



Board Members Present

Jill Robinson Kramer (Vice-Chair)

Virginia Calvin

Gretchen Gutman

MaryAnn Ruegger

Beth Bray

Ellis G. Dumas III

Board Members Absent

Janet Rummel

Staff

James Betley

Bridgett Abston

Ryan Preston

Sherie Scott

Beatriz Pacheco

NOTICE OF MEETING AND AGENDA

April 28, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. EDT

Indiana Government Center South – Conference Room A

302 W Washington Street,

Indianapolis, IN 46204

Meeting Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrwOVpYV1PVHYSAMk5sDRGw>

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Agenda

I. Call to Order/Board Meeting Minutes Approval

- a. Approval of Board Minutes (December 16, 2021)
 - i. Acting Chair, Jill Robinson Kramer called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. ET.
 - ii. Board Member Gutman motioned to accept the December 16, 2021 board minutes. Board Member Calvin seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote with Board Members Ruegger, Gutman, Dumas, Calvin, Bray, and Robinson Kramer voting aye.

II. Board Business

- a. **21st Century Charter School at Gary – Charter Application**
 - i. Presentation of staff recommendation
 1. Executive Director, James Betley, provided a brief overview of the change in authorizer charter application submitted by 21st Century Charter School at Gary.
 2. The staff recommendation is to approve the change in authorizer request.
 - ii. Presentation of request by organizer
 1. Arlene Colvin, School Board President for 21st Century Charter School at Gary, shared that the change in authorizer would provide for more access to educational opportunities.
 2. Kevin Teasley, President of GEO Foundation, summarized the history of 21st Century Charter School at Gary. He also provided an overview of academics, partnerships, and initiatives.
 - iii. Question and answer period
 1. Board Member Gutman asked about the State of Louisiana reference in Article 8 of the submitted application. Dana Teasley, General Counsel of GEO Foundation, shared that it was a charter management agreement template created along with the School Board's counsel. She shared that will be updated with ICSB staff upon charter approval. Board Member Gutman commented that she thinks ICSB should not allow templates in the applications particularly with an existing charter school. James responded that this update can be done and assured ICSB thoroughly reviews management agreements.
 2. Board Member Gutman said that she thinks the pandemic is being used as an excuse for poor performance. She said she is concerned by the elementary school statistics and asked what the school plans on doing to address this. Chief Academic Officer, Wendy Skibinski responded that they are increasing the number of times students are taking practice assessments. They have purchased an additional formative assessment and source of data. Second graders opted into taking IREAD-3. 20% of 2nd graders passed. Board Member Gutman asked what passed means and what would grade level would they meet. Ms. Skibinski shared that the 2nd grade students passing IREAD-3 are above grade level. Ms. Skibinski provided an overview of the data teams, interventions and academic partnerships. Board Member Gutman asked why can't we get this right. Ms. Skibinski shared that her job involves her looking at many types of

details including the school scheduling, access, etc. Ms. Skibinski highlighted that the student interventions must occur in-house. Student assessment must happen early and frequently.

3. Board Member Dumas asked the school to expound on what they plan on doing with the savings made by changing authorizers. Ms. Teasley responded that 100% of the savings will go directly back into the classroom. Some budget items the additional savings could be used for include additional teachers, teacher raises, and professional development. These determinations will be made through conversations with building leadership and with Ms. Skibinski.
4. Board Member Dumas asked how the school is providing direct communication to the parents regarding academic performance. Ms. Skibinski shared that school has data board throughout the school for parents to see academic performance. She said they will be reconfiguring grade levels among the four campuses to best support the students and will be communicating this with parents. The school hosts three parent teacher conferences per year. Families know what the targets are and why students have been selected for interventions or high ability.
5. Board Member Dumas mentioned that a member of the community was concerned about suspension and expulsion rates based on race, IEPs, and/or 504s. Ms. Skibinski said that she disaggregates disciplinary data on a monthly basis and a discipline committee has been created to review disciplinary procedures and expectations. All staff including bus drivers will be trained in how to proactively address disciplinary type issues. Board Members Dumas said he would like to see relevant data.
6. Board Member Bray said she was concerned about the math ILEARN data. She went on to say that proficiency is higher at the lower grades and seems to decrease at the higher grades. What is being implemented differently to address this? Ms. Skibinski said GEO Foundation hired a Director of Mathematics that looks at the classroom level curriculum implementation and data disaggregation. More formative assessments that correspond with passing guides. The previous educators in these positions have been replaced.
7. Board Member Bray asked Ms. Skibinski how much time she is spending at each school and how she is spending her time at each school. Ms. Skibinski said she spends a full day at each school building. While she is in the building, she does classroom observations and provides formative feedback while she is there. She meets with principals on a biweekly basis to discuss staffing and professional development. Mr. Teasley clarified that Ms. Skibinski is focused entirely on schools in Indiana.
8. Board Member Bray asked Mr. Teasley how many principals 21st Century Charter School at Gary has had in the seventeen years of its existence. Mr. Teasley responded that the first principal was there for about six months. The interim principal was there until 2012. Subsequently, there was an elementary principal and a higher grade level principal. Immediately after, a previous teacher returned as a high school principal. He relocated with his wife out of state. Thus, the assistant principal was promoted and how

