

BOARD COMMITTEE
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Date: November 18,, 2024
Time: 7:30 PM
Location: Online
Attending Zahida Hirani-Saran (Chair)
 Fauziat Raji (Vice Chair)
 Constance Amenaghawon
 Ajoke Omage
 Kerry-Ann Sitcheron
 Ian Gray
 Adedayo Ojeleye (Online)
 Jennifer Singh (Online)
 Khryssa Genery
 (Recording Secretary)

Guests: Jared Harmata
 Nikki Chau

Items

- 1. Land Acknowledgement (Zahida Hirani-Saran, Board Chair)** **7:31PM**
- 2. Call to Order (Zahida Hirani-Saran, Board Chair)** **7:32PM**
 Meeting called to order at 7:31PM, and was held virtually.
 - a. Approval of the November 18, 2024, Meeting of the Board of Directors Agenda**
 The November 18, 2024 Board of Directors meeting Agenda was approved as presented.
 - i. Motion to approve Agenda:** Fauziat Raji
 - ii. Seconded:** Kerry-Ann Sitcheron
 - iii. Vote Decision:** Passed unanimous
 - b. Approval of the November 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes of the Board of Directors.**
 The November 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes of the Board of Directors were approved as presented.
 - i. Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes:** Ajoke Omage
 - ii. Seconded:** Constance Amenaghawon
 - iii. Vote Decision:** Passed unanimous
- 3. Director of Finance Update (Constance Amenaghawon, Finance Chair)** **7:36PM**
 - a. October Financials**
 - i. Revenues**
 Total revenues as of October: \$2,634,527, representing 17% of the annual budget of \$15,128,741. Alberta Education provided \$2,259,648, including a \$68,000 rent subsidy grant. Alberta Infrastructure contributions amounted to \$97,798 (19% of the budget), including reorganized deferred revenue. Fees collected totaled \$174,410 (16% of the budget) and are expected to catch up over the school year. Investment income reached \$53,416, reflecting a conservative budget projection at lower interest rates (33% of the budget)
 - ii. Other significant contributions**
 Gifts and donations: \$1,649 (16% of the budget). Rental of facilities: \$10,000 (48% of the budget), with a tenant paying 50% of annual rent. Fundraising: \$11,537, including \$9,445 from family engagement.

iii. Expenses by Program

Total expenses: \$2,754,023, representing 17% of the annual budget of \$15,993,596. Instruction (ECS-12): \$1,768,044, including additional costs for classroom setup due to increased enrollment (18% of the budget). Plant Operations and Maintenance: \$547,910 (14% of the budget). Transportation: \$347,049, including costs for an additional bus (18% of the budget). Board and System Administration: \$91,020 (16% of the budget)

iv. Expenses by Object

Certificated salaries and wages: \$1,024,669 (16% of the budget). Non-certificated salaries and wages: \$169,394, reflecting new hires and performance-based salary increases (18% of the budget). Services, contracts, and supplies: \$1,031,528 (22% of the budget), including costs for additional insurance and classroom setup. Amortization expenses: \$262,268 (17% of the budget). Merchant fees under other interest/finance charges: \$11,463 (25% of the budget).

v. Deficit and Concerns

Year-to-date deficit stands at \$119,496, attributed partly to the 3% enrollment shortfall and increased operational expenses. Questions were brought forth regarding how the enrollment shortfall might impact year-end financial outcomes.

b. Audited Financial Statement Presented by Jared Harmata and Nikki Chau

8:18PM

Discussion Points

i. Draft Status

The Audited Financial Statement is still in draft form and cannot be finalized until Board approval is obtained. The report lacks dates due to its incomplete status and pending signatures.

ii. Liabilities

1. Accounts Payable

- a. Includes payments for the furnaces.
- b. Transportation payouts for parents require processing for subsidy payouts.
- c. Deferred Obligations: Outstanding obligations with the government as per prior agreements.

iii. Statements Reviewed

1. Statement of Financial Position

- a. Provided an overview of Aurora's current financial assets and liabilities.

2. Statement of Operations

- a. Highlighted increased expenses and a growing deficit.
- b. Operational deficit identified as a major concern, despite a strong financial asset base.

iv. Auditor's Observations

Auditor commended improvements compared to previous years' financials.

