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

**Date:** Thursday, February 5, 2015

**Time:** 12:30 pm

**Place:** Plato Academy Clearwater, 2045 Palmetto, Clearwater, FL 33765

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

**Plato Academy Principals:** Mr. Stephen Donnelly, Plato Academy Palm Harbor  
Ms. Dawn Parker, Plato Academy Clearwater  
Ms. Danielle Turro, Plato Academy Tarpon Springs  
Ms. Roe Schandel, Plato Academy Seminole  
Mr. Matthew Gunderson – designee for  
Ms. Jennifer Perez, Plato Academy St. Petersburg  
Ms. Amy Hayes, Plato Academy Largo

**Charter School Representatives:** Ms. Rina Psomas, Plato Academy Seminole, Mr. Matthew Gunderson, Plato Academy Tarpon Springs; Ms. Lisa Herbst, Plato Academy Palm Harbor; Ms. Tracey Hayes, Plato Academy Largo; Ms. Dawn Parker, Plato Academy Clearwater; Ms. Pamela Alexander, Plato Academy St. Petersburg

**Superior Schools:** Mr. Steve Christopoulos, President & CEO; Michael Press, Accountant  
**Other's Present:** Carol Siegel, ACH of America

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Pursuant to public notice, the meeting commenced at approximately 12:35 pm, with a Call to Order by Dr. Elias Kolettis. Roll call was taken and a quorum was established. The agenda, December 2014 and January 2015 financial statements, and handouts had been distributed in hard copy to the Board Members and were available for attendees.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Kolettis asked the members to review the minutes from the last Plato Academy board meeting on December 17, 2014, and to note any corrections or modifications. The minutes stand.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Chris Alahouzos and Mr. Peter Serbanos to adopt the December 17, 2014 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Employment Matter: The Board Members discussed the termination recommendation that had been made by Superior Schools for teacher, Sharon Oakley. The Board Members discussed the matter in detail with Mrs. Parker, Ms. Oakley's last supervising principal, who explained numerous and various instances of situations and infractions that occurred with Ms. Oakley that formed the basis of the termination recommendation. Mr. Alahouzos asked if there were written warnings in her file and if she had been warned about her infractions. Mrs. Parker confirmed that there were and that she had been warned on numerous occasions about the matters that were the basis of the termination recommendation. Ms. Alahouzos asked if all had been done to help Ms. Oakley succeed and Ms. Parker confirmed that she had without doubt tried to work with Ms. Oakley in the areas for which she needed improvement, but that so much of the time Ms. Oakley would avoid or evade Mrs. Parker. Mr. Alahouzos asked about the current policies and procedures for leaving the premises during contracted hours to which Tracey Hayes detailed and explained the forms and the process that is in place for teachers to use when they need time off, for which all teachers are provided such information at orientation and training each year before school begins.

**Motion made on behalf of Mr. Peter Serbanos and Ms. Dagmar Ortiz to terminate the employment of Ms. Oakley for good cause. The motion passed unanimously.**

Director Resignation: Dr. Kolettis reported that Ms. Dino Lalaounis had tendered his resignation from the Board based on his relocation out of the area. He read Ms. Lalaounis' communication tendering his resignation. The Board Member agreed that a plaque of appreciation should be provided to Mr. Lalaounis for his years of service to Plato Academy.

**Motion made by Mr. Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Ms. Dagmar Ortiz, to accept the resignation of Dino Lalaounis from the Board. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

Plato Academy Palm Harbor: Principal Donnelly reported the school is doing very well. He noted some facility matters that Superior, the school and the landlord are working through with regard to the grounds there in terms of work done to close out permits, putting in Astroturf and adding a sidewalk along two edges of Reister Hall. He noted the Astroturf and sidewalk were both required for safety matters and that those matters had been communicated to the landlord. He said he hoped that all the work could be done by Spring Break if not before. He reported on a staff member resigning and not coming back after the birth of a child. He said the students were performing well and parents seemed happy. He reported the Plato Academy Palm Harbor soccer team came in second in the tournament. He noted the school culture is exceptional at the school. He reported on the various fundraising activities being conducted by the PTO and the upcoming events. Mr. Serbanos noted that he had visited the Plato Academy Palm Harbor campus and was most impressed with the campus and the learning that was taking place during his visit. He thanked Principal Donnelly for the visit.

