



## **Cleveland Transformation Alliance**

### **Minutes of the Board of Directors**

September 21, 2020 | 5:30 PM

Via Zoom

#### **In Attendance**

Baumgartner, Mark

Downing, Diane

Gibson, Richard

Gordon, Eric

Heard, Robert

Jordan, Sharon Sobol

King, Brooke

Klupinski, Stephanie

Marbury, Shana

Napoli, August

Payton, Kevin

Price, Monyka

Randel, Erin

Tenney, Turkessa

Williams, Helen

Zachariah, Sajit

#### **Absent**

Bingham, Anne

Friedman, Lee

Jackson, Mayor Frank

Mullin, Ann

Patterson, Jeffrey

Roskamm, Alan

Ruiz, Victor

Reyes, Jose

#### **Other Attendees**

Altieri, Audrey

O'Donnell, Patrick

#### **Cleveland Transformation Alliance Staff**

Marnecheck, Meghann

Stacy, Eli

#### **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

Dr. Monyka Price called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM. Dr. Price gave her opening welcome and reflected on the loss of Justice J. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Ms. Billie Osborne-Fears, Bishop J. Delano Ellis II, and Reverend Dr. A. Charles Bowie. Pastor Richard Gibson reflected on his connection to Bishop Ellis, Reverend Bowie, Ms. Osborne-Fears, and Justice Ginsburg.

Dr. Price then opened the floor for discussion to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2020 Board Meeting. Ms. Shana Marbury, Dr. Helen Williams, and Dr. Price spoke about the minutes' length and summarizing them more in the future. At 5:39 PM, hearing no further discussion of the minutes, Dr. Price asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Mark Baumgartner made

the motion to accept the minutes. Dr. Sajit Zachariah seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes

### **School Re-Opening Updates**

At 5:40 PM, Dr. Price introduced Mr. Eric Gordon, Ms. Brooke King, and Ms. Stephanie Klupinski to give their School Re-Opening Updates.

Mr. Gordon stated that the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) was in their third week of instruction, and technology distribution was majorly complete. CMSD distributed approximately 30,000 computer devices and 12,000 hot spot devices in total between last spring and this fall. CMSD has another 10,000 hot spot devices on the backorder. He reiterated the technology access challenges in Cleveland but, praised parents and staff for their resiliency.

Mr. Gordon then spoke to CMSD's virtual classroom environment. Mr. Gordon stated that about 85 percent of students were logged in and engaged based on the initial count. Therefore, CMSD was looking to re-engage with the 15 percent not engaged and gather viewing time for the students logged in. Mr. Gordon reiterated that families and staff were working together.

Mr. Gordon addressed the meal plans for students. Mr. Gordon stated that the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) was in the second phase of monetary distribution to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). Additionally, CMSD is serving around 10,000 meals a day at K-8 school sites and 14,000 meals per week at the high school sites. It is lower than the average amount but is consistent with other school districts.

Mr. Gordon spoke of the Academic Learning Pods, having 29 partner organizations at 47 sites with about 1,230 seats available for young people who need a safe place during the day. Pre-K and kindergarten enrollment numbers are low in the educational environment. Presumably, this reduction in Pre-K and kindergarten enrollment is due to parents holding their children back from starting school this year.

Mr. Gordon highlighted the importance of voting for Issue 68, the school levy. It entails a \$15 mill renewal and a \$5 mill increase. It has been eight years since CMSD requested any new tax increase, and it is necessary. Mr. Gordon spoke of the technological investment that was necessary to connect students and families in Cleveland. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) released CMSD's graduation rate, and CMSD moved overall from 52.2 percent in 2011 to 80.1 percent in 2020. African American students had a graduation rate of 80.9 percent, and Hispanic students had a graduation rate of 82.0 percent this year, which is about 5 percent higher than their peers throughout Ohio. Issue 68 will help support the progress made, but if it does not pass, the levy will expire on December 31, 2020. The levy represents 12 percent of CMSD's operating budget. If the levy does not pass, CMSD will have to make significant cuts to balance the budget. Mr. Gordon stated early voting starts October 6, 2020, and registration



ends October 5, 2020. Mr. Gordon finished his update, and Dr. Price opened the floor for comment.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Gordon to speak about the State of the Schools Address that was scheduled for the next day. Mr. Gordon said that it would be held virtually and hosted by the Cleveland City Club from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Gordon how CMSD planned to address issues with virtual attendance. Mr. Gordon said that CMSD would have a better view at the end of the week. CMSD wanted to verify if their attendance reduction was due to technical issues or student virtual non-attendance.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Gordon what the scope was for school meal distribution. Mr. Gordon stated the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reversed its decision on food distribution flexibility, so now CMSD can feed any school-age child attending any school. Mr. Gordon reiterated the two food distribution types.

