



## **Cleveland Transformation Alliance**

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

October 26, 2020 | 5:30 PM

Via Zoom

#### **In Attendance**

Baumgartner, Mark

Bingham, Anne

Friedman, Lee

Gibson, Richard

Gordon, Eric

Heard, Robert

Jordan, Sharon Sobol

King, Brooke

Klupinski, Stephanie

Marbury, Shana

Mullin, Ann

Patterson, Jeffrey

Payton, Kevin

Price, Monyka

Rosskamm, Alan

Tenney, Turkessa

Williams, Helen

#### **Absent**

Downing, Diane

Jackson, Mayor Frank

Napoli, August

Randel, Erin

Ruiz, Victor

Reyes, Jose

Zachariah, Sajit

#### **Other Attendees**

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 an opening welcome

Dr. Price opened the floor for discussion to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2020 Board Meeting. At 5:35 PM, hearing no discussion of the minutes, Dr. Price asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Mark Baumgartner made the motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Turkessa Tenney seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

## 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report and Vote

At 5:36 PM, Dr. Price introduced Executive Director Meghann Marnecheck to present the 2020 Cleveland Progress Report. Dr. Price advised the Board they would need to vote on a resolution regarding the Cleveland Plan Progress Report.

Ms. Marnecheck thanked the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee Chair and Members for their work on the 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report. Ms. Marnecheck highlighted that the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee was waiting on early childhood data from PRE4CLE due to complications caused by the pandemic and unexpected passing of Billie Osborne-Fears. Ms. Marnecheck said that she remained in contact with PRE4CLE executive director, Ms. Katie Kelly, relative to a timeline. Ms. Marnecheck reiterated that the 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report was in draft status. Ms. Marnecheck requested feedback from the Board on edits and for the Board to authorize the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee to finalize the draft at the next meeting on November 6, 2020.

Dr. Helen Williams requested Ms. Marnecheck to walk through the full document. Ms. Marnecheck stated the following was in the report:

1. Mayors Letter
2. Executive Director Letter – Highlighting reduced data from the State of Ohio
3. Introduction – Detailing the digital divide and awakening to racial inequity
4. Enrollment data
5. Early Childhood Education Data – Pending
6. High school graduation data
7. College and career readiness data – Clarifying the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option Program (PSEOP) and Advanced Placement (AP) data
8. Say Yes Cleveland data
9. CTA data – Explaining survey results, Family Café information, and ambassador and navigator programs
10. Conclusion
11. Back Cover – Listing Board Members, staff, and report contributors

Ms. Ann Mullin said the report was well laid out and understandable. Ms. Mullin highlighted the edits that she recommended and recommended CTA recognizes late Board Member, Ms. Deborah Rutledge, for her leadership, contributions, and service. Dr. Price agreed with Ms. Mullin.

Ms. Lee Friedman highlighted the Cleveland Plan Progress Report's progression and her appreciation for its current structure. Ms. Marnecheck encouraged the Board to read the draft and give recommendations. Ms. Marnecheck illuminated that CTA was using Ms. Amy Dragga, a certified editor from the University of Chicago, to edit the report. Ms. Marnecheck said that Ms. Dragga would give her additional recommended edits by the end of the week.

Dr. Williams asked Ms. Marnecheck about the distribution plan. Ms. Marnecheck stated that she had contacted Suburban Press about reducing the report's print run from 1500 to 1000. CTA is anticipating sending approximately 350 of the 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Reports to educational leaders, elected officials, and community stakeholders. CTA will also make the 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report available to members of the Board for distribution. Dr. Price asked Ms. Marnecheck where the surplus of copies would go. Ms. Marnecheck said that historically the Board had taken packets to spread the Cleveland Plan Progress Report. However, Ms. Marnecheck stated that CTA could reduce it if the Board desired. Ms. Shana Marbury recommended sending the report to governmental officials. Ms. Marnecheck said they would be a part of plan for mailing through Suburban Press. Dr. Price questioned if the number of 1000 was correct due to the pandemic, limiting the report's physical distribution. Ms. Marnecheck agreed.

Ms. Mullin asked for clarification on when the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee was meeting. Ms. Marnecheck stated it was going to be November 6, 2020. Ms. Mullin asked Ms. Marnecheck if CTA would not be sharing the information until after the election. Ms. Marnecheck confirmed that plan based on PRE4CLE's timeline. She also confirmed that this was in-line with the Committee's initial timetable.

Dr. Price asked if there was any further discussion. At 5:49 PM, Dr. Price, hearing nothing additional, asked for a motion to approve the 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report with edits and give the Cleveland Plan Progress Committee authority to finalize the remaining content and release it for production. Dr. Williams made the motion to approve the draft 2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report. Ms. Ann Mullin seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the resolution.