Plato Academy Clearwater: Principal Parker reported that all was going well with the school and that the students and staff were still enjoying the new facility immensely. She reported that all at the school are preparing for the FSA, and that the Plato Academy Clearwater, Largo and Tarpon Springs' campuses were all chosen to perform FSA practice testing that had already occurred. She noted the test is very long at 120 minutes for grades 4-8. She noted that the state had a new contractor with a new computer system and that all went smoothly. She said that all students are working hard and being challenged.

Plato Academy Seminole: Principal Schandel reported that the students and staff were doing well, all working hard and enjoying school. She reported that she had been busy assessing student data. She reported on the activities going on at the school and the PTO activities and fundraising events that were to occur. She noted the staff and students would be ready to enter the modular upon its completion.

Plato Academy Tarpon Springs: Principal Turro reported that the school was working on National History day. She reported that all students and staff were preparing for the FSA and that the school had a smooth FSAT practice test. She noted the children did well testing. She reported that the modular was almost ready to be occupied with the exception of some final electrical drawings and inspections to occur. She said the modular classrooms are beautiful. She reported that next year the Tarpon Springs campus would be a full K-8 schools and that 2 middle school teachers and student support director would be needed.

Plato Academy Largo: Principal Hayes report was that the school is doing well and that the staff continues to actively work to implement the new FSA standards in the classrooms. It was reported that the PTO at the school is flourishing and that there are numerous exciting activities and fundraisers being conducted by the PTO and the school.

Plato Academy St. Petersburg: Principal Perez's report was that Plato Academy St. Petersburg is doing well with what seems to be a high parent satisfaction rate. She noted that she has daily communication with the teachers, staff, and students and that the climate is very positive. She said the school continues to focus on the new FSA standards. She noted that she has been analyzing data very well and looking forward to growing to 4<sup>th</sup> grade next year.

## **MANAGEMENT COMPANY REPORT**

Mr. Steve Christopoulos, President and CEO of Superior Schools Corporation gave the Management Company Report to the Board Members.

Academic Performance: He noted that the new FSA standards would be tested on fairly soon and that all the schools are preparing for the test taking coming up. He said that the Principals and teachers are working very hard to ready themselves and the students for the test. He noted that if tradition serves itself, all campuses will do an excellent job.

Student Enrollment Update: Ms. Rina Psomas provided the enrollment report and noted that there had there had been little movement at the schools. It was noted that St. Petersburg had its second enrollment period lottery but that new applications were received thereafter. She noted that if there were any vacancies at any CSP grant school, and she exhausted the current wait list for any grade level, she would need to conduct another lottery among the late filing applicants to provide them with a number. The Board discussed the situation and agreed that another lottery should be conducted if necessary for a grade where the current wait list numbers were exhausted but where there were late applications filed.

**Motion made by Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Elias Kolettis, for Ms. Psomas for all CSP Grant schools to conduct grade level lotteries when necessary when current wait list is exhausted to assign late filed applications wait list numbers. The motion passed unanimously.**

Staffing Update: The Staffing Update was given by Mr. Christopoulos. He noted that for Plato Academy Clearwater that a long term sub was being used in the place of Ms. Oakley. He noted that a teacher at Plato Academy Palm Harbor would not return after the birth of her child. At Seminole it was noted that the PE position had been filled. He reviewed the staffing requirements for next year at the various campuses. It was noted that three more teachers would be needed at Plato Academy St. Petersburg, and that Tarpon Springs would required two additional teachers to accommodate 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He noted that it would be a busy spring evaluating potential new teachers.

Financial Updates: Accountant Michael Press gave report on financials and updated budget. With regard to financials, he reviewed the revenue and expenses for each school. The balance sheet was reviewed and discussed for each of the Plato Academy schools operating in Pinellas County. Mr. Christopoulos noted that the Plato Academy Tarpon Springs school had many expenses related to the new modular there. The Board members reviewed the discussed certain expenditures for each of the schools with Mr. Christopoulos.

**Motion made by Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Peter Serbanos, to accept the December and January 2014 financial statements for the schools. The motion passed unanimously.**

Facility Updates: Mr. Christopoulos gave a review of the all the Plato Academy school facilities.