Dr. Helen Williams asked Mr. Gordon what the enrollment numbers were. Mr. Gordon stated that CMSD was standing at approximately 35,000 students, 1,400 less than where they expected to be. Most of the reduction is due to Pre-K and kindergarten numbers.

Dr. Williams asked Mr. Gordon for clarification on how families could use P-EBT cards. Mr. Gordon stated families could use them for anything that is permitted by the EBT guidelines.

Dr. Price asked if there were any other questions, and hearing no discussion, Dr. Price moved on to Ms. Brooke King. Ms. King said that Intergenerational Schools has three different locations and approximately 770 students. Intergenerational Schools are over-enrolled at two schools on the east side of Cleveland and under-enrolled at the west side school. The under-enrollment at the west side school is atypical and appears to be caused by parents deciding to homeschool their children. There are approximately 16 openings at the west side school.

Since July, Mrs. King stated that Intergenerational Schools held Parent Townhalls weekly, yet they moved to have them bi-weekly moving forward. Additionally, Intergenerational Schools are surveying parents bi-weekly. Ms. King highlighted the challenges of taking attendance on synchronous and asynchronous work. Ms. King is pushing to make sure that Intergenerational Schools are flexible, so they instituted a Wednesday to Wednesday school week. At Intergenerational Schools, younger students have more synchronous time, and older students have more asynchronous time.

Ms. King stated that Intergenerational Schools would begin the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Assessment. Intergenerational Schools are looking to learn the impact of the Pandemic on learning progress through these student assessments.

Similar to CMSD, Ms. King said Intergenerational Schools had instituted non-academic check-ins to determine attendance concerns. Additionally, Intergenerational Schools are doing check-ins to assess virtual learning's social impact on students, families, and teachers. Intergenerational Schools' unaudited attendance numbers have been between 90 and 95 percent.

Ms. King stated that Intergenerational Schools are looking to do a hybrid model by October 19, 2020. The plan will change if Ohio does not stay in orange. Intergenerational Schools have worked to ensure they are following social distancing and PPE guidelines. Additionally, Intergenerational Schools are determining instructional logistics. Ms. King finished her update, and Dr. Price opened the floor for comment.

Dr. Price asked Ms. King and Mr. Gordon if there would be state testing. Ms. King stated that she had not heard anything about Spring testing, and she was assuming there would not be Fall testing. Mr. Gordon noted that state testing mandates through the Federal and State legislature. Still, there is Ohio Senate Bill 358 that is looking to suspend testing for this year and require the district to submit a waiver from the United States Department of Education (USDOE). Mr. Gordon said he was supporting the bill, yet he doesn't know if it will pass and wasn't willing to speculate. Executive Director Meghann Marnecheck added to the conversation that Ohio Senate Bill 358 was bipartisan and active. Ms. King stated she would like to see if Intergenerational Schools' testing impacted the decision-making process.

Dr. Price transitioned to Ms. Stephanie Klupinski, who stated that she was a representative of the Ohio Association of Charter School Authorizers (OACSA), in addition to her role at Buckeye Community Hope Foundation. Ms. Klupinski gave an overview of multiple schools and authorizers connected to OACSA. Ms. Klupinski stated that numerous Constellation Schools, authorized by Buckeye Community Hope Foundation, started virtual instruction on September 8, 2020, and will continue through the first nine weeks. According to reports, Constellation Schools are doing well.

Ms. Kuplinski said that the one Accel School, under her organization's purview, Lincoln Park Academy, is offering virtual, hybrid, and in-person options. Ms. Kuplinski stated things are going well and that 20 percent of parents at the Accel School opted for the virtual option. Ms. Kuplinski advised that the Drop-Out Recovery School, under her organization's purview, Promise Academy, is virtual. Promise Academy's enrollment is slightly lower than the usual trend, at 145 students.