### **CTA Board Member Spotlight**

At 5:50 PM, Ms. Marnecheck stated that the Transformation Alliance began offering a Board Member Spotlight opportunity in March. Ms. Diane Downing gave the first update on Say Yes Cleveland's progress and news. Afterward, CTA paused the Board Member Spotlight due to meeting virtually. To resume the Spotlight opportunity, Ms. Marnecheck asked Mr. Mark Baumgartner, Mr. Kevin Payton, and Pastor Richard Gibson to update the Board on their perspective as to how remote learning is working.

Mr. Mark Baumgartner spoke of class attendance levels, and the challenges students had with technology. Mr. Baumgartner said that he felt he was hitting a groove with his students and believed that students responded well to his class structure.

Mr. Baumgartner said he thought teachers were adapting to the new environment well and that CMSD was giving teachers resources. Mr. Baumgartner and Dr. Jacquinette Brown, Executive Director of Professional Development, set up office hours for teachers to drop in

from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM every day. They have 3 to 4 teachers who are good at navigating online instruction systems staffing the drop-in office hours. According to the staff members, the overall need for drop-in office hours has reduced, but some teachers are still using the resource.

Mr. Baumgartner consistently has a group of approximately 5 to 6 students who check into class early to talk to him and his substitute. Also, the students assist with technical issues.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Baumgartner how the students feel and if the experience is more enriching. Mr. Baumgartner said that they know they have to do virtual instruction, and the environment is different. Mr. Baumgartner was adapting to the virtual environment and stated that students are not participating in back and forth engagement due to virtual environment constraints.

Ms. Mullin stated that the student-teacher relationship might be more humanized and personalized in the virtual environment. Ms. Mullin said never before had the student seen a teacher's home space and vice versa. She wondered what researchers could learn from the current removal of some boundaries between teachers and students. Mr. Baumgartner said CTU was questioning the need for CMSD's specific Parent-Teacher conference days, because the teachers are already in the homes with the families every day.

CMSD CEO Eric Gordon stated that this new dynamic is what he calls "The New Learning Relationship." Mr. Gordon believes parents have a new understanding of how hard teachers are working. Parents can also see the mistakes a teacher makes more readily now, and students have more agency and responsibility than they did before. Mr. Gordon hoped that "The New Learning Relationship" continues beyond the COVID-19 era. In response, Mr. Baumgartner said that students are taking more initiative in finding things virtually.

Ms. Marnecheck asked Mr. Kevin Payton, the Principal of A. B. Hart, to update the Board on how things were going at the school administration level.

Mr. Payton said that they are seeing engaged classrooms and enthusiasm from teachers. Mr. Payton said he hoped that school administrators and teachers could continue using virtual means to engage with students and parents. Reflecting, Mr. Payton stated that he would like to see more consistent students' attendance because they are being held accountable for their grades. Mr. Payton commended the district for working with partners to create the Academic Learning Pods. Mr. Payton was able to work with the Say Yes Cleveland Family Support Specialist to assist families in connecting with Academic Learning Pods.

Mr. Payton noted that his teachers had had 100% teacher attendance until recently (one person had to call-off ill) and recorded his appreciation for how easy it was for him to join a virtual class to audit the teacher's instruction.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Baumgartner and Mr. Payton about assessments and attendance. Mr. Payton said they look at attendance daily, but he sees the full report weekly. As a principal, Mr. Payton had his teachers call students if a student had missed school two days in a row. If the teachers did not reach the parents, the Wrap-Around Coordinator and Family Support Specialist would go to the student's house. However, Mr. Payton's team was not able to get every family.

Nevertheless, for those families, they were able to contact, they created an action plan. Mr. Payton stated that enrollment for his school is much better now. Mr. Payton has approximately 85% to 90% of students logging on. Mr. Gordon said many students are skipping their live classes to work and that all the apps used are recording time and attendance.

Mr. Gordon asked Mr. Payton to discuss how much time Mr. Payton, as principal, was in classrooms. Mr. Payton said that he goes to all of his classes and that he speaks to the students. Mr. Payton can go in and out of the virtual classrooms because of Zoom. Dr. Price agreed that it was more difficult to visit every class as a principal physically.

Dr. Price asked Mr. Baumgartner to speak to assessments and either Mr. Baumgartner and Mr. Kevin Payton to discuss the student code of conduct. Mr. Baumgartner said that embedded evaluations were in the lesson software. CMSD did give an NWEA formal assessment, but he believed the results were inconsistent. Mr. Baumgartner's office is working on how to train teachers to do formal reviews better virtually. Mr. Baumgartner said that his students were respectful, and most teachers mute their disruptive students. Mr. Payton noted that his teachers were not having problems because most parents monitored the students. Mr. Payton's noted other principals said there were issues with siblings or parents doing things in the background. Mr. Payton pointed out that they get a transcript of the students' communications if buzzwords come up while using the technology. For example, if an inappropriate word like "fight" came up, the school can reach out to the family about negative communication. Similarly, Mr. Baumgartner said new teachers especially appreciate the virtual environment because they do not have to be concerned with classroom control.

