



**Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Directors of
Plato Academy Schools Corporation**

Date: Friday, October 27, 2017

Time: 12:30 pm

Meeting Location: Plato Academy Trinity, 8812 Old County Road 54, New Port Richey, FL 34653

Satellite Location: Superior Schools Corporation, 861 N. Hercules Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33765

Teleconference option provided

Plato Academy Directors:

Mr. Chris Alahouzos, Meeting Chair

Mr. John Petalas

Mr. Louis Kokkinakos

Dr. Elias M. Kolettis (absent)

Ms. Dagmar Ortiz (absent)

Plato Academy Principals:

Mr. Stephen Donnelly, Plato Academy Palm Harbor

Ms. Katrina Courts, Plato Academy Largo

Ms. Karen Staab, Plato Academy Seminole

Ms. Carri Aranzabal, Plato Academy Pinellas Park

Ms. Jennifer Perez, Plato Academy Trinity

Ms. Michelle West, Plato Academy St. Petersburg

**Mr. Matthew Gunderson, Plato Academy Tampa and designee
for Plato Academy Tarpon Springs**

Mr. Adam Beard, AP Designee, Plato Academy Clearwater

Charter School Representatives: Mr. Stephen Donnelly, Plato Academy Palm Harbor; Katrina Courts, Plato Academy Largo; Ms. Lisa Herbst, Plato Academy Pinellas Park; Ms. Tracey Hayes, Plato Academy Tarpon Springs; Ms. Michelle West, Plato Academy St. Petersburg; Ms. Jennifer Perez, Plato Academy Trinity; Ms. Karen Staab, Plato Academy Seminole, Mr. Matthew Gunderson, Plato Academy Tampa

Plato Academy Schools Representative: Mr. Jereme Monette, Professional Development Director

Superior Schools Representatives: Mr. Steve Christopoulos, President & CEO; Ms. Lisa Herbst, General Counsel; Ms. Tracey Hayes, Chief Operations Officer; Ms. Rina Psomas, Director of Admissions

Other parents and visitors attended.

CALL TO ORDER

Pursuant to public notice, the meeting commenced at approximately 12:54pm, with a Call to Order by Mr. Chris Alahouzos. Roll call was taken and a quorum was established. The board meeting packet including the agenda, previous board meeting minutes, financial statements and handouts had been distributed to the Board Members in advance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Erika Mejia spoke regarding her concern with the high school students' language and dress code. She noted she was not comfortable with her child around such behavior. She wanted to know what the future would be for next year with regard to the high school leasing space on the same property as the Plato Academy Clearwater school.

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Alahouzos asked the members to review the minutes from the last two Plato Academy board meetings held on August 25, 2017 and October 11, 2017 and to note any corrections or modifications.

Motion made on behalf of Mr. John Petalas, with a second by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos to adopt the August 25, 2017 and October 11, 2017 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

The Plato Academy Principal's provided their school reports to the Board Members. Mr. Alahouzos thanked all the principals for their hard work and thank the teachers and staff in preparing and starting the new school year.

Mr. Alahouzos addressed the principals encouraging them to ensure that their students and schools were involved in community involvement. He noted that various Christmas parades happen in the area and encouraged the schools to have a presence in them. He noted that on Dec. 9 the City of Tarpon Springs would have its Christmas parade and that all schools were invited.

Mr. Alahouzos also encouraged the principals to supplement their civics courses with a visit to a local government office to learn about how local government works. He encouraged all to set up a visit to the City Hall of Tarpon Springs to learn how local government operates.

MANAGEMENT COMPANY REPORT

Academic Performance: Mr. Christopoulos addressed that SAT10 testing would be occurring at all the schools within the next few weeks. He noted that the schools will be looking at addressing any learning gaps and putting in place individual plans for students if needed. Mr. Christopoulos discussed the Schools of Excellence team and asked Mr. Gunderson to give an overview. Mr. Gunderson noted that the visits to the schools were occurring and that it was a great process for each school to go through and noted that AdvancED had given special praise to Plato Academy in its accreditation review for the Schools of Excellence Process that Plato Academy uses in its school evaluation process. He noted that it is a wonderful process to get to meet and hear from parents first hand, and to see classrooms and meet teachers and share best practices system wide.

Professional Development: Mr. Jereme Monette noted he was actively working to train teachers. He noted the mentor program in place has been a success and has had huge support from the principals. He noted regular trainings occurring with the Assistant Principal for leadership development, as well as faculty trainings. He noted he was a member of each Schools of Excellence team and noted the excellence of the process and how each school had made such use of the results of each review. He noted that it truly effected the way of work on the campus.

Student Enrollment:

Ms. Psomas gave the status of the current capacity for all the Plato Academy schools. She also reviewed what the 2018-19 school year capacity appeared to be in light of new buildings, etc. The Board reviewed the report and capacity numbers.

