

**Old Sturbridge Academy Charter Public School  
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Committee**

**Approved November 18, 2020**

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, October 28, 2020  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Zoom Video Conference  
**Members present:** Vivian Brooks, Linda Denault, Louis Fazen, Amy Herman, Reed Hillman, James Korman, Richard McGrath, Jessica Miller, Jasmin Rivas  
**Members absent:** Keith Blanchette, Pamela Boisvert  
**In attendance:** James Connally, Lisa DeTora, Jim Donahue, Sarah Parks, Kristin Fournier, Dan Fournier, Jennifer Simpson

**Order of Business:**

Public Access 1 on Docketed Items

1. Approval of the minutes of the September 30, 2020 Board Meeting
2. Approval of the Revised School Day Hours
3. Approval of the Revised Mask Policy
4. Report of the Governance Committee
  - Discussion and Approval of the Executive Director's Evaluation
  - Discussion and Approval of the Trustee Self Survey
  - Discussion and Approval of the Management Services Agreement
  - Renewal of Trustee Amy Herman's Term
  - Pilot Program: Merging the Advancement and Community Engagement Committees for a year
5. New Business

Public Access 2

**Documents and Exhibits:**

- 9.30.2020 OSACPS Minutes
- Proposed Mask Policy Updated 10.2020 for Board Review
- Executive Director Performance Review Summary and Survey Results
- Trustee Summary and Survey Results
- Management Services Summary and Survey Results

Mr. Hillman called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board. Quorum was established.

*Public Access 1 on Docketed Items*

Mr. Hillman asked if there were any comments from members of the public. There were none.

*1. Approval of the minutes of the September 30, 2020 Board Meeting*

Mr. Hillman asked if there were any errors or omissions in the minutes. There were none.

Mr. Hillman asked for motion to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2020 Board Meeting.

**Motion:** Dr. Denault moved to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2020 Board Meeting.

**Second:** Mr. McGrath seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

*4. Report of the Governance Committee*

[Note: The Board addressed the first three items in the Report of the Governance Committee prior to listed agenda items 2 and 3.]

- *Discussion and Approval of the Executive Director's Evaluation*

Mr. McGrath presented the Executive Director's Evaluation. He reported that the Governance Committee approved an executive summary and the full report earlier in the day.

Mr. Hillman noted that all Trustees received a copy of the Evaluation prior to the meeting.

Ms. Brooks expressed complete satisfaction in the Evaluation.

Dr. Denault concurred with Ms. Brooks.

Dr. Fazen complimented the format of the Evaluation and commended the Governance Committee for its work.

Ms. Herman agreed with the Evaluation.

Mr. Donahue thanked the Board for its generous comments. He noted that he would have scored himself lower in some areas, which he has discussed with Mr. Hillman, Mr. McGrath, and the Governance Committee.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to approve the Executive Director's Evaluation.

**Motion:** Mr. McGrath moved to approve the Executive Director's Evaluation.

**Second:** Ms. Brooks seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

- *Discussion and Approval of the Trustee Self Survey*

Mr. McGrath presented the Trustee Self Survey. He reported that the Governance Committee approved an executive summary and the full report earlier in the day. Mr. McGrath noted that 91% of the Trustees participated in the survey. All Trustees received a copy of the Self Survey prior to the meeting.

Ms. Brooks observed that the survey data provides a benchmark for future Board development. The survey gives the Board insight into areas in which to reinforce its efforts. She noted that the Governance Committee highlighted the Board's active and collaborative spirit, which supports productive and effective processes.

Mr. Hillman inquired whether the Governance Committee will follow up on areas of weakness identified in the survey.

Ms. Brooks replied that the Governance Committee will continue to discuss the survey results. They will be pivotal in the development of the strategic plan and continue to inform activities over the next three years.

Dr. Denault stated that the Governance Committee thoroughly discussed the survey this morning. She noted that the survey was well worth the time and effort it required. The results provides direction and a number of specific actions that align well with the strategic planning process. Dr. Denault thanked Ms. Brooks for her time and effort in organizing and producing a clear, concise document.

Dr. Fazen noted that the survey results are very easy to understand. He highlighted that only 10% of the Board brings fundraising expertise. He suggested that this could be an area of future Board development.

Mr. Donahue commented that self-assessment is challenging, but ultimately valuable.

Mr. McGrath found the survey very enlightening. He observed that the Board is generally unified in its thoughts. He noted that participation was exceptional. He agreed that the survey will inform the strategic plan.