Ms. Kuplinski shared that SMART Academy was entirely in-person. Smart Academy's enrollment was up to 120. Ms. Kuplinski said that Breakthrough School's Village Prep was virtual, but they were partnering with Open Doors Academy to open Remote Learning Centers for some parents. Ms. Kuplinski said that Horizon Science Academies, Washington Park Academy, and Constellation Schools are all virtual. Ms. Kuplinski stated that Menlo Park Academy is virtual for most students, but they do have 100 students receiving in-person instruction.

Ms. Kuplinski advised that the Ohio Council of Community Schools are virtual, in-person, and hybrid. Ms. Kuplinski reported that St. Aloysius Orphanage's Schools are virtual. Ms. Kuplinski finished her update, and Dr. Price opened the floor for comment. Hearing no discussion, Dr. Price asked Ms. Marnecheck to continue.

Ms. Marnecheck stated that Mr. Alan Rosskamm was unable to be in attendance. Still, he wanted to report that Breakthrough Schools was going through similar challenges as the other school systems, and, as noted earlier, they are partnering with Open Doors Academy. Breakthrough Schools is looking to use their buildings to accommodate students. Additionally, Breakthrough Schools had lower kindergarten enrollment numbers than they expected. Ms. Marnecheck stated that if the Board had any additional questions, they could reach out to Mr. Rosskamm.

Ms. Marnecheck shared additional information on Issue 68 and instructions on creating a Selfie Video to show support for it. Ms. Marnecheck highlighted the importance of encouraging individuals to complete the full ballot to vote for Issue 68.

### **CTA Research Presentation**

At 6:19 PM, Ms. Marnecheck stated that on September 18, 2020, the Board received two summary documents regarding the research performed this summer by CTA. Ms. Marnecheck expressed her gratitude for the Research Interns' work, Ms. Audrey Altieri and Ms. Hailey Openlander, in their literature review and stakeholder interview process. Ms. Marnecheck highlighted how they developed and administered the surveys during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which garnered 348 responses from the English Survey and 13 responses from the Spanish Survey. Ms. Marnecheck said the four recommendations from the surveys were:

1. CTA should create a one-stop-shop website to hold school and program information that is clear and accurate. CTA already has MyCLESchool.org, but the website can be more streamlined, and CTA can market its website better to parents.
2. CTA should work either through the website or as an additional resource to engage parents, schools, and students to share schools' reviews. Specifically, though more parental engagement. CTA already has community review capability through the Interactive School Finder Tool, but the reviews' process and parameters need clarification. Ms. Marnecheck recommended having the Communications and Engagement Committee work on refining community review processes and presenting it to the Board.
3. CTA should engage schools to create a point-of-contact or liaison for parents to answer their questions and concerns. Parents want the point-of-contact or liaison to be responsive to their queries and informed with current school information. CTA has been working through its Navigator Program to facilitate these contacts.

4. CTA should collect parent feedback regularly to inform the organization's decision-making process. CTA is looking to connect with parents either through future surveys or conversations to be responsive.

Ms. Marnecheck scrolled through the CTA Final Brief that the Board received and underscored the focus group findings. One focus group involved rising ninth graders. Ms. Marnecheck opened the floor for discussion. Dr. Williams stated that she read the full report, and she agreed with Ms. Marnecheck that marketing was important for CTA.

Dr. Williams said she was interested that safety concerns were such an important consideration for parents and that the test scores didn't seem to resonate with parents. Dr. Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck her opinion on the discrepancy between what parents care about, and CTA highlights. Ms. Marnecheck said that CTA's focus should remain on academics, but messaging on academics should be restructured. Additionally, CTA should define the word "safety" through future engagement efforts with parents and other stakeholders. CTA needs to understand and convey the environment, culture, and program offerings of a school. Anecdotally, a family in the report was trying to find information on schools that had a music program, so the website should have the functionality to perform a search using that criterion.

Dr. Price asked what CTA could do to assist school systems in utilizing the survey data and how often was CTA going to do this type of research? To answer Dr. Price's first question, Ms. Marnecheck stated that it was about five years since CTA performed a formalized survey of the community. Ms. Marnecheck pondered if CTA could do the surveying yearly, but they want to have ongoing engagement. CTA already asked survey respondents to do focus group sessions and participate in the Cleveland Family Café event. Ms. Marnecheck said she hoped to foster the engaged respondents' connection to become a CTA parental advisory group. To answer Dr. Price's second question, Ms. Marnecheck stated that CTA would broadly share this research with community stakeholders, parents, and schools.