Motion made by Mr. John Petalas with a second by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos to approve the proposed capacity number for the 2018-19 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Psomas then reviewed proposed 2018-19 application periods and lottery dates with the Board Members as follows:

Plato Academy Plato Academy Trinity and Plato Academy Tampa – 2018-19 School Year

Kindergarten Application Period:

1ST application period–Nov. 1, 2017 through November 13, 2017, with lottery on November 17, 2017

2nd application period–Nov. 14, 2017 through December 31, 2017, with lottery within two weeks following

3rd application period – January 1, 2018 – May 31, 2018, with lottery within two weeks following

2017-18 – Application Period for Grades 1 through highest grade served:

1st Application Period – Nov. 1, 2017 – December 31, 2017, with lottery within two weeks following

2nd Application Period - January 1, 2018 – May 31, 2018, with lottery within two weeks following

All Other Plato Academy Schools – 2018-19 School Year

Kindergarten Application Period:

1ST application period–Nov. 1, 2017 through November 13, 2017, with lottery on November 17, 2017

2nd application period–Nov. 14, 2017 through May 31, 2018, applicants added to waiting list on a rolling basis

2018-19 – Application Period for Grades 1 through highest grade served:

1st application period–Nov. 1, 2017–May 31, 2018, applicants added to waiting list on a rolling basis

Motion made by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos, with a second by Mr. John Petalas, to adopt the above listed application periods and lottery dates to be held at the Superior Schools Corporation conference room. The motion passed unanimously.

Staffing Updates: Mr. Christopoulos noted that all positions are filled and that the schools have been proactive in making sure all positions are filled. He noted that Plato Academy Pinellas Park will be hiring additional support staff.

Financial updates: The Board Members reviewed the latest financial reports from September, 2017 and proposed amended budgets. Mr. Christopoulos reported that the budgets for the schools had been amended to address a slight shortfall. He noted that overall the budgets are in line as originally presented with minor areas of adjustments.

Motion made by Mr. John Petalas with a second by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos to approve the 2017-18 budgets amendments for all the Plato Academy schools. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Christopoulos discussed that the audit reports had been finalized by Plato Academy auditor and noted that copies had been distributed to the Board Members. He noted that there were no deficiencies.

Motion made by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos, with a second by Mr. John Petalas, to adopt the 2016-17 audit reports for the Plato Academy schools. The motion passed unanimously.

The CSP Grant status for the Plato Academy Trinity grant was discussed. It was noted that it is going into the Implementation 2 stage and that the new budget is being finalized by the principal. Items to be purchased were discussed and it was noted the budget would be ready soon for approval.

Motion made by Mr. John Petalas with a second by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos to provide authority to the chairman to approve the Plato Academy Trinity CSP Implementation 2 budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Facilities Updates:

Plato Academy Trinity: Mr. Christopoulos gave a report of the progress of the new building going up for the school. He noted the foundation and metal building has been erected. The playground had been moved to prepare for slab and foundation as well. He noted the new school building will house 3 classes per grade, with the first year starting with K-4th grade.

Plato Academy Pinellas Park: Mr. Christopoulos noted that the students are in the new building and small items are being finalized. He noted that the school now has 3 classes per grade for grades K-4 this year.

Plato Academy St. Petersburg: Mr. Christopoulos noted that all had been actively alternative sites, but that the Cornerstone site was still the primary site that will have a reduced school size of 2 classes per grade K-8 for which plans have now been submitted and are awaiting approval. He noted it is to be completed August of 2018.

Plato Academy Tarpon Springs: It was noted that the Lease has been extended for 2 years on that site. He noted that an exhaustive search for a school property in that area had been conducted and the one property that was thought could work ended up not being viable per meeting with the Pinellas County planners based on traffic impact. He noted that alternative options would continue to be sought.

All other Plato Academy schools: It was noted that the current schools were all using an updated tracking and ticketing tool to keep track of all facility issues. It was noted that the system was working well and that issues were being addressed sooner with increased response times.

Technology Update:

Mr. Chatzopoulos provided a technology report. He noted that the Plato Academy IT providers had been working on the number one priority of network connection for all the schools and that new equipment was systematically being installed in the schools. It was noted that the new technology was included in the budget. He noted that Plato Academy Clearwater hosted the 3rd EDcamp of Tampa Bay and that 230 educators come to the school to learn new strategies. He noted that the Plato Academy and Superior Schools teams were going to the Charter School Conference and that Superior Schools and iHub USA would have exhibitor booths.

Mr. Christopoulos noted that there was a SACS training for which a team from Plato Academy and Superior Schools would attend in Atlanta. Mr. Christopoulos also noted a conference in California that Mr. Monette would attend.