- serves as the school principal. The current school leaders have been with 21st Century Charter School at Gary between five and seventeen years.
9. Board Member Bray asked that the school's team speak to the provisional approval of their renewal charter agreement with Ball State. Mr. Teasley responded that the approval was not provisional nor probationary. Mr. Teasley went over the items on Ball State's charter approval letter. He said he recognizes the high school grade levels cost substantially more than the lower levels and feels it is a great return on investment. He said 21st Century Charter School at Gary has a great relationship with Ball State. They chose to leave to afford more opportunities to students.
 10. Board Member Ruegger asked to be provided with the out-of-school and in-school-suspension rates for the last academic school year. Ms. Skibinski said it was about seventeen percent and about seven percent of students with IEPs. Board Member Ruegger asked how suspension rates vary by elementary, middle, and high school. Ms. Skibinski said the number tends to be higher in the intermediate grade level.
 11. Board Member Ruegger asked if the school has interventionists and if so, how many are there and how do they support. Ms. Skibinski shared that their intervention support does not have the title "interventionist", but they provide interventions during the school day in ELA and in math. The school's team recently discussed having content-specific and skilled interventionists.
 12. Board Member Ruegger asked to be reminded of Mr. Teasley's role. Ms. Skibinski said his title is CEO and superintendent. Board Member Ruegger asked if he had a teaching license and a superintendent's license.
 13. Board Member Ruegger asked if Mr. and Mrs. Teasley were part of the same family or if the last name was just a coincidence. Ms. Skibinski said yes they are part of the same family.
 14. Board Member Ruegger asked how Ivy Tech Community College is paid for the schooling 21st Century Charter School at Gary students. Mr. Teasley shared that the school receives state funding and the school pays for tuition, textbooks, and transportation.
 15. Board Member Ruegger asked if the school has had a graduate rate audit within the last three years. Mr. Teasley shared that they have had a graduation rate audit every year. Board Member Ruegger said if the school's external auditor has also done a graduation rate audit. Mr. Teasley answered yes. Board Member Ruegger then asked how many students are being taken out of the cohort and well as if they have had any findings on the graduation rate. Mr. Teasley said they have not had any findings and he said the school started with 92 students and 88 are graduating. The other four students may take five years.
- iv. Board decision
1. Board Member Calvin motioned to approve the staff recommendation to grant the change in authorizer request for 21st Century Charter School at Gray that includes the Ball State provided renewal conditions and assurance funding is not disproportionately helping their higher grades at the expense of the lower grade levels. Board Member Gutman seconded the motion.

