

CAROLUS ONLINE ACADEMY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
APRIL 18, 2024, AT 5:00PM
VIA ZOOM

I. Preliminary Items

Called to Order at 5:02pm
Roll Called

Board Members present:

- John Pallasch, Chair
- Kristen Bell, Secretary
- Eric Mack, Treasurer
- Gretchen Dobbs, Member
- Rachel Migli, Member

Others present:

- Pamela Sieger, K-12
- Chad Long, K-12
- John Kramer, K-12
- Dr. Carlotta Redish, K-12
- Dr. Naarah Bryant, K-12
- Dr. Angela Howze-Jones., K12
- Tamika Cleckley, K-12
- Tracey Lee, K-12
- Betsy Carpentier
- Niki Kayser

Approval of the minutes from previous meeting. Kristen Bell made a motion to approve. Eric Mack seconded. Unanimously approved.

II. Regular Agenda Items

- Update on board election. Pam Sieger stated we have our four required stakeholder elected members and need three additional board-appointed members.
- Open board positions. Kristen Bell shared the nominating committee's proposal for recruitment, which is to involve COA leadership team in these efforts by asking teachers to communicate with parents about joining the board. Pam suggested a meeting or recorded interview with members of the board to share with families in hopes to drum up excitement. John Pallasch and Kristen Bell both

agreed. Pam will communicate with Dr. Bryant and Dr. Redish to facilitate. They plan to announce to teachers next week.

- John announced Pam as our Executive Director.
- March Financials. Chad Long shared three things. **MARCH** Financial update: Chad reported that due to the high number of enrollments that came in after the close of the funding period by 600k. 135 ADM is lower than projected. Stride will provide a balance budget credit. Enrollment happening later in the year had the biggest impact on these numbers. Expenses are in line with what we expected. Students are utilizing 6-7 courses rather than 4 ½ he anticipated. John asked if credit will roll over. He said they wouldn't require us to repay immediately and we would have the surplus for next year. Language can be found in the surplus agreement.
- Audit Update. **RFP** results. Chad sent RFP to 16 firms in the state. Eight got back and said they couldn't due to capacity. One firm responded. Eric asked about the timeline for the audit. We kick it off in July-August. Firm provided an audit. August through September is when bulk of the work will occur. Wrapped up by the end of October. Betsy stated that the timeline statute requires that all audits are in by December 1. Most school districts have contracts already, so limited approved list explains the inability to sign at this time. A one-year contract was suggested. Eric agrees. John stated that he is hesitant. We will try to get one or more firm. Board members agreed to research and send potential auditing firms to Chad by COB tomorrow. Update the time period for the RFP if we need to look for more.
- Chad's **budget proposal** for fiscal year 2025. 1,100 enrollments next year – 517 above what we have now. We expect admin increase from 436 to 1,015 because we are enrolling them sooner. Forecasting 14% sped enrollment will stay the same. Total funding of 9.9 million for next year. 5.7 million higher than 2024 due to higher enrollment, earlier enrollment timing. Total expenses for next year 9.7 million (5 million higher than 2024). We anticipate hiring 14 additional staff members. We already gave 9% staff salary increase. Total staffing for net year 44 FTE (14 higher than current year). Expect school to have surplus 126k. Stride Technology fee of 7% of total funding. Projecting increase year-over-year due to projected increase in funding.
- Rent and Maintenance: \$2,817 per month. Note that we are searching for new office space.

III. School Leadership Report

- Enrollment update – enrollment is right under 800 now.
- **Enrollment assumptions.** Chad reported that students will take 607 courses next year. Holding Funding PPR flat but we do expect an increase for next year.
Funding assumptions. Current ADM 437 units. Next year 1,015 units. We

expect weighting will remain constant. Assuming a mostly flat PPR Authorizer has a budgeting model. **TOTAL FUNDING ASSUMPTION:** We have a state grant for a reading coach, which we hired. We expect to receive a Title 1 grant for next year.

- Early hiring and overall hiring update from Pam Sieger. Pam reported that 16 people were hired for fall for the High School. Zero open positions. Current Staff Profile – two staff classified as grant staff. John asked about where we fall with teacher pay compared to other schools. Chad will reach out to HR to get that information. Teacher laptop costs will go down. We have a 3rd party teacher program at stride, which is basically a shared teacher. Increases every year. Professional Development for teachers will increase since we are opening a high school.
- Minimum salary schedule – Betsy will send it to Chad the House and Senate proposal and the link to the current schedule.
- Introducing Dr. Redish (at 5:07pm) Dr. Redish has been here for 10 days and it has been a great experience. She noted that she feels supported and embraced at COA. She thanked Pam and the Board.
- High school update from Pam. Committee meetings take place every week.
- Testing update – Tracey has all sites ready. Everyone in place, families were notified multiple times.
- Gifted update – We are piloting a gifted program this fall. Dr. Bryant and Dr. Redish. We will get more info on that soon. Reach the underserved as well.
- Trauma informed update – Pam has a certification. Dr. Bryant will attend. De-escalation school certified school next fall.
- School community outreach update coffee with coaches. Picnic in the park – media will be there. Marketing firm will be working with them to highlight this. Outing to Carowinds for an end of year celebration. Also, we will start an ambassador program. Pam will send us the presentation for community outreach.

IV. **Adjournment 6:11pm** Kristen Bell made a motion. Eric Mack seconded. Unanimously approved.