Ms. King emphasized that the research showed parents trust word-of-mouth endorsements from other parents. Ms. King asked if the Navigator Program could have one parent contact at each school? Dr. Williams asked Mr. Gordon whether it was plausible to have a single person answer parents' questions. Mr. Gordon stated CTA could normalize Parental Ambassadors if it offers upfront support and resources to schools.

Dr. Williams asked if CTA could link parent testimonials to the school's pages on MyCLESchool.org. Ms. King concurred that the Community Rating section should go further. Ms. Marnecheck stated that she wanted CTA to address this issue with the School Finder Tool



and School Quality Guide. Mr. Baumgartner added that there were limits on the Community Rating section, and Parental Ambassadors would be more responsive.

Dr. Williams said that from CTA's inception, the focus has been to address parental concerns and questions. Dr. Williams thanked CTA staff and consultants for their work. Ms. Marnecheck restated her support and appreciation of Ms. Altieri and Ms. Oppenlander.

Dr. Williams recommended creating a cover sheet for the report that would state why CTA did the research, what CTA learned, and what steps CTA will take to implement the information.

Mr. Gordon stated that Ms. Erin Randel wanted to distinguish between an individual having all the information and having access to gather information. Mr. Gordon illuminated that the individual would need to be supported to grow in their knowledge. Ms. Randel stated that the point-of-contact, historically, has been the Principal, and some of them haven't had the time capacity to answer specific questions. So moving forward, the point-of-contact person for the school should be someone else.

Ms. Altieri stated working with CTA was an honor and that parents appreciated CTA valuing their opinions. Ms. Altieri said that Ms. Marnecheck had access to the one page summary for dissemination to the public. Ms. Marnecheck advised the Board that Ms. Altieri and Ms. Oppenlander had recorded a video session walking through the data and the findings.

### ***Executive Director's Report***

At 6:45 PM, Ms. Marnecheck went over the activities of the CTA Navigators, Ms. Maxine Williams, and Ms. Wyndi Moore. Starting June 1, 2020, the Navigators worked to gain insight into parental concerns and connect families to resources (such as school supplies and technology). Ms. Marnecheck and Mr. Stacy desire to use the information gathered to inform future program decisions for 2021. Ms. Marnecheck stated her appreciation of the Navigators' hard work and dedication. The Navigators are working to close any open issues, and full-time CTA staff will take on their responsibilities for the remainder of 2020.

Ms. Marnecheck shared that the Executive Committee had a meeting on August 31, 2020. The Executive Committee discussed a plan forward for the Cleveland Plan Refresh conversation, and the Committee determined that the discussion should proceed despite the COVID-19 Pandemic. CTA wants to capitalize on the momentum, and Ms. Marnecheck will search for a facilitator. Ms. Marnecheck is hoping for the Board to have the Cleveland Plan Refresh conversation in the early spring of 2021 and, in tandem, create a strategic plan for the organization moving forward. Understanding time limitations that might exist with the Board, Ms. Marnecheck requested that all Board Members plan to attend the December 7, 2020 Board Meeting to have



a focusing conversation. More information will follow in the coming weeks regarding the Cleveland Plan Refresh.

Ms. Marnecheck recommended that the Board tune into Mr. Gordon's State of the Schools Address through the City Club of Cleveland's website and YouTube channel. Additionally, Ms. Marnecheck reminded the Board of Mayor Frank Jackson's State of the City Address scheduled for October 8, 2020, at 6:00 PM. The next Board Meeting is October 26, 2020, at 5:30 PM, and the Board will review the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee's work and vote on the draft report. The Board will meet virtually through Zoom (unless CTA receives advisement from the State of Ohio or Mayor Frank Jackson). The Cleveland Plan Progress Committee will meet on October 8, 2020. The Communications and Engagement Committee is scheduled to meet virtually through Microsoft Teams on September 24, 2020, at 10:30 AM and will go over plans and goals for the next 6-12 months. The Finance Committee will meet on October 22, 2020, at 8:30 AM to review financials and the draft 990 documents. Ms. Marnecheck thanked Ms. Randel for joining the Finance Committee.

#### **Adjournment**

Dr. Monyka Price adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM.