

# Truxton Academy Charter School

## Regular Board Meeting

**December 13, 2021**

Notice was provided on our website, [www.truxtonacademy.org](http://www.truxtonacademy.org) on Monday, December 6, 2021.

A quorum of 8 trustees out of 8 total number of trustees was present as follows:

**Members Present:** Stuart Young, Tom Brown, Krysta Austen, and Sarah Stevens attended in person. Dave Amberg, Korinne L'Hommedieu, Cindy Denkenberger joined remotely. Beth Klein joined remotely at 7:06pm.

**Others present:** Patty Dawson attended in person. Leaf Carmer, Sara Petit-McClure, Courtney Harrington, Ellen Eagen and Kathie Arnold attended remotely. Other guests Carmine Sonnaccio and Betsy Soshinsky attended in person.

President Stuart Young called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

### **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes for the Regular Meeting November 8, 2021 were presented. Having no objections, minutes were accepted as presented. Approved.

### **Community Comments**

Betsy Soshinsky asked if her letter of concern had been addressed and if any resolutions were being proposed. Stuart Young responded that we received her letter and are investigating her concerns. This is the first meeting of the board since her letter was received. She was hoping that some action would have been taken already. Stuart Young confirmed that a meeting with our Head of School and himself has been set. Sara Petit-McClure explained that her concerns would all be addressed in detail at the meeting. Stuart asked if she would like to speak further to any. She asked if our curriculum included sex education or CRT at this time. Sara responded that sex education was not typically introduced until Grade 6 and CRT is not a curriculum. Betsy expressed that her biggest concern is class size and is hoping that it will be addressed quickly. Tom Brown replied we must balance student to teacher to classroom ratio based on enrollment and budget. Staffing issues are a big part of the issue and we are working to find a better solution.

### **School Report**

Sara Petit McClure shared results from the recent parent survey - 44% of families responded. Most responses show that families are satisfied with their child's experience and Truxton Academy overall.

Tom Brown asked about maker space classes. Sara shared the last project where students were building and constructing based on scientific methods. All students have maker space instruction once per week.

Leadership council agreed that surveys are helpful and should be done more than once a year. A similar survey will be sent out in March and at the end of year. Teachers will follow up with families to hopefully increase the number of responses.

Tom reported that it was great to see the bikes from our recent fundraiser put together and ready to go. He also remarked on how great it was watching the kids work hard outside with hay bales for the composting project.

Beth Klein reported on Leadership Council. The group discussed classroom behavior, how it relates to staff openings and how to increase needed support. We are still in need of a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher subs, as well as social emotional support. Staff morale was discussed and the team is working on ways to work together. The Winter concert will need to be virtual due to rise in Covid. Our Music teacher, Mr. C, and the students are working hard to make it great regardless.

## **Board Committee Reports**

### *Finance Committee*

Treasurer's Report attached. Korinne reported that cash position improved due to Cortland City School District payment finally coming in. Actuals from July thru November – and forecasts for the total year show that we are on budget, although a little lower on revenues that anticipated. We should get additional revenues before end of year, but she did not include in her forecast. Spending is favorable. Being down an Administrative Assistant and Grade 4 teacher positions is giving us an upside in spending, but we know this is not ideal for student results. We are budgeted and committed to filling these positions ASAP. Custodial and cafeteria staff are on track. Health insurance is unfavorable, but a correction to payroll entries should bring it back in line. Budget vs. actual spending through November is favorable. It is still early in the year, however, barring any major maintenance issues, we should be in good standing. Tom asked about future fuel oil prices. Kathie Arnold confirmed that we are good through April. Korinne stated that she has budgeted for higher prices in April when we will have to refill. Facilities committee is tasked with researching best prices and advanced purchasing in the summer months.

Beth asked about the \$42k overage showing at the end of the year and if that should remain even after approved additional positions are filled. Korinne confirmed that is the case.

Finance Committee Report attached. Tom reported that the audit was reviewed and they are working toward all fixes needed. They are also looking to get more tech in classrooms.

### *Personnel Committee*

Reports for November 9 and December 8 are attached. Cindy reported that they discussed updating the employee handbook. There were a few areas that need further clarification. The committee postponed Peaceful Schools due to the sub shortage. Carol Woodhouse suggested a holiday party for teachers, to help boost morale. The party is planned for December 17 and Carol could use monetary and other support. We can contact her directly. Courtney mentioned there could be help from PTO for support. She will reach out to her group and connect with Carol.