1. Issues Found

- a. Page 30, Unexpended deferred capital is required to be allocated to other school jurisdictions.
- b. Paid expenses on Page 30 needed a correction to \$55,500.
- c. Auditor praised the financial health but emphasized completing pending government obligations.

v. Report Timeline

1. Final report updates to be completed by Wednesday, November 20, 2024.
2. The final version will be presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, November 21, 2024.

vi. Key Takeaways

1. The operational deficit requires strategic planning to address future financial sustainability.

2. Compliance with government obligations must be prioritized to avoid regulatory complications.
3. The Board recognized the value of auditor feedback in strengthening financial management practices.

vii. Board Decision

1. **Motion:** To Accept the Audited Financials for the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024
2. **Moved by:** Constance Amenaghawon
3. **Seconded by:** Adedayo Ojeleye
4. **Vote Outcome:** Passed unanimously at 8:50 PM.

c. Final Audit Findings Presented by Jared Harmata and Nikki Chau

8:46PM

The financial audit for the year ending August 31, 2024, was reviewed in detail. The auditors presented key findings, highlighting adjustments, unadjusted misstatements, and areas requiring attention. The primary purpose of the audit was to ensure accurate financial reporting and provide insights into financial health.

i. Audit Adjustments

Adjustments resulted in a final net loss of \$612,425, reflecting corrections to secondary school amortization, deferred grant funding, and other items.

ii. Unadjusted Misstatements

These included adjustments for stale-dated cheques, enrollment deposits, prepaid flex benefits, and August visa transactions, among others. These misstatements totaled a net impact of \$59,368 on assets and \$(72,817) on liabilities.

iii. Significant Audit Risks

No instances of fraud were identified in management override testing. Revenue recognition and accounts payable procedures showed no significant issues, confirming compliance with accounting policies.

iv. Internal Controls

A deficiency was noted in recording GST claims, where errors led to overstated expenses and understated receivables. Improved procedures for tracking and calculating GST are recommended.

v. Conclusion

The audit concluded that Aurora Charter Schools is compliant with Canadian public sector accounting standards, with no material concerns regarding going concern status or related-party transactions.

Break 10 Min

8:48PM

4. Superintendent's Report (Ian Gray)

8:56 PM

a. Research and Grants

Highlighted the importance of creating templates for managers to streamline submissions, to be introduced at the next meeting. Shared excitement for the upcoming "Lunch and Learn" event in two days, featuring Dr. Eileen Santos from the University of Alberta. Expressed pride in the innovative research at Aurora, emphasizing the call for submissions to the RAISE Scholarly Journal.

b. Strategic Plan

Board presented feedback on the strategic plan, requesting any additional input from stakeholders.

c. Leading Learning

i. Principal's Report

1. Primary Campus

Acknowledgment of the successful Remembrance Day ceremony. Farewell to Jesse Hinton, with gratitude for his contributions. Family Science Night on November 15 featured Global News presenter Michael Ng and telescope activities, well-received by families. Completed phonics training for staff, ensuring continuity and strengthening educational practices. Successful lockdown drill, showcasing preparedness.

2. Secondary Campus

18 out of 23 students received university pre-acceptances. Parents and students invited to a University of Alberta scholarship session. Ongoing efforts in student behavior monitoring, emphasizing respect, uniform adherence, and punctuality.

d. Student Learning Services (SLS) Updates

- i. Active counseling services**, with a Grade 9 anger management module underway. Students working on BASE modules focusing on social and mental well-being.

e. School Operations

i. School Calendar 2024-2025

Initiated the school calendar template for the next academic year. Discussions ongoing to gather staff input for creative scheduling solutions, as Edmonton Public Schools' calendar is delayed until December.

f. Annual Education Results Report (AERR)

i. Superintendent's Message

The school has successfully grown to serve over 1,200 students across two campuses. Significant milestones include the introduction of the high school program in 2022 and the acquisition of the Alberta Avenue campus in 2023. Consistently high academic standards have been maintained, with teachers and staff praised for creating a remarkable learning environment.

ii. Student Achievement

Provincial Achievement Tests show strong performance, with high rates of acceptability and excellence in core subjects.

