



FRIENDSHIP ACADEMY
OF THE ARTS
Where friendship and academic excellence meet

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Minutes
Board of Directors of Friendship Academy of the Arts
Saturday, October 13, 2018
Board Retreat
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Location: North Market, 4414 Humboldt Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55412

Attendees: Wendy Hines, Brenda Hill, Ananyasia Joseph, Berta Needham, Robbie Burnett, Akuorkor Ablorh
Staff: Dr. B Charvez Russell

- I. Call to Order – Meeting Called to order at 9:07 PM by Wendy Hines
- II. Ice breaker
- III. Ted Talk Video and Discussion
 - A. Recollections of Our Favorite Teachers
 1. Learning is about building relationships.
 2. Warm Demanders - Dr. Lisa Delpit talks about children needing “warm demanders” in a chapter of her book “Multiplication is for White People: Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children” about working with middle school students.
 3. Community building - Build between peers and with teachers.
 4. The very good teachers are coaches. How do we instill that ability to coach and hold accountable and not to control and hold power over?
 - B. Transient Communities - Today’s school communities are transient. Adults come from different communities and so do students. There is a mix of financial situations. There is a mix of access to resources including formative educational experiences.
- IV. Review of Friendship Academy of the Arts Board Member Manual starting with the Bylaws of Friendship Academy of the Arts, Friendship Academy of the Arts Contract, and a brief review of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. Refer to details below.
- V. What is a board?
 - A. We supervise collectively because boards make decisions as a group. The group also supervises the Executive Director. Individual board members should not go into schools and try to tell the staff what to do. Nepotism is a current issue in on various school district boards and is not okay.
 - B. The board is a policy entity. The policy, which exceeds 100 pages, is available on the school website.
- VI. What is a charter school?
 - A. Yes, a charter school is a public school.
 - B. Being a charter school means you have a special authority from the state to receive funds and open a school. Charters are given greater autonomy. In return, there is



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greater accountability. Charter schools are not funded fully. Public schools are fully funded. Meanwhile, charter schools are tasked to do it better.

- C. Background - The first charter school started in Minnesota. Prior to this, public education was provided in district schools only. In Minnesota, it was noted that public schools were not doing all they could do for school. Teachers wanted to change that. Initially, you had to have a teacher majority board but now it has changed to one teacher and one parent required on the board. Charters are created for improved learning and improving upon the learning process (Minnesota State Statutes offer purposes and reasons for charter schools).
- D. History - Originally the state oversaw all the operations of the first charter school. As more charters emerged, the state created a category for sponsor and then for authorizers. The authorizer took over the districts work overseeing student academics, financial and overall accountability.

VII. What is the executive director's role regarding school policy?

- A. The executive director is the executor of the school policy.

VIII. What is the purpose of the arts at Friendship Academy?

- A. Teach through the arts. Creating artists is not the goal.

IX. What key factors in the relationship with the charter authorizer does the school board need to attend consider?

- A. A charter school authorizer performs 4 tasks.
 - 1. Provides oversight of charters in academic and financial performance.
 - 2. Evaluates operations.
 - 3. Determines the terms of the charter school contract renewals.
 - 4. Reviews proposed changes to charter school proposals including programs and site changes.
- B. One major job of the board is to manage the relationship with the authorizer. We do that using the charter contract with the authorizer.
- C. Five years is the longest charter contract a school can get with an authorizer. They may come and do a check in (in between they will come in announced to visit within the 5 years). Coming in announced is a sign of being respectful.
- D. The year before the charter contract ends, we are in the renewal phase and that's when the authorizer makes decisions about opening closing and working out problems. Additionally, the authorizer also can determine whether or not you may go to another authorizer or they can decide to close the school.
- E. Friendship Academy of the Arts (FAA) must apply by November 15 of the reapply year. Then Pillsbury United Communities (PUC) will update us on renewal by March. Our renewal year and expansion year will be the same year. Hence, the board will need to do a renewal contract in November 2020.
- F. Our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities (PUC), is considered a board member and does come to some meetings. Samantha is the PUC representative who will visit us most this year. Remediation. If PUC asks or tells the board to do something we need to do it in a manageable time. Otherwise, not taking the action can turn into a school closing.