2. The motion passed with a five to one voice vote with Members Virginia Calvin, Gretchen Gutman, Beth Bray, Ellis Dumas, and Jill Kramer voting aye. Member MaryAnn Ruegger voted nay.
 3. Member Janet Rummel was not present to vote.
- b. **Paramount School of Excellence: Lafayette – Charter Application**
- i. Presentation of staff recommendation
 1. Executive Director, James Betley, provided a brief overview of the new charter application for Paramount School of Excellence Lafayette.
 2. The staff recommendation is to approve the new charter school request.
 - ii. Presentation of request by organizer
 1. Tommy Reddicks, CEO of Paramount Schools of Excellence, provided an overview of the replication application for the new Paramount School of Excellence Lafayette. Mr. Reddicks also provided background and history on the network.
 - iii. Question and answer period
 1. Board Member Gutman asked for more discussion about the virtual school. Mr. Reddicks responded that their school was very proactive even prior to the pandemic to launch a virtual school. The network chose to pivot to a virtual school by using the existing brick and mortar school model.
 2. Board Member Gutman asked the special education student percentage in the district and is it comparable to the students served. Mr. Reddicks said they are very comparable with about 17% - 18%. Board Member Gutman asked if the Lafayette school would be comparable to the Lafayette school district. Mr. Reddicks said yes. Board Member Gutman asked if the same would be true for English learners. Mr. Reddicks said yes. They are trending in that direction for their Indianapolis schools.
 3. Board member Gutman asked how the organizer is informing the Lafayette community about the incoming charter school. Mr. Reddicks answered that they have opened a mall store called My Learning Nook that is a free tutoring center for students grades K – 8. Board Member Gutman asked if there have been letters of support from the community. Mr. Reddicks said he has received a letter of support from a former board member of New Community School and there was also a public comment provided at the public hearing.
 4. Board Member Calvin commented that, as a Board member, she would like to better understand virtual schooling and special education.
 5. Vice-Chair Kramer Robinson asked for clarification on when the school would open. Mr. Reddicks replied they plan to open for the fall of 2023.
 6. Vice-Chair Kramer Robinson asked if the local school district had any comment. Mr. Reddicks said there was no comment from the local school district.
 7. Vice-Chair Kramer Robinson said that since the school would be a K-8, what is the plan for transitioning students to high school. Mr. Reddicks said their network prefers to not move into high school and instead has counselors work with students individually to find the best fit for them.
 8. Board Member Ruegger asked which authorizers does the network have schools with currently. Mr. Reddicks said they have three schools with the

Indianapolis Mayor's Office and one school with Trine University. Board member Ruegger asked who authorizes the charter for the acquired closed South Bend school building. Mr. Reddicks said they have an application for that school with Trine University. Board Member Ruegger clarified that the Paramount network owns the school building, but does not have a charter for said school. Mr. Reddicks confirmed that is correct. Board Member Ruegger asked the status of the Paramount South Bend charter application. Mr. Reddicks said the application is due in May and it is being finalized. Board Member Ruegger asked when the decision will be made. Mr. Reddicks said they have not been made aware of the Trine Board meeting date. Board Member Ruegger asked how the public can follow along on the process. Mr. Reddicks said he thinks it would be on the Trine University charter schools website. Board Member Ruegger asked if the network would be engaging the South Bend community regarding the new charter school. Mr. Reddicks said there will also be a My Learning Nook opening in their main mall. Board Member Ruegger asked if the My Learning Nook is part of the virtual school and where the funds come from. Mr. Reddicks responded that it is a standalone initiative. He said the network had money set aside for marketing initiatives and has used state funding (1008) to fully fund the Mishawaka and Lafayette locations. Board Member Ruegger asked what the 1008 grant is. Mr. Reddicks said it was focused on addressing learning loss. Board Member Ruegger asked if the public was aware a new charter school was coming when they pass by the My Learning Nook. Mr. Reddicks said there is Paramount School of Excellence marketing throughout the Lafayette My Learning Nook. Board Member Ruegger asked how Paramount fits within the new school's community compared to the previous charter school in Lafayette. Mr. Reddicks responded that they have learned lessons throughout the years. He does not see restrictive or oppressive models in their schools. Board Member Ruegger asked the organizer to address the suspension rate specifically for Black students and also for students with 504s or IEPs. She is concerned about the INview suspension rate for Paramount. Mr. Reddicks responded that they have been working on their suspension rate and in the last year it has dropped by half. He mentioned a DEI coordinator has been added at the network level. They are working hard to address the disproportionate suspension of Black and special education students. Board Member Ruegger asked what the percent of special education students suspended. Mr. Reddicks said he did not have the rate on hand. Board Member Ruegger said many teachers at Paramount Brookside are inexperienced. She asked how this is being addressed by Paramount. Mr. Reddicks said local competition is driving teachers to move around to other schools with higher pay. Board Member Ruegger asked if Purdue Polytechnic would be opening in Lafayette and if so, would Paramount Lafayette partner with them. Mr. Reddicks said he cannot speak with them, but the network would love to continue the relationship with current partners.

