

MEETING MINUTES

IDAHO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

February 13, 2020
650 W State Street, Boise, Idaho
Len B Jordan Building, Clearwaters Room

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Reed at 9:00 a.m. The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Alan Reed
Brian Scigliano
Wanda Quinn (left at 12:54 p.m.)
Nils Peterson
Kitty Kunz
Sherrilynn Bair
Julie VanOrden (arrived at 10:42 a.m.)

TAB A: COMMISSION WORK

1. Agenda Review/Approval

M/S (Kunz/Peterson) To approve the agenda as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

2. Minutes Review/Approval

M/S (Peterson/Scigliano) To approve the minutes as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

TAB B: PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments from the public.

TAB C: CONSIDERATION OF TRANSFER PETITIONS

PCSC Director, Jenn Thompson introduced Anser Charter School's petition to transfer their authorization to the PCSC.

Nicole Baird Spencer, Board President of Anser Charter School, described the school's mission and plan for growth in the next few years. She explained that growth is the main reason that they would like to transfer their charter.

She highlighted their plans for expansion and new property recently purchased with cash, and provided an overview of the Expeditionary Learning (EL) method.

Michelle Dungston, Education Director, and Heather Dennis, Organization Director also spoke about the school's successes, their expansion goals, and the demand for enrollment.

Commissioner Quinn complimented the board of Anser Charter School on their expertise.

Heather Dennis explained their plans to reach more diverse students including the expansion that will allow more students to enroll.

Commissioner Peterson disclosed that he previously interacted with the school while serving as a founding board member of Palouse Prairie Charter School between 2006-2008, and again on a site visit around 2012. Commissioner Peterson did not recuse himself from the vote as he believes the disclosed contact with the school would not impact his ability to vote objectively in this matter.

M/S (Quinn/Kunz) A motion to approve the transfer petition for Anser Charter School and execute the performance certificate as presented effective July 1, 2020. *The motion passed unanimously.*

TAB C: CONSIDERATION OR PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE ADOPTION

Director Thompson summarized the process of adopting new performance certificates for two schools whose petitions were approved in December: Doral Academy of Idaho and Pinecrest Academy of Idaho. Per statute the commission has 75 days after approval of a new charter school to execute the performance certificate.

M/S (Quinn/Scigliano) A motion to execute the performance certificate for Doral Academy of Idaho and to execute the performance certificate for Pinecrest Academy of Idaho as presented. *The motion passed unanimously.*

TAB E: CONSIDERATION OF PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE AMENDMENT

Director Thompson introduced Elevate Academy's founders and explained the school's request to make an amendment to their performance certificate.

Elevate Co-Directors, Monica White and Matt Strong, presented a two-part amendment request.

The first part of the request was to expand 6th grade enrollment and reduce enrollment in the high school classes. This would not change the school's overall enrollment numbers. The Co-Directors believe this structure will better meet the needs of the at-risk students they serve based on student demand. It will also provide a more balanced work-load for their teaching staff.

The second part of the request was to allow the school to keep a number of seats open to accommodate continuous enrollment for students who are unenrolled for a brief period of time due to incarceration or for the purpose of voluntarily completing a residential life-skills training program.

General discussion between commissioners and the Co-Directors followed. The discussion served to clarify the amendment request and educate Commissioners on the unique challenges of working with at-risk students.

M/S (Peterson/Bair) A motion to approve charter amendments including the proposed adjustment in allowable enrollment by grade level and year of operation as presented in the amendment submitted by Elevate Academy and the ability to hold 18 seats open in the school for the purpose of accommodating continuously enrolled students who are unenrolled temporarily due to juvenile detention or an Idaho Youth Challenge Academy situation. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Break at 10:22 a.m. Reconvene at 10:30 a.m.

TAB F: CONSIDERATION OF PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE NEGOTIATION

Director Thompson introduced the performance certificate amendments requested by Heritage Academy. Director Thompson explained that the school provided a proposed draft of their Performance Certificate with the requests incorporated into the text, and that Director Thompson had highlighted the requests as 8 distinct points of negotiation in a separate summary document.

Carroll Cone, Board Chair of Heritage Academy, introduced his fellow board members; Michael Haddox, Chris Myhre, and Kris Gilgren. He also introduced school director, Dr. Christine Ivie, and Amy White, legal counsel for the school's board. Mr. Cone described the school's model and student demographics.

Kris Gilgren, board member, spoke about the data they would like for the commission to review concerning the growth and success of students.

Annell Crouch, founding board member, spoke about the impact from negative publicity and how it has affected the school.

Amy White, legal counsel for the school's board, explained the requested changes.