Plato Academy -7<sup>th</sup> School Location/Pinellas Park: Mr. Christopoulos reported that a location had been identified at 9200 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Pinellas Park and that he and Chairman Kolettis have been working together on the new location and that the District has been notified of Plato Academy's request to change the address of the 7<sup>th</sup> Plato Academy school to the new location. He described the property and the requirements for zoning and permitting and the particulars for having the property ready for the 2015-16 school year. The Board Members discussed starting the school small to create that it was best if the school began small.

**Motion made by Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Louis Kokkinakos, to approve the new location and request to change the address of the 7<sup>th</sup> Plato Academy school in Pinellas County to 9200 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Pinellas Park. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion made by Chris Alahouzos, with a second by Louis Kokkinakos, to start the Plato Academy Pinellas Park school with grades from kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, as space permits, as to how many classes per grade and grade levels are served, and upon the approval of the address change by the District, the Director of Admissions is authorized to establish an initial Open Enrollment Period and to set a lottery date shortly after the close of the Open Enrollment period, if necessary, to enroll students in the new school. The motion passed unanimously.**

Plato Academy Pasco: Mr. Christopoulos noted that the Pasco County charter agreement was in the final stages of negotiation and that Plato Academy would need to find a location for the Pasco County school soon or the Board would need to request a deferment until the following school year. He reported that Superior Schools has been looking for locations in Pasco County. Mr. Kokkinakos noted that he had also been looking for sites in Pasco County. Mr. Christopoulos noted that while the ideal situation would be to find a turnkey lease option at first, he mentioned there were not that many opportunities in Pasco for that, but that Superior Schools was contacting many institutional zoned property owners in Pasco to find a turnkey site. He noted also that was much land in Pasco County that should be considered for development and that Arcadia Development would be considering the development of properties in Pasco County for institutional purposes. As a matter of disclosure he made it clear that Superior Schools is affiliated with Arcadia Development and that Arcadia Development is actively looking to develop sites for institutional and other users. He wanted the Board Members to understand that fact and encouraged them to seek other sites and developers as well to discuss sites and school design ideas. He noted that other developers are interested in serving Plato Academy and that Board should feel free to work with other developers to find locations and develop sites. He noted that if the Board desired, Arcadia Development would be willing to work with the Board to purchase the sites and/or build the improvements thereon to lease to Plato Academy.

The Board Members discussed various areas in Pasco County to locate the school. It was noted that many Plato Academy families already come from the New Port Richey and Trinity areas, and that those area might be suitable. Other Board Members noted the boom of development in the Wesley Chapel and Land O'Lakes area. Mr. Christopoulos discussed one church in the New Port Richey area was interested in having Plato Academy that had four acres next to their property. One concern noted that there were many sinkhole areas in Pasco County. Mr. Gunderson noted that around the interested church it was a underserved densely populated area with average school grades of Cs and Ds. Mr. Gunderson also noted that Superior Schools would also be

looking into the economic development area opportunities with regard to school development. Ms. Psomas reported that there were 600 applicants on the wait list that live in Pasco County. Mr. Alahouzos also brought up the question of governance for new schools and the Board discussed various options and corporate structures that could be used for subsidiary Plato Academy entities.

**Motion made by John Petalas, with a second by Chris Alahouzos, to authorize Superior Schools to pursue all location opportunities and to also work with Arcadia Development to find a suitable location and development plan for placing the Pasco County school, and to authorize Chairman Kolettis to oversee and sign documents for a Pasco County school location. The motion passed unanimously.**

Plato Academy Seminole: Mr. Christopoulos discussed the status of the Plato Academy Seminole modulars and discussed the relationship with landlord during the process and that he believed that all had gone well and that the modulars would be ready early in the first quarter of 2015.

Plato Academy Tarpon Springs: The status of the Plato Academy Tarpon modulars was discussed and it was noted that the modulars were anticipated to have been ready much earlier. It was noted that there were unexpected developments with electrical and plumbing matters that delayed their occupancy. The hope was that they would be ready for occupancy very soon. The Board Members also discussed the fact that only a few more years remained on the Lease at Tarpon Springs and the question was whether the school should remain at the location or move to another location. It was noted that sharing space is challenging with any other entity and that the preference would be to have an exclusive use space arrangement. Ms. Turro noted that the relationship with the Tarpon Springs landlord had been positive, but that with any shared space arrangement prohibits a school from being able to maximize the space to its full potential. The Board members agreed that a new property should be sought.