iv. Board decision

1. Board Member Gutman motioned to approve the staff recommendation to grant a charter for the new Paramount School of Excellence Lafayette charter school. Board Member Bray seconded the motion.
2. The motion passed with a five to one voice vote with Members Gretchen Gutman, Ellis Dumas, Virginia Calvin, Beth Bray, and Jill Kramer voting aye. Member MaryAnn Ruegger voted nay.
3. Member Janet Rummel was not present to vote.

III. Public Comment

- a. Mr. Noah Smith – Fort Wayne Community Schools. *Hello, my name is Noah Smith. I'm from Fort Wayne, Indiana. I'm a citizen and taxpayer. I'm also on the Fort Wayne Community Schools' board in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I am not here to comment on this specific application in particular, but there was an application that was withdrawn in Fort Wayne. First and foremost, I'd like to thank Bridgett and Bea, in particular. They were very helpful previous process over last month. Excellent to work with very professional very, you know very forthright and coming and I very much appreciate their assistance in this process. That being said, I do believe this is a rushed process as I feel like over this month and particularly with this application and the application we experienced. In my opinion, It's creating a new school district. There's a separate board. There's separate, you know students, principals. That kind of stuff. You're creating a separate school district within an area and for this to be processed within basically 30 days or less feels like a rushed process. I believe the fact that there's really no one here from the community either in this one or the prior application, that speaks to that level of concern from my perspective. The other thing I wanted to mention is I would advocate and encourage you as board members with your role to advocate at the state level to become the only authorizer. As a concern of mine, as you mentioned, in your last review that charters could shop authorizers and then reviewing the experience that you've had as an authorizer other authorizers have had, it does appear that there are charter schools that have gone from one authorizer to another authorizer. And the appearance is a concern in that one of the specific ones that I noticed that you had authorized in your notes or minutes is that it was you were concerned about financial and academic performance and it moves to a different authorizer within a year later. So, I would advocate that you be the only authorizer within the state as you are in my in my opinion again the only democratically appointed processed authorizers. The other authorizers seem to be mostly universities that that just popped up and decided, 'Hey we're authorizers today'. So that's why I have stayed today. I will have to leave for parking purposes, but I appreciate the time the experience today. Thank you.*

IV. Staff Updates

- a. New Board Members
 - i. Hopefully once the open board positions are filled, a Board retreat can occur.
- b. Fall 2022 Renewals
 - i. There are twelve schools for renewal in the fall. Availability and communication for the Board will be requested for the fall.
 - ii. Vice-Chair Kramer asked if suspension and special education data can also be provided in Board meetings.
 - iii. The Fall 2022 Renewal Board meeting(s) will be held in person.

V. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

- a. Fort Wayne Community Schools Public Hearing
 - i. Board Member Ruegger said she was very pleased with how the public hearing was organized and professional. Board Member Ruegger said she felt the timeline

was a problem as recommended by Noah Smith. She recommended posting to the ICSB website upon receipt of the letters of intent and scheduling the public hearings immediately as well. Executive Director, James Betley, said ICSB staff already does the two recommendations by Board Member Ruegger. Vice-Chair Kramer asked when the public hearings are scheduled. ICSB Staff Member, Bridgett Abston, said public hearings are scheduled immediately upon receipt of applications. Public hearings are then scheduled for about two weeks from the date of application receipt. Board Member Ruegger suggested the public hearings be scheduled prior to the submission of applications. Vice-Chair said the Board will take these suggestions into consideration.

- b. Board Member Bray motioned to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Gutman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with Board Members Ruegger, Gutman, Dumas, Calvin, Bray, and Kramer voting aye. Board Member Janet Rummel was not present to vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m. ET.