property.

David Chizewer shared more about Craig Henderson; he was a founder and longstanding board member. Responsible for our successful Board financing. Recently sold his business and would love to rejoin the Board. David is formally nominating him for Board membership.

David made the motion, Brian seconded and approved unanimously

Voting Item: A motion was made by David Chizewer, seconded by Brian Novelline and agreed upon unanimously to nominate Craig Henderson to the CICS Board of Directors.

The Board next discussed the changes made to the bylaws. A conversation ensued on virtual participation; David will share the appropriate legal language with Meaghan, but we need a process in place to note who will be voting remotely. At the beginning of each meeting, we will certify the reason for virtual participation in the meeting.

Voting Item: A motion was made by David Chizewer, seconded by Evan Sharp and agreed upon unanimously to approval the amended Bylaws of the Chicago International Charter School Board of Directors.

Pelin Deniz next presented the projected 20th day counts. As of today, we are down by 14 students as compared to last year. We do have significant successes: Northtown, Ellison, Bond, and all ReGeneration campuses have increased overall enrollment. We do not have the wait lists that we have had in

the past; there are no kindergarten waitlists across all CICS campuses. We have seen over 960 transfers out of CICS from the end of last year to this year. Beth reiterated that it's a victory that we are even, given the overall state of the city and the academic performance of many of our campuses which is not as strong as it should be.

David questioned our insight into the transfer students; do we know whether the transfers are within CPS or if they are leaving the district. It would be helpful to understand more of the context, i.e. what is within our control and what is not. We will focus on what is in our control - we know academics and safety is the priority. We will explore busing and transportation opportunities. We will also explore opportunities for partnerships with early childhood programs. What is it that we can do across the network to ensure that parents are staying within our network?

Beth next shared an update on the audit. We are incredibly thankful for the team at Distinctive Schools; they have worked with our team to do as much as possible to get us ready for the audit. We began the audit; 2 days in and we are cautiously optimistic. Beth thanked all of our SMO partners for their patience as we put a hold on many activities to prepare us for this audit.

Next, Beth presented the budget. Given some forecasted changes, we are reducing our overall personnel costs by \$60,000, but we are increasing our consulting costs. Additional changes include an increase to non personnel. We added to our legal budget given expulsion hearings, we gave a modest budget increase for stewardship events, and increased costs associated with the audit. Additionally, we increased maintenance costs; we need to do significant work to CICS West Belden to make it ADA accessible. It may cost more than \$150,000, which is what we have budgeted. Two things that were taken out of the budget in the past - professional development for staff and mileage reimbursement - have been added to the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. In total, this is an increase of \$258,000 in non-personnel.

Allison next presented updates from the portfolio team. We had a very calm and joyful opening of school, which are words that have not been used to describe schools (post pandemic) in some time. However, we have some sobering data that we will be sharing. We will host a training in November to do a deep dive into our ISBE summative designations, and we will also discuss the data points during our meeting in December. Allison highlighted the summer professional learning opportunities across our 3 SMOs. CICS has focused on campus visits across the portfolio. Beth shared that what she saw across all

schools was joy. There is a lot of hope for what we can accomplish this year. Our working groups have continued: reducing exclusionary discipline, supporting multilingual learners and supporting our diverse learners. We are working with Innovate as our data warehouse partner.

Allison shared more about the importance of rigor; there is not consistent rigor across classrooms in our network which we see in our inconsistent outcomes. We know that access to grade-level curriculum - which is rigor - is the key to closing the gaps. It is most important that our students are on grade-level.

Allison presented the latest IAR data. We look at this data in comparison to schools across the network, to CPS averages, and to each school's performance the year before (their year-over-year growth). We will receive the accurate data in a month and will share more with the full Board then.

Allison then shared SAT data, which is no longer being required in CPS. We will have ACT data moving forward (so will not have comparative data). We need to better understand how our schools are or are not best addressing the needs of our students especially on the south side. Allison then presented average daily attendance and chronic absenteeism across the network and how we perform against CPS.

Lastly, Allison reviewed charter compliance and all of our CICS policies that are under review. Oftentimes, CPS policies are built to use their systems or are built for student bodies or networks that are not reflective of ours.

Meaghan shared updates on Development, including progress on goals discussed during the August meeting and retreat. The Development Committee has been established and is composed of Brian and Katie. The first fundraising appeal was mailed out and an ask was made of all Directors to participate. Meaghan asked all members to share their personal financial commitments by the end of October.

Closing Items

Brian Novelline adjourned the meetings at 5:58pm.