**Motion made by John Petalas, with a second by Chris Alahouzos, to authorize Superior Schools to pursue location opportunities to find a suitable new location the Plato Academy Tarpon Springs schools. The motion passed unanimously.**

Plato Academy Largo: Mr. Christopoulos reported that he and George Klimis had a very fruitful meeting with the Landlord regarding the next five years of the lease and that the Landlord is expected to accept Plato Academy's renewal notice. Mr. Christopoulos reviewed the in excess of \$50,000 of improvements that had been made on the property and the upcoming ADA bathroom remodel. It was noted that the work has been permitted and that the work should occur soon. He noted again that the meeting with the landlord representatives was very positive.

Plato Academy St. Petersburg: Mr. Christopoulos reported that that school would be occupying the current property for another year, but that it would need to move for the 2016-2017 school year when it would grow to the fifth grade. Mr. Gunderson noted that there is another church in the vicinity of the current school that would be a good candidate for the school. He noted that the church leadership was receptive to having a Plato Academy school at their location and that he would be meeting with the church leadership to discuss the matter further.

Plato Academy Palm Harbor: Mr. Christopoulos reported that Superior Schools is working with the landlord on permission to complete the outstanding property projects to close out permits on the property, to install a sidewalk next to the pavilion and on the side of Reister Hall, and to install artificial turf on the playfield. It was noted that the process of working with the church leadership on the projects, especially the artificial turf project, was extremely challenging in terms of their internal reporting structure and in terms of timing of what Plato Academy needs. He said it was almost to the point of frustrating the purpose of the Lease. The Board Members noted for Superior Schools to work with Plato Academy's outside counsel, Rick Alford, if necessary on the matter.

Plato Academy Clearwater: – Mr. Christopoulos reported that all work at the Palmetto Street property should be completed soon. He reported that the buildings would all be ready for the expanded enrollment that was being requested with the District. The Board Members discussed future plans of using the Gym/Multipurpose building at Clearwater for various school and community functions, some of which could possibly be held to raise money for the different needs of the schools. Discussion was had with regard to certain annual events that could be held there.

Technology Update: Mr. Christopoulos reported that with the new FSA test, it could not be taken on an iPad. The schools would all need laptops in place for the testing. With that being the case, he noted that Superior Schools research revealed that student laptops are preferable over iPads moving forward. He also noted that a decision would likely be made soon that all devices would remain at school at the end of the day except for those that have no technology options at home to do their homework. He noted that iPads would continue to be utilized in the learning environment, but that laptops would be the primary technology tool used in the classroom because of their need for testing and their further flexibility with flash and having a keyboard, among other reasons. He noted that laptops have come down in price significantly and can be purchased for approximately \$179 each. The Board Members discussed the pros and cons of taking the devices home or not.

**Motion made by John Petalas, with a second by Dagmar Ortiz, to authorize purchase as many student laptop computers as possible to replace or supplement current laptop inventory for use by students grades K-8 at each Plato Academy school to purchase with budget surplus monies from each school's budget. The motion passed unanimously.**

Other technology updates were discussed in addition to the new SuperiorTech4Teachers Conference to be held at Plato Academy Clearwater by Plato Academy teacher Nick Chatzopoulos. Mr. Christopoulos noted that Mr. Chatzopoulos was a renowned teacher in Florida, providing his background and accomplishments, noting that he was one of the only teachers in the state that that received 100% pass rate for 5<sup>th</sup> grade math on the FCAT – and had done so for two years in a row. It was noted that he also has a passion to train other teachers to also instill passion into students. The conference details were discussed; it will be 2-day conference that will also provide teachers with continuing education credits. It was noted that the conference could potentially host 700 people. Mr. Alahouzos encouraged the team to employ various technology options such as a webinar format to accommodate other teachers could attend from afar as well.

## **OLD AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Charter Amendment Requests: Mr. Christopoulos reviewed the status of the amendments requests made for the 7<sup>th</sup> school address change, Seminole 15-year renewal and enrollment increase for Clearwater. Mr. Christopoulos spoke about requirements for enrollment increase and provided information sent from district staff.