Motion by Tom Brown, seconded by Krysta Austen, to approve creation of Social Worker/Social Emotional and Academic Intervention teacher position. None opposed. Motion carried.

### *Facilities Committee*

No Report submitted.

### *Curriculum Committee*

No Report submitted.

### *Marketing Committee*

No Report submitted. Sarah reported that the sign was dropped at Lab and will be installed for the upcoming Ski Season.

## **Special Committee Reports**

### *Nutrition Committee*

No Report submitted. Tom Brown reported that the cold serving is on order to arrive in June 2022. Sara reported that a current ELA lesson included letters from students written to Mrs. Riehlman asking where

our food is purchased. The next step is to contact some of the local vendors for field lessons. Students will be making mozzarella cheese with the Harrington family which will then be put on their pizza that Friday for lunch!

*Professional Advisory Committee*

No report submitted.

*Transportation Committee*

No Report submitted. Sara reported that teachers have been notified that we are set to have Field lessons scheduled.

*Fundraising Committee*

Report attached. Dave reported that the Honda Corporation is not accepting grant proposals at this time. He is looking for a document with committee mission and expectations to recruit new people and would like something to share so folks know what to expect. Patty reported that the Executive Committee is working on this to roll out in the new year. Dave shared the original spreadsheet created by the committee which includes a list of business that have been and/or could be solicited. He is asking for board members to add to the list – creating an annual campaign asking friends and previous supporters to support again.

Cindy remarked on the dog treat fundraiser. Students are doing research on pricing and will be rolling out the ordering process. Once they are ready, more treats will be made.

*Agriculture Committee*

Report attached. Kathie reported that the committee has grown and changed its name to the Rural Life Lab Committee. Kathie has stepped down as chair, and the committee approved the appointment of Lizzie Saft and Courtney Harrington as Co-Chairs. Tom Brown asked that the committee regularly communicate with all founders to be sure to stick to our mission. The group is also working to get grow towers back into classrooms. The committee will meet with Sara on other plans/curriculum in the works. Jenny Hull is helping with increasing and improving the composting system through after school STEM class. Kathie updated on progress for the small animal barn. Star Ridge Structures will put blue prints together for \$200 but will not sign off on NYSED's certificate of compliance. Levi has offered to do this for a reasonable price. He has also offered to file all paperwork to get approval through NYSED for a \$1,000 fee. The board is considering this option. Grants for grow towers transitioning to high tunnels through USDA will not be submitted until Spring 2023 per Kathie. Courtney requested Board members to share any possibilities for Field Lessons, as well as a contact/liaison. She would like to have a joint meeting with the fundraising committee to discuss grant opportunities as well.

With no objection to reports as submitted, reports are all approved.

**Old Business**

Tom Brown contacted Success Academy and is still working on making contact and will continue.

**New Business**

Beth Klein reported that her students have created 11 more PBL units that will be coming out to our teachers, some include Agriculture.

Tom asked about outside masking policy. Sara reported that no changes have been made to our mask policy since the beginning of the school year. She does need to share that NYSED has sent down information stating they will not allow for indoor mask breaks.

Kathie asked about County Health Department asking for space for pop up vaccination clinic. TCC would allow for use of Maker Space and Library if our Board members approve. They are looking at 10am-7pm Jan 6,7,8 Jan 27, 28, 29. This should not interfere with the school day. The National Guard will be staffing.

Motion by Dave Amberg, seconded by Tom Brown to approve, pending TCC's finalized arrangements include elevator and entrance cleaning, as well as mask enforcement.

Ayes: Korinne L'hommedieu, Dave Amberg, Tom Brown, Beth Klein, Cindy Denkenberger

Nos: Krysta Austen, Sarah Stevens

Motion carried.

**School Events**

DEC 13 Board Meeting

DEC 15 Marketing Committee Meeting TBD

DEC 20 Educational Excellence Committee Meeting

DEC 21 Virtual Concert

DEC 24 – JAN 3 NO SCHOOL – Winter Holiday Recess

Motion by Sarah Stevens, seconded by Tom Brown, to enter executive to discuss personnel issues at 8:38pm. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion by Cindy Denkenberger, seconded by Tom Brown, to exit executive session at 9:10pm. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion by Tom Brown, seconded by Dave Amberg to accept Felicia Downing for the part time Cafeteria Aide position. All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Tom Brown, seconded by Cindy Denkenberger, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm. None opposed. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Patty Dawson, Recording Secretary