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- X. Important Mix of Financial Considerations
- A. If FAA doesn't pay a vendor, the vendor can go to our authorizer, Pillsbury United Communities (PUC), to put pressure on FAA. However, FAA and PUC are separate entities. FAA pays PUC to oversee us. Refer to the Contract on page 4.
 - B. A board member cannot be the accountant, the landlord, or other such conflicts of interest for a charter school board. Refer to the Contract on page 6.
 - C. Contracts are final only after board approval.
 - D. Every deposit is made in the name of our school and under control of the executive director. No other accounts are used.
 - E. We must send MDE our budget by June 30 yearly. Multiple financial deadlines are listed in the Contract on page 9-10.
 - F. For layoffs and firings, the school reimburses out of its pocket until funds come in. If a series of layoffs occurs in combination with other financial strains like school closing issues, the school could have financial trouble. Refer to the Contract on page 10.
 - G. The school has no unions so there is no collective bargaining.
 - H. If the school closes, the board must go in and determine what assets remain after the closure. Property owned by school must be given away to another entity. The board will need to answer questions from the state and other business participants.
- XI. Student Enrollment
- A. The Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) student accounting is how the school gets paid. It is important that this is handled well.
 - B. Any child in the state can come to us.
 - C. The school is required to hold a space for enrolled children until the next school year plus 15 days.
 - D. Attendance goal. How do we get them there? If a student isn't coming, the office manager, Ms. Verlon, monitors all attendance, calls the home, and asks them why. She informs the family the parameters from the county that give consequences for not coming after a certain number of days. Her actions have led to success with the attendance goal.
- XII. Bylaws are how we as a board interact.
- A. Voting. Based on an amendment, both members and existing board members can vote. Members include parents and legal guardians of an enrolled child and employees.
 - B. Our last annual meeting was in July 2018.
 - C. For massive changes or changes that indicate conflict, the members may end up voting. The expansion is not going to be voted on by members because the initial vision of the school was as a K-12 charter.
- XIII. Meetings
- A. What is reported? The things we've been asked to be done are reported to us at every meeting, both financial and academic side. The board interacts with reported information and updates. For example, what role did the board play in the budget?



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Do we understand it? Did we shape it? Did we shape it toward what needs more or less money?

- B. Open Meeting Law – The public has the right to attend. Quorum meetings must be set up so any public person can see it and hear it.
 - 1. Quorums are public, any time they occur (does not matter where or when). Any 4 school board members together constitutes a quorum. Any school board business they discuss is considered a public information.
 - 2. Conference calls are not acceptable. Providing open video chat is okay. This law is important. The public must have some channel to find out each meeting is about to occur.
 - 3. Location of regular meetings should be stated on the school website.
 - 4. When a board member shows up for a meeting, his or her attendance confirms there was sufficient notice for the meeting.
 - 5. Once a quorum is established, if a board member has to leave early the board can vote without them.
- C. Closed Meetings - Meetings can be closed only based on certain criteria and must be confirmed in advance with the school lawyer. Personal information, like the executive director evaluation, is an example of a closed meeting.
- D. Special meetings need 3 days notice. Only what is on the agenda can be discussed.

XIV. Board Participation

- A. If the board is too large people stop participating. If the board is too small everyone is over taxed.
- B. The school board needs to follow up on a past discussion about amending the school board director terms. The board needs to modify the tenure of board members so that the elections will be staggered. Currently we could have a situation where everyone leaves at the same time. If so, the institutional history will be lost.

XV. Committees

- A. Committee members do not have to be board members. You cannot have a quorum (4 board members) on a committee because then it becomes a board meeting.
- B. Committees make recommendations to the board and then the board makes the final decision(s).
- C. We still need a treasurer. We may need to add 1-2 more board members to get a treasurer. The board chair has 2 candidates in mind with a financial background who would be available to join soon.

XVI. The law changes frequently and we are required to be up to date in the law changes.

- A. Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS) keeps us updated on upcoming changes in the law. Dr. Russell is a board member on MACS. Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) sends out notices and changes once they are official. MACS tells you when the changes are coming up in real time.

XVII. Board Member Training Updates

- A. Ms. A Joseph and Ms. B. Hill attended the MACS board chair training presented by Eugene. Both found this training engaging and helpful.