Ms. Miller found the survey useful and expressed the hope that it be conducted annually. She expressed her thanks to Mr. McGrath and Ms. Brooks.

Mr. Hillman concurred that the Trustee Self-Survey should take place annually.

Ms. Rivas observed that the survey provides a good blueprint for future Board recruitment. She noted that the survey shows interest in equity and diversity.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to approve the Trustee Self Survey.

**Motion:** Dr. Denault moved to approve the Trustee Self Survey.

**Second:** Dr. Fazen seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

- *Discussion and Approval of the Management Services Agreement*

Mr. McGrath presented the Management Services Agreement Review for FY2019-2020. He reported that the Governance Committee approved an executive summary and the full review earlier in the day. Mr. McGrath noted the review scored “exceeds expectation” in eight of nine evaluation categories, including Crisis Management/COVID-19.

Dr. Denault stated that the Review highlights the close cooperation between the Academy and the Village.

Dr. Fazen noted the high scores throughout the Review.

Ms. Herman commented that she can attest to how much the Village means to the Academy. She noted that the partnership is one of the things that makes the Academy so special.

Ms. Rivas thanked Ms. Brooks for her work in assembling the Review. She stated that the graphs and visuals are very helpful.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to approve the Management Services Agreement Review and confirm that the Agreement is in compliance with all representations, warranties, conditions and agreements as voted on September 7, 2017.

**Motion:** Mr. McGrath moved to approve the Management Services Agreement Review and acknowledge that the Agreement is in compliance with all representations, warranties, conditions and agreements as voted on September 7, 2017.

**Second:** Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

## 2. *Approval of the Revised School Day Hours*

Mr. Donahue noted that the Board and staff have been quick, nimble, and flexible in responding to the Academy’s needs during the pandemic. The micro-campuses, social distancing, and health and safety protocols are keeping the community safe. As the first six weeks of school concluded, Mr. Donahue and Ms. DeTora evaluated what is working well and what could be improved as we move into the winter. They identified several concerns about the current school day hours and recommended revising the day hours to 8:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Mr. Donahue provided background on this recommendation. The Academy’s chartered school day is 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. In July, the Board approved a modified school day of 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. At that time, we did not know if the primary learning model for the school year would be in-person, hybrid,

or fully remote. The shortened school hours were intended to give faculty and staff sufficient meeting time before and after school to support students in all learning models. Right now, it looks like full in-person learning will continue and we have less need of the additional meeting time. We would rather have additional instructional time. Currently, the campus opens at 7:30 a.m. for the free, outdoor before-school program. Many students arrive between 7:30 and 8 a.m. The students arrive in the classroom between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m., having spent up to an hour outdoors, and have breakfast. Instruction does not start until close to 9 a.m.

Mr. Donahue stated that under the start time, classrooms would open to students at 7:40 a.m., eliminating the outdoor before-school program. Students would immediately eat breakfast. Instruction would begin by 8:20 a.m., providing additional instructional time in the mornings when the students are most engaged.

Mr. Donahue noted that the 2:15 p.m. end time recognizes that dismissal is a process under the COVID-19 protocols. The earlier dismissal time will allow an earlier start to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) after-school program.

Mr. Donahue stated that Ms. DeTora is being as accommodating of families as possible.

Ms. DeTora observed that some students may be on campus for two hours before instruction begins. Given this year's focus on academic acceleration, it is important to maximize learning. She noted that the teachers support this change. If approved by the Board, the new schedule will go into effect on Monday, November 9, giving families two weeks to modify arrangements.

Dr. Denault voiced enthusiastic support for the change. She noted that students will benefit from a shortened before-school time.

Dr. Fazen complimented the Academy's flexibility in recognizing and quickly responding to the situation.

Ms. Herman supported the change. She noted that frequent sanitization of hands and surfaces extends each stage of the day, reducing the time available for instruction. For example, instead of two rounds of different types of individual student activities, there is only time for one under the current schedule. She anticipates that under the new schedule, there would be time for two.

Mr. McGrath stated his support for the change.

Ms. Miller concurred with Mr. McGrath and emphasized the need for flexibility.

Ms. Rivas stated her support for the change and inquired how many families the revision would negatively impact.