iii. Engagement and Satisfaction

Parent satisfaction with student engagement reached 96.6% in 2024, a steady increase from prior years. Teacher satisfaction with student engagement is high at 98.4%. Citizenship initiatives have led to a 90.1% satisfaction rate among parents, with noticeable increases in satisfaction for students and teachers.

iv. Facilities and Learning Environment

Recent upgrades include advanced instructional technology, renovated school spaces, and enhanced athletic and science facilities.

v. Programs and Initiatives

Implementation of mentorship programs, digital citizenship workshops, and community service learning projects. Strong focus on academic excellence, character building, and collaborative community involvement.

vi. Governance and Leadership

Aurora's accountability framework and stakeholder engagement strategies ensure alignment with provincial standards. High parent and teacher involvement rates demonstrate a robust partnership in education.

vii. Financial Responsibility

Strong financial management, with most expenses and revenues aligned closely with the budget, reflecting fiscal responsibility and investment in key areas.

1. **Motion:** To accept the 2023-2024 Annual Education Results Report.
2. **Moved by:** Fauziat Raji
3. **Seconded by:** Adedayo Ojeleye
4. **Vote Decision:** Passed unanimously, with the caveat to complete minor changes.

g. Facilities Updates

i. Sherbrooke Campus

Furnace replacement completed; the staffroom is restored and operational.

ii. Alberta Avenue Campus

Gym renovations nearing completion, with scoreboard installation pending. Ian Gray and Mrs. Harman attended the Accelerator Project event for educational insights. Emphasized the importance of submitting the Capital Plan, which can be revised throughout the year to align with funding and project goals.

iii. Skyrattler Campus

Construction contract awarded to Aman, with a completion deadline of June. Hiring process to begin in alignment with construction milestones.

9:45PM

5. Policy Committee (Kerry-Ann Sitcheron)

a. 1030 BP: Board Code of Conduct (3rd Reading)

i. Motion: Constance Amenaghawon motioned to accept 1030 BP: Code of Conduct for 3rd and final reading

ii. Seconded: Constance Amenaghawon

iii. Discussion:

Mileage and about keeping it fair and equitable across the board and staff

iv. Vote: Unanimously

b. 4200 BP: Corporate Credit Cards(2nd Reading)

i. Motion to accept 4200 BP: Corporate Credit Cards for 2nd reading: Kerry-Ann Sitcheron

ii. Seconded: Fauziat Raji

iii. Discussion

Limitations on credit card issuance to specified roles, including the superintendent, principals, assistant principals, secretary-treasurer, and board secretary. Concerns raised about potential fraud and the need for safeguards. Suggestion to review two years of charge data and table of allocated limits. Policy to clearly define misuse consequences and ensure staff training on acceptable use

iv. Motion: Tabled for further review by the policy committee

c. 6055 BP: Study Period (3rd Reading Tabled November 2024)

i. Decision

Tabled for 1 month to take some time to communicate with staff to gain additional feedback before the board goes to a 3rd and final reading.

d. 8350 BP: Video Surveillance (3rd Reading)

i. Motion: To accept the reading of 8350 BP: Video Surveillance 3rd reading

ii. **Moved:** Kerry-Ann Sitcheron

iii. **Seconded :** Ajoke Omege and Adedayo Ojeleye

iv. **Amendments:** To address redundancies and incorporate FOIP Act provisions regarding cost transparency.

v. **Vote Decision :** Unanimous

6. Board of Directors

9:58PM

a. Student Recognition

Highlighted student achievements and recognition for their efforts and successes.

b. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS)

i. TAAPCS AGM Update:

The AGM was held in Calgary two weeks ago. Aurora did not pay the required membership fee, resulting in non-voting status. Despite this, the Chair and Superintendent attended meetings to represent Aurora.

1. Discussion Highlights:

Significant focus on promoting awareness and education surrounding charter schools.

A letter received from the Minister of Education was notably positive, contrasting with a previous abrupt communication.

The board considered maintaining non-voting status for the upcoming year to evaluate the organization's direction and potential benefits of voting membership.

c. Motion: To remain a non-voting member of TAAPCS for the next year.

d. Moved by: Ajoke Omege

e. Seconded by: Fauziat Raji

f. Vote: Passed with six votes in favor.

7. Next Meeting December 16, 2024

8. Adjournment

10:11PM

a. Motion to adjourn Fauziat Raji

b. Seconded by Constance Amenaghawon