XVII. Teacher Training



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- A. How do we determine how a teacher needs development? It is based on their individual identified need. For example, it was helpful to have the special education teachers attend the Designs for Learning Training in October. Mr. Kidd attended a workshop to help train instructional coaches.
 - B. There is no formal development plan at this time for licensed teachers. We need to develop a formal plan. It is possible to do a formal individual plan that is tied into teacher relicensure requirements. Also, it is possible to include ways to help teachers develop in their profession based on needs identified in their evaluations.
 - C. Upcoming teachers and educators on staff. Currently, FAA has 3 support staff who are in training programs – 2 on the teacher and 1 the counselor track. We need to consider how to hire the talent we have from within to aid continuity during expansion.
- XVII. Support staff who are artists.
- A. In the meantime, we want support staff that aspires to do something in education (this includes outside the classroom). Are you an artist who could contribute to our school that way? Is this going to pay your bills while you get to share your art with our children and community? Attention to artistic skill sets is important regarding support staff.
- XVII. Visiting Artists
- A. During the instructional day, an artist without a teaching license cannot conduct the lesson, but they can supplement the direct instruction. Licensed teachers are not needed during enrichment because it is after the school day. Some supervision is needed to know what the artists are teaching.
- XVII. Ethics and Safety
- . Claims. The school board must notify PUC if there is a claim such as misconduct between adult and child.
 - A. Background checks. Artists brought in must have criminal background checks completed in order to work with the children.
 - B. Religion. FAA is not affiliated with the church's identity. The church is a past founder who currently donates to the school.
 - 1. One of the top performing states in the school was closed because it was determined they were teaching religion. This charter was paid with public funds and thus could not do that. If a public school teaches religion, multiple multiple religion must be sufficiently included. Sufficient inclusion is subjective.
 - 2. Charters must be welcoming to all children. If FAA uses the sanctuary on site, we must remove the bibles. FAA has had to move crosses in the past.
- XVII. Culture. The cultural sensitivity training goal (refer to number 10 in the Contract on page 25) was previously met through the Innocent Classroom Training. This year, restorative practices are being introduced to meet this goal. This program is about learning the students and helping them talk in a safe setting.



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- A. Cultural sensitivity also includes culture, language background, ethnicities, and much more. How will FAA participate in a broadening cultural perspective?
 - B. How has the school staff shared what they need around the cultural piece?
 - C. Extended discussion on culture including the acknowledgement that it is challenging to discuss culture openly.
- XVIII. Leadership Plan
- A. Who is the leadership team? Essentially, the leadership team is Mr. Carr and Dr. Russell.
 - B. The leadership plan is oriented around the 4 friendship way teams.
 - C. The school board would like to know what is happening with each friendship way team. Options for how each team can report were suggested. Each team could come to the board to report, submit information in writing, or have Dr. Russell report. The purpose would be informational, not evaluative. It will be a communication of what is going on. Board members noted that some groups will not have had sufficient time to have met before they would first be invited.
 - D. The board decided to invite the Family and Community Team to the November board meeting to present on what they are doing.
- XIX. Agenda Topics Covered and Not Covered
- A. Topics covered in depth - the Bylaws and the Charter Contract
 - B. Topics touched on and to be continued - The Strategic Plan sets up our work plan for the next five years. We need to consider how to keep this plan alive instead of collecting dust on a shelf.
- XXIII. Items to include on a future school board meeting agenda:
- A. Modify the tenure of Board Members. Refer to the Bylaws on page 3 and the notes above regarding board participation.
 - B. Provide succession of board positions.
 - C. Develop a formal development plan for teachers.
 - D. Change goal 3 under academic/accountability in the Contract on page 24 because the Reward Program no longer exists.
 - E. Update the financial information in the binder under Strategic Plan on page 60. It states a deficit we no longer have.
- XX. Items to include on the next board meeting agenda:
- A. By our next board meeting on Monday, October 29th board members will review the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan in the Board Member Manual and come ready to discuss page 53-55 so that we can understand it fully. The strategic plan was approved last year. Dr. Russell would like this strategic plan to be what we do and to make it happen. How can the board support us in doing what we say we are going to be doing?
- XXI. Next board meeting is Monday, the 29th of October.
- XXII. Adjournment of Board Meeting – motion to adjourn at 1:06 PM (BH, RB)