After the presentation, Commissioners engaged in discussion with Ms. White and Dr. Ivie. The Commission chose to consider negotiation items 1, 2, 3, and 7 separately from negotiation items 4, 5, 6, and 8.

M/S (Quinn/Peterson) A motion to approve Heritage Academy's requested changes

- To the school's Mission, Vision, and Key Design elements as listed in 3A and 3B of the proposed performance certificate.
- The proposed reduction of the school's maximum enrollment from 450 students to 207 students with the per-grade enrollments as presented in section 5B of the proposed performance certificate.
- The proposed adjustments to the school's primary attendance area as presented in section 5E of the proposed performance certificate.
- The proposed submission of the school's annual budget in the same format as is submitted to the State Department of Education as presented in

section 6D of the proposed performance certificate. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Discussion continued, focused on the remaining requests. Dr. Ivie described the tools used to compare like districts and how Heritage Academy used the tools.

Commissioner Quinn thanked the school board for their grace in this difficult time and explained that the Renewal Committee is currently working on these same issues. She suggested that the Commission table the remaining four items in the performance certificate negotiation until the April meeting to allow the Performance Framework Flexibilities Project, to run its course.

Dr. Ivie expressed concerns that even if the Commission adopts revisions to the academic section of the Performance Framework that would better capture Heritage Academy's successes, the school is on a path to score low on the operational and financial sections of the Performance Framework. She further pointed out that the Commission could choose to close the school during its 2022 regular renewal cycle for low scores in these areas. She explained that the anticipated low scores on the operational and financial sections of the Performance Framework reflect damage done by negative media attention over the past year and reiterated her belief that a new or extended term of operations would allow her school the time to recover.

Ms. White requested a break to speak with her clients. Chairman Reed granted the request. The meeting resumed 15 minutes later.

Ms. White stated that since a new performance certificate is going to be issued to reflect the changes agreed upon so far, the school requests that the Commission also approve a five year term from 2020 to 2025.

The commissioners discussed the request. No motion was brought forth regarding negotiation items 4, 5, 6, or 8 as presented in the staff summary document nor was a motion brought forth regarding the restated request for a new 5-year term.

M/S (Peterson/VanOrden) A motion to table the commission's decision until the April 9, 2020 meeting and direct PCSC staff to negotiate on behalf of the commission items 4, 5, 6, and 8 and the conditions in the existing certificate. *The motion passed unanimously.*

TAB G: PCSC DIRECTOR REPORT

Director Thompson presented a brief Director's report. She noted that the 2019 PCSC Annual Report is posted online and was presented to the Idaho State Board of Education. The document is posted on the PCSC website. She also updated the Commission on the status of annual reports for each school, upcoming financial reports due from schools, and a few school-level compliance issues the staff is monitoring.

Director Thompson also asked for clarification for minor amendments to performance certificates. Clarifying discussion followed.

TAB H: RENEWAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Commissioner Quinn gave an update on the Renewal Committee's recent meetings. Surveys were conducted with schools and meetings have been held across the state.

Director Thompson summarized results of the meetings and recommendations to help improve the performance certificates. She mentioned the complexities in compiling the data for annual reports under the current system. She recommends better aligning PCSC measures to the Idaho Accountability Framework and simplifying the PCSC's calculations and methodologies.

As Commissioner Bair has a background in assessment, The Renewal Committee would like to have Commissioner Bair work with the PCSC staff going forward, while the Renewal Committee steps back.

TAB I: PCSC DISCUSSION

Chairman Reed invited Michelle Clement-Taylor to participate in the discussion. She shared that the State Department of Education will be focusing on the five year graduation rate instead of four year beginning this fall.

At the October 2019 PCSC meeting it was decided to hold some meetings in 2020 in different locations across the state. The commission is considering a change to the location of the PCSC meetings for the rest of 2020.

M/S (Peterson/Bair) A motion regarding the location of the April, October, and December regular PCSC meetings for 2020, that they be held in Boise. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Director Thompson updated the commission on the new bills being considered in the legislature that would impact charter schools.

Ms. Clement-Taylor updated the commission on two bills that were introduced earlier that morning (during the PCSC meeting). House Bill 511 regarding automatic closure due to insufficient cash on hand and House Bill 512 regarding weighting lotteries in favor of underserved populations.

M/S (VanOrden/Kunz) A motion to oppose House Bill 364. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The commission discussed the need to review all PCSC policy over the next year. Chairman Reed suggested beginning the process with a first read of Section V – Renewal and Non-Renewal of the PCSC Policies at the next regularly scheduled meeting (April 9, 2020).

M/S (Scigliano/Bair) A motion to adjourn. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 1:33 p.m.