Dr. Williams said that it was great that CTU, the Cleveland Council of Administrators and Supervisors, and CMSD Executive Leadership all work together well. Mr. Payton concurred.

Mr. Gordon said that CMSD is seeing more ways to assist families. He shared an example of a teacher hearing a smoke alarm chirping in the background at a student's house. They were able to help that family in getting a new smoke alarm. Mr. Gordon saw it as proof of the deepening of the family-teacher relationship.

Ms. Marnecheck noted a question by Mr. Robert Heard in the Board Meeting's chat discussion. Mr. Heard asked if COVID-19 had impacted teacher evaluations. In the chat, Mr. Gordon said that CMSD and CTU had agreed upon a compressed evaluation process that would occur in the second semester. CMSD and CTU agreed that holding evaluations during the first quarter while teachers were trying to adjust to virtual learning would not be a fair assessment.



Ms. Marnecheck asked Pastor Richard Gibson to speak about the work Elizabeth Baptist Church was doing on a community level.

Pastor Gibson said Elizabeth Baptist Church has the Haven as an overflow shelter for the County. Pre-Pandemic, the Church had ten to twelve families housed, but now they house five to seven. The majority of the Haven youth are CMSD students, although they can come from anywhere in the County. The supportive services are assisting 10 to 20 students at the Haven.

Additionally, Pastor Gibson said Elizabeth Baptist Church has an Academic Learning Pod with nine students in their gymnasium. The Pod's focus is on CMSD students. He shared a story of a student with learning disabilities. Elizabeth Baptist Church was able to work with the student's parents to find other resources. Pastor Gibson said that the Church is on a check-in call with other Academic Learning Pod sites every week to share information and strategies. Pastor Gibson said the structure was supposed to be one adult to nine students, but they learned that it didn't work. The Church is paying for a second adult to assist the students in the Pod. The Church's Academic Learning Pod is operational from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Elizabeth Baptist Church has created a space for parents to share information through Zoom. Most of the parents on the Zoom conference are CMSD, but there are parents from other districts on the call sharing their experiences. Pastor Gibson said they are working with PC's for People to address digital access issues with families. Elizabeth Baptist Church's community does not have fiber optic cable lines, causing challenges for learning.

Pastor Gibson said that he serves on the Juvenile Court Board, and they learned at a recent meeting that CMSD had provided financial resources to make sure that all of the housing units had Wi-Fi.

Mr. Baumgartner commended the community partners that stepped up to host the Academic Learning Pods and applauded the students' resiliency as they learn in different environments.

Dr. Price asked Pastor Gibson if the students bring their devices to the Pod. Pastor Gibson said they do, but not all of the computers were operational. Elizabeth Baptist Church purchased nine laptops, and three to five of them are consistently used in the space. Pastor Gibson's staff work with the teachers and parents to assist with technical issues.

Mr. Alan Rosskamm asked Pastor Gibson and Mr. Gordon if they think about what would happen if Cuyahoga County went purple. Pastor Gibson said they are prepared to do whatever is necessary.

Ms. Marnecheck asked Ms. Brooke King and Mr. Rosskamm to chime in about the charter school's perspective. Ms. King stated that Intergenerational Schools were disappointed they couldn't start hybrid classes. Intergenerational Schools had planned to have some students do hybrid courses multiple days a week from Monday through Friday, beginning on October 19,



2020. Some Intergenerational Schools' students returned to the buildings, in small groups, to get comfortable with their school environments a few days before opening. However, Intergenerational Schools did not reopen due to Cuyahoga County going red with COVID-19 cases.

Ms. King said that the Intergenerational Schools' Board is revisiting the reopening plan and may change it to allow students to return based on need. Ms. King said they would look at multiple measurements to assess their next steps. However, Intergenerational Schools might have to change the reopening plan again if the County turns purple with COVID-19 cases. Ms. King highlighted that most teachers desired to stay in the remote learning environment because they are getting into their teaching groove. Intergenerational Schools' model was to have one teacher doing both virtual and in-person instruction by breaking up the day into blocks with small groups.

Ms. Marnecheck said that Mr. Gordon had recognized Pastor Gibson in the meeting chat for his work and highlighted that Elizabeth Baptist Church does a lot to address food needs. Pastor Gibson also mentioned that Elizabeth Baptist Church was opening a Pre-K facility in December with 60 to 65 slots. Pastor Gibson said they did not want to wait until after the pandemic to open it because of community need.