Pasco County Charter Agreement: Mr. Christopoulos said that Pasco has been a great authorizer to work with. He noted that Hillsborough County has also been good to work with, and that they are very receptive to charter schools there. The board members reviewed the Pasco contract and it was noted the Model Contract had been used by district staff there. The Board discussed the various requests they would not to make with regard to indemnification and student dismissal rights. It was discussed that the current dismissal language was good and that families will have ability to redress any grievances.

**Motion made by Peter Serbanos, with a second by Chris Alahouzos, to authorize the Board Chairman to work with Superior Schools to coordinate the final changes for the Pasco County Charter School Agreement and to authorize the Chairman to sign the final draft at the close of negotiations. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Christopoulos discuss possible expansion opportunities in the Palm Beach, Boca Raton, and Orlando areas of Florida. Matt Gunderson provided an update on a recent meeting that occurred in Orange County with people who were interested in having a Plato Academy in that community. The Board Members discussed the various district requirements to have local boards and the corporate structure was discussed with regard to adding Plato Academy subsidiaries that could operate Plato Academy schools in other Florida districts. The Board Members further discussed that they liked the strategy to start small and develop autonomy. They noted the benefits of do so are extremely rewarding and that a great culture is gained by doing so.

**Motion made by John Petalas, with a second by Chris Alahouzos, to authorize Superior Schools to file High-Performing and Standard Charter School Applications on its behalf in all Florida counties where there is expansion interest or where there are opportunities to expand exist. The motion passed unanimously.**

Dr. Kolettis reported that he and Mr. Christopoulos had been in contact with the leadership of the Florida Charter School Alliance, a statewide charter school support organization in Florida that has as its main objective to promote charter schools. The Board Members discussed the advantages of becoming a member and discussed the various support provided by the Alliance. One of the mechanisms used by the Alliance is the Rapid Response Team. The Board Members discussed that it was a good idea and helped to bring people together to humanize charter schools – bringing students, parents, and teachers, together to effect change. It was agreed that Plato Academy could benefit from its involvement and support of the Alliance and noted the cost of joining per school.

**Motion made by Chris Alahouzos, with a second by John Petalas, for all of the Plato Academy schools to join the Florida Charter School Alliance, and to continue membership indefinitely until determined otherwise. The motion passed unanimously.**

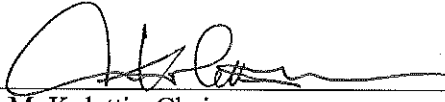
Ms. Dagmar Ortiz added a new topic to the agenda. She indicated an official Alumni program should be developed. She noted that Plato Academy needed to keep in touch with and capture data from the graduating alumni of the Plato Academy schools. She noted that there are many now that have graduated and that it would be a good idea to ensure Plato Academy is keeping in touch with them and to have alumni events. All the Board Members agreed. Methods currently being to keep in touch with the alumni were discussed by the management team. Discussions took place about various events that could occur, such as a sporting event and picnic, and by keeping in contact via email and other ways using social media.

Mr. Peter Serbanos also added that he would like to see a school wide community assistance project put into place, such as a book bag and supply drive. He noted that some of the Plato Academy schools had already done so, and that it would be a good idea to ensure that all the schools have a community service program in place to serve disadvantaged students both in and outside of Plato Academy.

Mr. Chris Alahouzos noted that Plato Academy should have a formal ceremony now at the new Plato Academy Clearwater school has opened and that it would be good to invite state representatives and other guests to the ceremony/celebration in order to experience the Plato Academy school first hand. Holding an open house and tour was discussed by the Board Members. Mr. Chris Alahouzos also discussed the importance of inviting School Board members to such a celebration. It was noted that Carol Cook had visited Plato Academy Tarpon Springs in the past and that it had been a positive visit. Also, it was noted that Terry Krassner had also visited the Plato Academy Seminole school, and had reportedly stated that she not been a fan of charter schools, but that after touring the school she loved it. A discussion ensued regarding how the relationship with the District and the Plato Academy schools could be improved. Legislation was discussed that could assist, and that a state authorizer statute could relieve a lot of the inconsistencies, unpredictability, and contradictions between the Districts and charter schools.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the acting Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:38 pm.



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

Date: 6-30-2015