

**Thomas MacLaren State Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting
September 24, 2020
Minutes**

APPROVED

The meeting took place online via Zoom videoconference.

- I. **Call to Order:** Mrs. Nussbaum called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
 - A. **Roll Call:** Present: Mrs. Melissa Nussbaum, Ms. Diane Borre, Mr. Paul von Boeck, Mr. Tim Fuller, Mrs. Meredith Sherman, Mrs. Dawn Conley, and Mrs. Khristine Prickett Vadala. Mrs. Hannah Parsons was absent. Also present were Mrs. Mary Faith Hall, Executive Director, Mr. Ben LaBadie, Head of Upper School, Ms. Katie Maslow, Assistant Head of Upper School, Mr. Nico Alvarado, Head of Lower School, Mrs. Katherine Brophy, Director of Communications, Mrs. Lori Richardson, Director of Finance, Mrs. Kari Coleman, Director of Operations, Mrs. Joy Oram, Director of Community Engagement, Mr. John Brendza, Charter School Institute (CSI), and Mr. Tom Sistaire of Hoelting and Co.
 - B. **Public Comment:** Mr. Brinsa introduced himself and the reason for his presence at today's Board Meeting. He is evaluating our Board practices, something that CSI is doing for each of their schools.
 - C. **Approval of Agenda:** Approve the amended agenda. Mr. von Boeck motioned, Mrs. Conley seconded. Unanimous approval of the agenda.
 - D. **Approval of Minutes:** Mr. von Boeck motioned. Mrs. Conley seconded. Unanimous approval of the August meeting minutes.

- II. **Policy Review and Accountability**
 - A. **Auditor's Report:** Tom Sistaire of Hoelting and Co., presented his findings regarding the annual audit. He walked the Board through the audit, explaining the technical language so that everyone would understand more fully the school's financial position and the school's financial policies and procedures. Hoelting and Co. again issued an "unmodified" or "clean" opinion of our annual audit. Mrs. Nussbaum and Mrs. Hall praised Mrs. Richardson and her team for all their hard work which resulted in this clean audit. Mrs. Nussbaum motioned that the Board accept Mr. Sistaire's audit report. 2nd Mr. von Boeck. Unanimous approval
 - B. **Nomination of Board Secretary:** Mrs. Nussbaum nominated Mrs. Parsons to be Board Secretary. There were no other nominations for this position. Mrs. Conley motioned; 2nd Mr. von Boeck. Unanimous approval.
 - C. **Approve 2020-2021 Enrollment Policy:** Mrs. Hall explained the changes that were made. Because of the federal grant we had received for the Lower School, we had to have a separate Enrollment Policy for Lower School that took into account the lottery restrictions that came with the grant. Now that that grant has expired, we have created a single K-12 policy which looks very similar to the US policy that had already been in place.

*MOTION: To approve the 2020-21 Enrollment Policy as presented.
Motioned by Mrs. Conley, 2nd Mr. von Boeck. Unanimous approval.*

- D. School Founders Document:** Mrs. Hall discussed the desire to broaden the definition of the “school founder” to include the Founding faculty and staff, the Founding Board and the Founding Students (Classes of 2013-2016) and the reasoning behind this change.

MOTION: To approve the School Founder Document as presented.

Motioned by Mrs. Sherman. 2nd Mrs. Conley. Unanimous approval.

III. Board Training

- A. Community Engagement – Mrs. Joy Oram:** Mrs. Nussbaum introduced Mrs. Oram, reminding them that not only does she organize the MacLaren Society and MacLaren Quartet events, she also organizes social events for the high school students and the broader MacLaren community. Mrs. Oram went into more detail about her role as Director of Community Engagement since 2016. She also explained how she is beginning to work on networking with local philanthropists, organizations and civic groups. She asked the Board members to contact her with names of people that she could meet with and talk to about MacLaren.

IV. Student Performance

- A. PBIS/Highlanders Program – Mr. LaBadie and Mr. Alvarado:** Mr. LaBadie, Head of Upper School and Mr. Alvarado, Head of Lower School gave a joint presentation. This program is an effort to create a school culture for the students that is characterized by kindness, friendliness, and peace. There are many external pressures on students. How can we support students and foster our school culture in a way that is consistent and organized, at scale and quickly, as we have large groups of children coming into the school? This is where Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) comes in. It focuses on prevention instead of punishment. These programs are formalizing what we already do around the school in the context of conversations and relationships. We want to be intentional about this so as to help our students become emotionally healthy, resilient, and “fully human and fully awake to the world”. In the Lower School, we use the idea of the Highlander (integrity, generosity, and community) to make PBIS more understandable to the students and to express the character traits that we want to emphasize with them. This is a long-term process. We will need to evaluate it as we go but we are already seeing success.

Mr. LaBadie and Mr. Alvarado then fielded some questions from Board members.

V. Status Reports

- A. Executive Director:** Mrs. Hall noted that the biggest change to announce was that after Fall Break, the Upper School would be shifting from a reduced cohort to a full cohort model, with all in-person students having class together Mondays-Wednesdays and remotely Thursdays and Fridays. The decision was made after consulting with the Board Executive Committee, members of the School Advisory Committee, faculty, and our authorizer, the Charter School Institute (CSI) who ultimately approved this change. The other exciting news is that the North Modularity arrived on Friday and in about 3-4 weeks they will be usable. There will be a full update on the bond and how we have used that money on this major renovation project at the Board retreat. On the topic of enrollment, Mrs. Hall made the point that we have never had so much change in enrollment in the August-September time frame as we have this year. We may end up under budget. We will find out after Count Day on October 1.

B. Dashboard: Mrs. Hall noted that she added more special populations to the Dashboard and asked the Board to let her know if that is helpful or not. These are numbers we are asked about most often and that we keep track of most often, so she thought they would be valuable for the Board to see.

C. Finance Committee

a. August Financial Statements: Mrs. Borre said that there isn't much going on as this is only the second month into the school year. As the auditor stated, the reserves are healthy.

VI. Announcements

A. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: October 22, 2020, 4:00 p.m. via Zoom

B. Board Retreat: November 14, 2020, at Mrs. Parson's workspace. This will be in-person in a large room.

VII. Adjournment

A. Motion to Adjourn: Mrs. Conley motioned; 2nd Mrs. Sherman. Unanimous approval. Adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Katherine A. Brophy, Minutes Recorder

Date