

AQS Board Meeting
1:00pm October 19, 2023
Plato Learning Academy
5545 W Harrison, Chicago IL 60644

President Bakalis called the regular Board of Directors meeting to order at 1:02pm.

Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were:

Present: Michael Bakalis, Marlene Golemba, Laura Davidson, Terri Vanderjack, Tom Pekras, Pam Paul, George Nassos and Patricia Yadgir.

Others Present:

Wendy Stella – HR and Payroll Manager and Executive Assistant to Dr. Bakalis and Patricia Yadgir

Yolanda Banks – Principal of Plato Learning Academy

Brad Wdowiak – company accountant from Chicago Transom.

Meeting Minutes June 1, 2023

Tom - Approval with changes as follows:

Facilities report – typo correction – contractor spelled contactor

Plato Financials - George misspelled.

Principals Report – NOT missing in sentence “have NOT had many withdrawals.”

New Business – ABOUT misspelled missing A

Motion: by Terri Vanderjack

Seconded by Marlene and carried without dissent.

Financial Report – Plato and AQS Financials- provided via email by Brandon Wdowiak staff accountant for AQS and Plato Learning Academy, Brandon on Standby if needed.

Plato Financials – Mike and Terri unfamiliar with how financials are presented. George discussed that Assets and Liabilities must match. Mike placed a call to Brandon for clarity. Brad explained that he followed the steps that were used by our previous staff accountant Brandon.

Mike asked what the Net income represented. Brad explained that these are the funds owed to us every quarter from CPS and then recorded every month, so this income represents two months of payments.

The income on the last page shows income before school has started, which is likely why it shows a profit. Mike commented that the budget must remain in the positive and asked Brad to call him if anything seemed like it might upend that plan.

George asked about the columns on the spreadsheet presented. Brad said Column 1 is the activity in the account, Column 2 is the budget versus actual, Column 3 is the YTD activity, Column 4 is the Budget for July and August only, Column 5 is the annual budget. Brad also commented that while the first 2 columns have value columns 3 and 4 are more valuable for the financial standing.

Mike will call Brad to talk about the 23/24 expenses and how to handle them.

Motion: by Tom Pekras

Move to accept Plato and AQS Financials

Seconded by George Nassos and carried without dissent.

Change in school leadership – Mike

Mike commented on the last 1 ½ years at Plato seeing a lot of changes, which he felt were not good, for a variety of reasons certain staff just did not work out.

The decision was made to promote in house for the principalship, Yolanda Banks, who has been with AQS and Plato for several years, is familiar with the staff and workings of Plato accepted the role presented and we are happy to have her in the leadership of the school.

School Report – Plato Learning Academy

Principal Report – Yolanda Banks – Plato Learning Academy Principal

Enrollment is at 179 with SPED at 21

There have been no withdrawals since the end of the 22/23 school year, so status quo. There are 43 newly enrolled students for the 23/24 school year. The community knows that things are changing at Plato and that things are turning around for the positive at Plato. The community is supportive.

Tom asked if the enrollment number included the SPED number – Principal Banks said, yes it was.

Principal Banks continued on to explain that Dean Vernell Evans was working hard to reduce detentions and disciplinary referrals. There is in school suspension on Wednesdays, the early release day.

If the student requires removal all together there are other days of the week to handle that.

For in school suspension the Gym teacher has been monitoring those students and helps them do their schoolwork. The counselor is working with the students on restorative behavior.

Facilities – Jeremy Garcia

Jeremy reported that the camera at the security desk has been installed and working. No one is allowed in the building without being seen and then buzzed in.

Principal Banks reports that there is one student that is having severe behavioral issues, and the parent is not supportive. The student requires medication daily, yet the parent doesn't do it some days and not on the weekend. Mike has said he will talk to his mom about this issue. The student is disruptive and leaves class, disrupting the class and the building in general.

This has been discussed with CPS and they won't expel them, have asked for documentation in ASPEN to get help. When the report was reviewed, we were told to continue doing what we were doing.

The mom was upset that the student's grades were bad, so she picked him up, which didn't help. The student is interested in Whitney Young for High school but must bring up grades to have a chance.

A 1:1 Para is in the process of being hired and assigned, Principal Banks is hopeful this will help the behavior.

Activities Report – There was a grandparents' day that was the best turnout ever for a school event. Over 30 attended.

The Character Counts program is being reestablished.

Plato Ambassador – selected students meet with Principal Banks to discuss goals and then visit each classroom and spend time with students.

Movie night – This was a success, had popcorn and pajamas. Students enjoyed the movie and the time.

Fun Friday – there will be a jewelry party.

Friday night there will be a field trip to Haunted Trails and K-5 will visit the pumpkin patch on Monday.

The United Voices Choir will be at Plato again this year, so far there are 20-25 who are interested, they will perform for Christmas and Black History month.

The monthly staff outing, which is the last Friday of the month, will be bowling and dinner.

Mike is very pleased with Principal Banks attention to the needed activities and is very appreciative.

Sept PD – Done!

Oct PD – Conferences the next week – will require lots of work.

Sam is working on the NWEA data for parents, the 8th grade parent meeting and STLS training planning monthly.

Mike asked about NWEA and assumed the scores were good. Principal Banks said that yes, they were good and that the teachers do understand the scores and are informed of what needs to take place.

November will start after school tutoring and a few sports programs. There is intervention at the end of the day with students who are struggling in all classes.

Mike asked if Principal Banks was well received by the staff, she replied that yes, it's been welcoming, and the staff seem happy about it.

Mike asked about the staffing, Principal Banks explained that she is still covering some of 2nd grade, Wendy explained that the use of contract teaching staff is currently working at Plato. School is started with Breakfast, school news, discussion and a positive quote to get the day off to a positive start.

Motion: by Terri Vanderjack

Move to accept Plato School Report and Facilities report.

Seconded by George Nassos and carried without dissent.

Board Discussion – Enhancing the Plato Experience - Mike

Mike asked how much reading time is done in a day and that it should be 70%-80%, Marlene commented that when using grade specific book if some can't follow best to give more resource materials or another book with more foundational items.

Mike asked the board for any suggestions of ideas – Marlene thought maybe a drama program could visit the school, Marlene will check with the Chicago Improv and how much to come to the school. Principal Banks commented that there are a few staff members who are working on a Christmas program.

The Career fair is coming up – George volunteered to discuss the environment.

Open floor for public discussion or questions – No one was present for any public comment.

Old Business – No Old Business

New Business – No New Business

Motion: by Terri Vanderjack

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Tom Pekras and carried without dissent.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:13pm