Mr. Baumgartner said that teachers need social and emotional support as well. Ms. Tenney noted that parents are concerned with navigating multiple apps and keeping up with their child's assignments. Ms. Tenney was a part of a parental group session with 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade parents, where they shared concerns over not receiving clear directions on how to navigate the systems to keep up with children's coursework. Mr. Gordon said they had received that feedback, and CMSD is looking to create standardization templates for technology navigation. Mr. Gordon noted CMSD had hoped the multiple tools available would benefit instead of causing a barrier for families.

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

At 6:50 PM, Ms. Marnecheck noted that the following week would mark her first anniversary as CTA's executive director and thanked the Board for their support and guidance throughout her first year. Ms. Marnecheck submitted the annual funding request for CTA to the Cleveland Foundation and Gund Foundation last month. Additionally, Ms. Marnecheck plans to request grant support from an additional three to four foundations for funds in 2021 before the end of the year. Ms. Marnecheck had a conversation with the Abington Foundation and is looking forward to partnering with them on the Ambassador program again next year.

Last week, the Finance Committee met and reviewed the 2021 budget and the CTA Financials through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Ms. Marnecheck thanked Ms. Colleen Tahan for her work. Due to reduced expenses, CTA anticipates a carryover balance of \$204,800 into 2021. The Finance



Committee also reviewed the annual draft Form 990 and emailed it to the Board last Thursday. The Board did not need to vote on the submission of Form 990, but Ms. Marnecheck wanted the Board to review and add comments if necessary. Ms. Marnecheck requested the Board respond by October 30, 2020. Afterward, Ms. Marnecheck would sign the Form 990 and then give it to Barnes Wendling to file it on CTA's behalf. The Form 990 filing is due on November 16, 2020.

Ms. Marnecheck thanked Ms. Erin Randel and the other members of the Cleveland Parent Leadership Action Network (ClePLAN) group for their involvement in the second Family Café conversation. The first Family Café was held in August and gave parents and caregivers space to share their hopes and fears about entering a virtual school year. During the second Family Café event, CTA asked participants how virtual learning was going and what resources they still needed. Overall, CTA found that parents felt they had the help they needed, but some conveyed concern over their student's grades. A significant takeaway from the second Family Café was parents want to interact with each other. CTA desires to continue to host Family Café events quarterly and anticipates continuing to work with ClePLAN. We hope to schedule the next conversation in January.

Ms. Marnecheck announced that Mr. Eli Stacy had grown the Ambassador Program to 14 Partner Organizations and 125 Ambassadors. About 100 took the training through the staff-led format, and 25 have used the self-guided training available anytime on the CTA website. The navigators had completed their work for this cycle. The Navigators were able to engage with 122 families with 152 children. Ms. Marnecheck and Mr. Stacy are working to restructure the navigator program. Ms. Marnecheck said she would keep the Board updated on changes to the navigator program and the next iteration of the program anticipated for January through March of 2021.

Ms. Marnecheck reminded the Board of Issue 68 and encouraged them to consider taking action to support it in the final days before Election Day. Ms. Tenney reminded the parental group session that the amount was an investment in Cleveland children.

Ms. Marnecheck read the note from Ms. Stephanie Klupinski in the chat. Ms. Klupinski said that they have been having conversations with other authorizers across the country about the changing work environment. Authorizers, previously apprehensive about providing too much oversight, and shifted to providing more support to schools. The pandemic allows for more collaboration across charter schools and enables them to focus on racial and gender equity.

Ms. Marnecheck noted that the next Board Meeting was set for Monday, December 7, 2020, and is the last meeting scheduled for the year. The Board Meeting will be held virtually and include grounding conversations leading into the Cleveland Plan Refresh discussion in 2021. Ms.



Marnecheck encouraged Board Members to attend the next meeting, if at all possible, to ensure their voice is included in the conversation.

The Cleveland Plan Progress Committee will meet on November 6, 2020, to finalize the Cleveland Plan Progress Report. The Governance Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, November 16, 2020, and the Communications and Engagement Committee is scheduled to meet on November 17, 2020. The Communications and Engagement Committee is slated to discuss CTA's marketing plan and 2021 School Quality Guide. Lastly, the Finance Committee is scheduled to meet on December 3, 2020, to review an updated draft of the 2021 Operating Budget. Ms. Marnecheck ended her remarks. Dr. Price congratulated Ms. Marnecheck on her first year-being a cancer survivor. Other Board members and Eli Stacy acknowledged and congratulated her as well.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Monyka Price adjourned the meeting at 7:01 PM.