



---

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

**Date:** Friday, August 25, 2017

**Time:** 12:30 pm

**Place:** Superior Schools Corporation, 861 N. Hercules Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33765

**Plato Academy Directors:** Dr. Elias M. Kolettis, Chairman  
Ms. Dagmar Ortiz  
Mr. Chris Alahouzos  
Mr. John Petalas (absent)  
Mr. Louis Kokkinakos (absent)

**Plato Academy Principals:** Ms. Dawn Parker, Plato Academy Clearwater  
Mr. Stephen Donnelly, Plato Academy Palm Harbor  
Ms. Katrina Courts, Plato Academy Largo  
Ms. Karen Staab, Plato Academy Seminole  
Ms. Danielle Turro, Plato Academy Tarpon Springs  
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

**Charter School Representatives:** Mr. Stephen Donnelly, Plato Academy Palm Harbor; Katrina Courts, Plato Academy Largo; Ms. Dawn Parker, Plato Academy Clearwater; 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

**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; Mr. Matthew Gunderson, Director of School Improvement and Quality Assurance

**Parents and Others Present:** Jacqueline Long, Angela Phiscator, Briana Haverty, Allyson Graham Griffiths, Jessica Rotolo, and others

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Pursuant to public notice, the meeting commenced at approximately 12:45pm, with a Call to Order by Dr. Elias Kolettis. 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. Jacqueline Longe, parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader at Plato Academy Clearwater, spoke of her concerns regarding security with high school on the campus. She noted she spoke with the high school headmaster about her concerns and of safety during school day and before and after care regarding use of the students using the

same bathrooms, opening gates, and intermingling with the K-8 kids. She noted her concerns regarding language. She noted she had brought this up at a PTO meeting and saw that the very next day changes were implemented. She noted the use of the cafeteria by the high school students and documenting it. She noted she did not want to ostracize the high school students.

Jessica Rotolo, parent of a 7 year old daughter at Plato Academy Clearwater, spoke regarding the same concerns raised by Ms. Longe with regard to the high school students, in addition to her concerns regarding parking and driving concerns and inappropriate music. She noted once incident where the police were on campus and did not know why.

Allyson Graham Griffiths, parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student at Plato Academy Clearwater, said it was their 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the school and they love it. She said they love the curriculum, principal, and staff and happy to be part of the school. She said her grievance was safety concerns for the elementary students with the high school students. She noted parking and carline concerns, and that she had met with Dr. Koularmanis and he assured her that plans were already implemented. She noted the importance of having the same rules for each. She said she wanted to look for solutions.

Briana Haverty, a Plato Academy Clearwater parent, stated her concerns were the same as the last speakers with safety and the same standard concerns. She noted the high school students should have uniforms. She noted concerns about parking. She noted that all students on campus need to follow the same policies and procedures.

Angela Phiscator, parent of a 7 year old at Plato Academy Clearwater, noted that her concerns about parents taking videos of students.

Mr. Chris Alahouzos noted that Plato Academy would look into all the concerns to make the people feel comfortable. Ms. Dagmar Ortiz thanked the parents for coming to share their concerns and assured them that the concerns would be addressed.

Dr. Koularmanis regarding the high school and noted that it was not a public school and provided low income families with a school choice option. He noted the Pinellas County failure factories and that he was glad to give the opportunity to students from some of those school areas to gain a solid high school education. He noted the high school was not an alternative school, but was a school to help students reach their fullest potential, no matter their socioeconomic background. He noted that Friday was not a regular school day, and that improvements has been put into place regarding parking now off site, and start and end times for the school so as not to conflict with the Plato Academy schedule. He noted that the high school was trying its best to not cause complications with the Plato Academy scheduling and students.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kolettis asked the members to review the minutes from the last Plato Academy board meeting held on June 30, 2017 and to note any corrections or modifications.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz to adopt the June 30, 2017 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

All of the Plato Academy Principals read their School Reports to the Board Members. Chris Alahouzos thanked all the principals for their hard work and thank the teachers and staff in preparing and starting the new school year. He said he was pleased to hear all the plans of community involvement among all the school reports, and would like to hear more of that in the future. He noted various opportunities for the Plato Academy schools to participate in holiday events and Christmas parades. He encouraged the Principals to

have their students visit city halls and visit city governments to learn about civics. He noted that their students were future leaders and that they were always welcome to visit Tarpon Springs.

## **MANAGEMENT COMPANY REPORT**

Mr. Christopoulos addressed the board regarding the parent concerns raised. He acknowledged their concerns regarding parking being cramped, and noted that with the new Superior Office building next door the site provided additional parking, which was now being utilized by all high school students to alleviate the sharing concerns. He noted that the high school had grown and that new space was being sought. He noted that the high school was also managed by Superior Schools and is part of the Superior Schools family of accredited quality schools with similar mission and visions that work toward all students reaching their full potential. He noted that education is blind to color or national origin, education changes lives and contributes positively to the community.

He addressed the parent safety concerns raised and noted that the building was secure. He acknowledged that safety was a number one concern and all parent concerns had been heard. He noted that he was working with the principals of both schools and all of the concerns were immediately addressed and remedied. He noted that at the same time, he said it was important that the high school students felt that they were students of value also, that they are people whose rights matters too. He noted we cannot in any way jeopardize their rights – all the students' rights were important. He noted that safety was foremost on everyone's minds. He addressed the Plato Academy parents that had been videotaping the high school students to prove a point that they were in the cafeteria when they were not supposed to be. He asked them to put themselves in the shoes of those students, especially coming from a low socioeconomic area and who had made the choice to attend Superior Collegiate to make a difference in their life, and how it was so important for them not feel discriminated against. He said he would not tolerate behavior that would take away student's rights. He noted already the some of the surveys conducted at the high school noted that some would not return because of the way they felt treated by some Plato Academy parents and he noted that was a shame to make those kids feel that way.

Dr. Kolettis pointed out that there are many schools that have pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade on the same campus, without restrictions, and each functioned well and all knew their way around. He noted that all items raised were being corrected. He said it was not a new concept and many schools have co-existed successfully. He noted there may be some bugs to figure out and we will do so.

Mr. Christopoulos introduced Alex and BJ, coaches for the high school teams that included soccer, football, and basketball and that they were doing a fabulous job, and that the football team had a recent win of 48-0. He noted that they were helping the kids putting all their energy and soul in to coaching them and to giving them a bright future. Coach BJ said that he appreciated the opportunity from staff and come to a solution to help their kids. Mr. Christopoulos said it was a priority to help the high school students to feel that they also belonged as well. Coach BJ said the opportunity provided by the high school allowed so many lower income families the change to change the direction of their kids lives with the quality of education that they were receiving and the quality coaching. He said many of the kids now are college bound where they may not have been before. He noted all the good that Superior Collegiate has done for students, outside of sport that they do a lot in the community. He noted that over 50% of the students that attend Superior Collegiate participate in sports. It was noted that robotics and music were offered on Friday.

Academic Performance and Professional Development: Mr. Christopoulos introduced Jereme Monette, who was the new Professional Development Director for Plato Academy. He noted his extensive background in education and was coming in from the Hillsborough County School District. Mr. Monette spoke and noted how impressed he had been with the Plato Academy schools, and that each one was above average in every single category. He noted it was something to celebrate. He noted that he would be working to reflect on what the schools were doing and to assist school in reaching even high goals. He noted that Plato Academy performance was considerably higher than District averages in every regard. He noted how spectacular the Plato Academy Principals were at every Plato Academy campus in that they knew the names of all the

children, were communicating effectively with parents and were involved in their communities. He noted their servant leadership styles which was such an effective way to lead. He noted he would be supporting them as visionaries on their campuses, and had met with each one individually to go over the goals for the year, to look at where the school was with data and to determine the next steps moving forward. He noted that he would be building faculty trainings, and that Mrs. Turro was doing great things with professional development on her campus at Plato Academy Tarpon Springs. He noted Plato Academy Largo was setting goals for growth, and that Plato Academy Seminole teachers were setting up their own building capacity workshops. He noted that they own their training and have a vision with daily follow up – not just bureaucratic training. He noted Mrs. Perez’s great strategies for improving growth from the bottom quartile, and how exhilarating it was to hear Ms. Perez’s theme of “Places we will go.” He noted that every Principal had an amazing skill set and each was gifted. He gave congratulations for all that has been done at the Plato Academy schools. He noted that the culture created by the parents and kids was just amazing, and made it a setting that cultivated higher learning. He noted that Mr. Donnelly’s school, Plato Academy Palm Harbor, had some of the highest scores in the state, and noted that special things were being done there. Mrs. Dagmar Ortiz and the other board members welcomed Mr. Monette to the Plato Academy family.

Mr. Nik Chatzopoulos noted that it was a new year with all striving and moving forward. He noted that there would be a Superior Professional Development where the teachers were creating and delivering their own presentations and sharing their best practices amount with other teachers.

Student Enrollment: Mrs. Psomas noted that all schools except Plato Academy Tampa were at capacity. She noted that for Plato Academy Tampa it would be best for invitation purposes to go to a daily enrollment period until capacity was reached and to do a lottery daily if needed.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz to conduct daily enrollment periods, with daily lotteries if needed, for Plato Academy Tampa until the school was at capacity and then to resume regular enrollment periods thereafter for the 2017-18 school year. The motion passed unanimously.**

Staffing Updates: Mr. Christopoulos noted that all position are currently filled and that the schools have been proactive in making sure all positions are filled.

Financial updates: The Board Members reviewed the latest financial reports from July. It was noted that all schools were tracking in line with their budgets. It was noted that there was a slight shortfall with Plato Academy Tampa due to lower than expected enrollment, and that the schools were starting to catch up with the FTE payments with all coming in on target.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the July 2017 Plato Academy financial reports. The motion passed unanimously.**

The Board Members reviewed a 2016-17 budget amendment proposed for Plato Academy Trinity in order to amend the actual versus the original budget. Mr. Press noted the true net increase from the number that had been projected. He proposed that to amend the June 30 projections for Trinity.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz to approve the 2016-17 budgets for the Plato Academy Trinity school. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Christopoulos noted that the audit reports would be ready soon and that a draft report had already been received for Plato Academy Trinity.

Facilities Report: Mr. Christopoulos first of all congratulated everyone involved in opening the new Plato Academy Pinellas Park building. He congratulated that Mrs. Aranzabal for doing a wonderful job in getting the school ready. He noted work would be ongoing to complete the second floor and to complete the soccer

field. He noted the old building is still in good shape and would be continue to be used and be remodeled. He thanked everyone who pitched in and helped.

Mr. Christopoulos noted that for the Plato Academy St. Petersburg it had been a challenge to get a proposal approved with the city. He said the plans had been revised and that the development company was coming up with creative ways with the new location. He noted the issues encouraged from the development commission and neighbors and that those were being resolved or eliminated due to a new plan with enrollment coming down to 364 for a two class per grade school. He noted that would eliminate many of the city's concerns. He noted the school would have a 99 year lease there, and that the developer would be putting about 5 to 6 million into the property.

Mr. Christopoulos noted there was a potential facility opportunity in St. Petersburg, in an area near the existing Plato Academy St. Petersburg campus, at St. Stefanos Church. He noted that the church educational building and land are available there. He noted the leadership there said they would love to host a Plato Academy school in that location. He noted that Plato Academy St. Petersburg has a great future as there is a long wait list for the school and it possibly could accommodate a Plato Academy school there. He noted that possibly the Board would want to file a Charter Application on Feb. 1, 2017 to open in August for the 2019-20 school year.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the site of St. Stefanos Church for a potential location for a Plato Academy charter school and for the Chairman and Superior Schools to engage in negotiations with the church for space and land on which to build a school. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the filing of any Plato Academy charter school application where there is a need or desire to have a Plato Academy school. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Christopoulos provided a report for Plato Academy Trinity and the construction on that project. He noted that construction had begin and some work completed and that it was scheduled to be complete next summer. He noted that the pad is there and the building has been erected. He noted that the building will house 546 charter school students.

For Plato Academy Tarpon Springs he said that an amendment had been entered into to extend the lease term for 1 year plus 1 year option. He noted that all are still trying to find a new location for the school. He noted other potential properties in the area but that they had various issues that could derail Plato Academy in building a new school on the lots. Dr. Kolettis asked if the property across the street from the existing school would be suitable. Mr. Christopoulos noted that the owner wanted a very high price for it which was not in line with any market price.

For Plato Academy Palm Harbor he noted that new sod did go down and was still hoping for an agreement to install Astroturf there based the high volume of foot traffic on the field. He noted the replacement of lift station pump and otherwise the property was in good shape. He did note that the Church is replacing all the air conditioning units in the building.

For the Plato Academy Clearwater facility he noted there were some AC issues with water and that was addressed immediately. He noted that the development company has taken responsibility for the work and is ensuring that there is direct drainage out from the AC units, and will work on any other issues in the building.

For Plato Academy Largo, he noted the desire was to replace the AC in the courtyard and that work is being done to ensure all ACs are working properly. He noted other work and improvements planned for the property.

For Plato Academy Seminole he noted there had been some water intrusion, AC and roof issues and that all had been or were being handled.

He noted that Plato Academy Tampa was a turnkey building and that all was running well and that some painting and mulching had been done.

Mr. Christopoulos noted that a new facility director was being sought as Mr. Sinisi had resigned due to health reasons. He noted that all issues would be addressed by the management team in the meantime.

Technology Update: Nik Chatzopoulos provided update with regard to technology. He noted that Plato Academy were leaders in this area with technology in the classrooms. He spoke about ST4T conference and that so many of the teachers had done many technology paths as part of their professional development. He noted the vast majority of the conference attendees followed one of the 8 technology paths. He noted that even FETC is now offering specialized professional development paths, and he noted his connection with FETC and how they adopted that idea. He noted that was the highest form of flattery.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Legal: Dr. Kolettis gave an update based on insurance counsel's report noting that the case was still in the discovery phase and that updates regarding a potential mediation would be coming soon.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Bylaws Revision: Dr. Kolettis noted that Plato Academy Board Counsel, Shawn Arnold, had reviewed the Bylaws and recommended, even though language was in place that complied with the law, to make the conflict of interest section clearer, and to eliminate any possible confusion that there should be no interested transactions by Board Members.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the revised Bylaws as noted. The motion passed unanimously.**

Adoption of a new Conflict of Interest Policy: Dr. Kolettis noted that similar to the revision of the Bylaws, Plato Academy Board Counsel, Shawn Arnold, also advised the Board to update its existing Conflict of Interest Policy, which had been distributed to the Board for Review.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the new Conflict of Interest Policy. The motion passed unanimously.**

Revisions to Parent Student Handbook. First Dr. Kolettis noted that Plato Academy counsel, Shawn Arnold, reviewed the existing Grievance Policy, and noted that the Policy distributed to the Board Members had been proposed by counsel. He noted that it was similar to the old policy in that parents/guardians with grievance would follow the line of teacher, principal, management company for fact finding being that the structure is for the school principals to report to Superior Schools, and then if no resolution at that level, to bring the matter to the Plato Academy Chairman, and then if no resolution there, then to the full Board. Other updates to the handbook with regard to FERPA and Non-Discrimination notices were also discussed.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve the updates to the Parent Student Handbook. The motion passed unanimously.**

New Superior School Busses: Dr. Kolettis noted that Superior Schools had purchased two additional buses and that those busses had been offered to Plato Academy to use when needed when not used by the high school. He proposed entering into a Shared Use Agreement similar to the one that Plato had provided to Superior Schools for the use of the Plato Academy busses. It was noted there would be no fee to use the

busses, other than to properly operate, pay for the gas used, and to clean after use and to report any issues if noted. Dagmar Ortiz noted that the two parties should appoint one person from each school to be the point person and to create a schedule of use.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to approve entering into a Shared Used Agreement with Superior Schools to use the Superior School busses, and to grant authority to Chairman to sign the final agreement. The motion passed unanimously.**

Closing Remarks:

The Board Members discussed again the parent concerns that had been raised and went through the list of all the things that Plato Academy, Superior Collegiate High School, and Superior Schools, as the management company to both, were putting in place to alleviate their concerns. Mr. Christopoulos and Dr. Koularmanis discussed what had already been put into place, as well as discussed actions that would be done moving forward. Mr. Christopoulos advised that both principals on the campus would be in a continuous monitoring mode and would work together to ensure that all safeguards are in place.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:01 pm.

*C. Alahouzos*  
*signed for Chair Kolettis*

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

Date: 10-27-2017