OLD BUSINESS

Management Agreement: Mr. Christopoulos noted that he had been working to update the agreement and was working with Dr. Kolettis to do that. He said would continue to work with Dr. Kolettis to finalize and hoped by the next board meeting to have a amended and restated management agreement in place since the board had given Dr. Kolettis approval to finalize it.

Legal: It was noted that the case Plato Academy Palm Harbor monkey bar case was about to go to mediation and that an update would be provided thereafter from the insurance counsel. Mr. Alahouzos asked regarding the out of pocket cost to Plato Academy and it was noted that the agent would be contacted to find out that information, that there was likely a deductible involved, but that it had not been discussed by the agent yet.

NEW BUSINESS

New Law Updates: Mr. Alahouzos and Mr. Christopoulos gave an overview of Bill 7069 that was passed in the last legislative session and covered a few items from the law. The first was the mandatory recess for the public schools, but for which charter schools were exempt. It was noted that Plato Academy schools do already have recess as part of their elementary schedules. It was noted that some parents had brought up concerns to provide more recess time. The benefits from additional recess time were discussed along with the balancing the current schedule already in place. It was discussed that at each school the schedules are specifically designed for that school and that the principal and teachers would need to be consulted with regard to the time available for additional recess time.

Motion made by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos, with a second by Mr. John Petalas, to grant the Plato Academy Principals discretion at their schools to implement additional recess time. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board Members discussed the new law with regard to Florida local school boards sharing local millage from property tax revenue with charter schools. It was noted that at least 14 county school boards, including the Pinellas County School Board, had filed a law suit to reverse the law. It was noted that charter schools had worked long and hard for the new law to pass allowing the same amount of money that follows a student attending a local zoned school to follow that same student to a public charter school if the parent chose that educational option for their child. The old process was discussed that only the state portion of funding per student was the same for a student attending a local zoned school and a charter school, and that it was the local county property tax money that did not follow the student to a charter school, which could be as much as \$2,000 per student. The idea behind the law was to have all public monies follow a public school student -- whether they attend a local public zoned school or a local public charter school. It was noted Chairman Kolettis and Plato Academy's attorney, Shawn Arnold, had been in communication and that Chairman Kolettis was in favor of proposed actions being discussed by Mr. Arnold to intervene in the lawsuit and to fund such mission. Mr. Christopoulos shared that legal costs to the Arnold Law Firm would be involved and it was discussed that the money should be in the budget and if needed a budget amendment could be made to support the litigation effort.

Motion made by Mr. John Petalas, with a second by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos to grant the Plato Academy Chairman authority to work with the Arnold Law Firm to support the charter school litigation in favor of charter schools. The motion passed unanimously.

School Visitor Policy: Mr. Alahouzos noted that there were reports at several Plato Academy schools where parents had come in the schools very emotional and angry and would conduct themselves inappropriately by screaming, yelling, and threatening staff, including in front of students, and where a parent had threatened a student and used bad language to the student. The Board discussed that this type of behavior would not be tolerated, and that the Principal, or onsite After Care Director or Executive Early Learning Director have every right to dismiss the parents and issue a trespass warning letter if any type of disruptive behavior is exhibited by a parent or guardian. He said the Board will absolutely support and stand behind any Principal or Director with regard to the actions that they take, or will step in when needed. He said it is the absolute duty of the Principals and Directors to safeguard their students and the learning and educational environment from any outbursts or disruptions and to remove any such threat from the environment. He made it clear for the Principals and Directors to reinforce and enforce the existing School Visitor Policy as set forth in the Parent Student Handbook, and to call on the Chairman for reinforcement if needed.

Closing Remarks: It was noted that a complaint had been filed by a Plato Academy Clearwater parent with the Department of Education's inspector general's office, which was referred to the Pinellas County School District since that was the entity that had jurisdiction over the matter. It was noted that a response was due by Friday. The Board discussed that the Chairman should oversee and response accordingly.

Motion made by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos, with a second by Mr. John Petalas, to grant the Plato Academy Chairman the authority to work with the school and Superior Schools on the matter and to finalize a response to the parent complaint. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board Members also discussed the new law that moved the charter school application filing deadline to February 1 of each year. The Board Members discussed the high demand for a Plato Academy education and noted that new applications should be filed at least in all 3 counties where there are existing Plato Academy schools in addition to any other counties where there is a desire or demand for a school.

Motion made by Mr. Louis Kokkinakos, with a second by Mr. John Petalas, for the Chairman to work with Superior Schools to file new charter school applications in all 3 existing counties where a Plato Academy school is located and in any other districts where there may be a desire or demand for a Plato Academy School. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1:41 pm.



Dr. Elias M. Kolettis, Chairman
Plato Academy Schools Corporation

Date: 1-12-18