Ms. DeTora replied that only a few families contacted her with concerns. She reiterated that the Academy is ready to help families as they negotiate childcare and work schedules.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to approve the revised school day hours of 8:00 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

**Motion:** Dr. Denault moved to approve the revised school day hours of 8:00 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

**Second:** Ms. Herman seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

*3. Approval of the Revised Mask Policy*

Mr. Donahue introduced a recommendation for a revised mask policy informed by the first six weeks of school. At the beginning of the year, the Academy adopted DESE’s guidance on masks and face coverings. Under this policy, K-1 students were strongly encouraged to wear masks and 2-6 students were required to wear masks. Mr. Donahue and Ms. DeTora recommend an amendment to the policy so that masks are required for all students. This will not impact many students, as most K-1 students are already choosing to wear masks. Academy students are in the Village working with LTE teachers in addition to their classroom teachers. The revised mask policy will keep as many people in our community as safe as possible.

Ms. DeTora stated that all students have done a phenomenal job of wearing masks, taking mask breaks, and advocating for their own mask breaks. She noted that the Academy has continued to emphasize project-based, hands-on group learning while practicing social distancing. Universal mask wearing will add another layer of protection. Dr. Gail Ryan, the school physician, has written a letter in support of the revised policy. Ms. DeTora noted that many other K-12 schools are moving to adopt universal mask policies.

Dr. Fazen noted that mask wearing helps protect against respiratory illnesses other than COVID-19. He inquired about students that might be disadvantaged by the revised policy.

Ms. DeTora stated that the Academy provides masks for those who do not have them.

Dr. Fazen asked about the meaning of “mandatory” in the context of the policy.

Ms. DeTora replied that students will have multiple mask breaks over the course of the day. All students will remain masked during arrival and dismissal, while within six feet of others, during time in the Village, and during recess. She complimented the Academy staff on their consistency in enforcing the mask policy.

Dr. Fazen inquired whether anyone is dependent on lip reading.

Ms. DeTora replied that no one relies on lip reading at the moment, but the Academy has made available masks with clear cut-outs. Teachers have made videos of themselves unmasked so that the students can see their entire faces.

Ms. Herman commented that even the kindergarten students are highly skilled mask wearers.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to approve the revised mask policy.

**Motion:** Dr. Denault moved to approve the revised mask policy.

**Second:** Ms. Miller seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

4. *Report of the Governance Committee* (continued)

- *Renewal of Trustee Amy Herman's Term*

Mr. McGrath presented a recommendation from the Governance Committee that Amy Herman's term as a Trustee be extended for one year from November 30, 2020.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to renew Trustee Amy Herman's term.

**Motion:** Mr. McGrath moved to renew Trustee Amy Herman's term.

**Second:** Ms. Rivas seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** Ms. Brooks: Yes  
Dr. Denault: Yes  
Dr. Fazen: Yes  
Ms. Herman: Abstain  
Mr. Korman: Yes  
Mr. McGrath: Yes  
Ms. Miller: Yes  
Ms. Rivas: Yes

Motion passed.

- *Pilot Program: Merging the Advancement and Community Engagement Committees for a year*

Mr. McGrath noted that the Governance Committee has not yet addressed the pilot program.

**Motion:** Mr. McGrath moved to table the topic until after the November 13, 2020 meeting of the Governance Committee.

**Second:** Dr. Denault seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** All in favor.

5. *New Business*

No new business was raised.

*Public Access 2*

[Note: Technical difficulties during Public Access 1 prevented members of the public from speaking on docketed items. The Chair allowed comment on docketed items during Public Access 2.]

Mr. Hillman asked if there were any comments from members of the public.

Mr. Hillman recognized Dan and Kristin Fournier.

Mr. and Ms. Fournier addressed the change in school day hours. They requested a family survey to determine the impact of the change and noted that stability is important for the students.

Mr. Hillman recognized Jennifer Simpson.

Ms. Simpson commented that the change in school day hours will be disruptive to families. She noted that it will be especially difficult for working parents with children enrolled in other districts. She stated that the two week transition period was insufficient.

Mr. Hillman asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Mr. McGrath moved to adjourn the meeting.

**Second:** Ms. Brooks seconded the motion.

Mr. Hillman conducted a roll call of the Board.

**Vote:** Ms. Brooks: Yes

Dr. Denault: Yes

Dr. Fazen: Yes, with the understanding that the Board will address concerns raised in Public Access.

Ms. Herman: Yes

Mr. Korman: Yes

Mr. McGrath: Yes

Ms. Miller: Yes

Ms. Rivas: Yes, with same understanding as Dr. Fazen.

Motion passed.

Mr. Hillman adjourned the meeting at 3:54 p.m.