

Community School of Digital and Visual Arts

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 5, 2025

Time: 4:00pm

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Board Chair Joe Battle

II. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

Roll was called, and a quorum was declared present.

Board Members Present

- Joe Battle
- Michael Palmer
- Toni Hall
- Bonnie Hauser
- Tommy McNeill
 - Kathy Everette Perry absent.

Non-Board Members Present

- Brian Crawford
- Olufemi Adeniyi
- Ben Johnson
- Cheryl Isaac

III. Approval of the Agenda

- **Motion by:** Joe Battle to approve the draft agenda as presented.
- **Moved by:** Micheal Palmer
- **Seconded by:** Bonnie Hauser
- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

Amendment to Agenda:

- **Motion by:** Joe Battle to approve the Board Reports, with Board Reports to follow at approximately 4:30 PM.
- **Moved by:** Michael Palmer
- **Seconded by:** Bonnie Hauser
- **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Graduation Ceremonies and School Success

V. The board meeting began with a discussion of recent graduation ceremonies, where Michael shared his positive experience attending both the 8th-grade and kindergarten events. He noted the strong emotional connection between students and parents, as well as the school's emphasis on academic achievement and respect among students. Brian highlighted the success of students who have been with the school since kindergarten, including the recipient of the board award. The meeting also touched on Bonnie's past

experiences working in Birmingham, where she encountered racial disparities and corruption, which she found disturbing.

VI. Board Communication and Elections Update

- Joseph Battle announced he is no longer going to serve as Board Chair and asked for elections in July

VII. Motion by Bonnie Hauser, seconded by Michael Palmer

The board approved the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. They discussed the upcoming July board elections and the need to stagger board member terms. The board also addressed the need for improved communication channels, including setting up email addresses for board members and a group email for the board. Olufemi agreed to set up the email system, and the board discussed how to manage and monitor these communications.

Board Financials and New Spaces

The meeting focused on financial updates, building sale, and space search. The audit is on track to be completed by the end of August, two months ahead of schedule. Regarding the building sale, Brian explained that the closing date has been extended to December, with a lease-back option if needed. The team is actively searching for a new space, with Brian planning to visit a potential location on Wednesday. The group discussed the high cost of new spaces in Durham, with rental rates ranging from \$22,000 to \$26,000, and explored the possibility of partnering with another school to share space.

New Cabinet Proposal

The board discussed replacing the managing director position with a three-person cabinet consisting of a chief academic officer, chief operations officer, and chief communications officer. Bonnie proposed this change to improve governance and communication between the board and school. Brian and others agreed this structure would allow staff to handle more administrative functions, reducing the board's involvement in day-to-day operations. The board decided to consider this new cabinet structure, pending staff feedback and further board discussion, to better utilize their talented staff while maintaining appropriate oversight.

Motion by Bonnie Hauser and second by Toni Hall approving the Bylaw Changes

Adoption of Parent and Student Handbooks

Handbook Adoption and Marketing Strategy”

The board approved adopting both the master employee handbook and parent-student handbook, subject to cabinet review, with Brian explaining these documents were professionally reviewed by their legal advisor to ensure compliance with DPI. The board

also approved formal bylaw changes, with Joe presiding over the vote. Regarding PR and marketing needs, Brian acknowledged his relationship with Michael Best Strategies and suggested exploring other local market-focused agencies, with Bonnie noting concerns about the current proposal and emphasizing the need for someone familiar with the Durham market, while Ben shared insights about local charter schools' marketing strategies including social media, radio, and community presence.

Motion by Toni Hall and seconded by Bonnie Hauser

Marketing Proposal and Decision

Marketing, Scores, and Progress Updates

The board discussed marketing and PR needs, agreeing to empower the cabinet to select a service provider within a \$15-20,000 budget, with the cabinet having the authority to proceed without waiting for the full board meeting in July. Olufemi reported that while math scores remained similar to last year, ELA scores decreased slightly, though science scores were still pending. Cheryal highlighted early grade reading proficiency data, noting that while current numbers were around 40-46%, they were trending in the right direction toward the 70-80% target.

VIII. Principal's Report – Olufemi Adeniyi

1. Olufemi reported that while math scores remained similar to last year, ELA scores decreased slightly, though science scores were still pending. Cheryal highlighted early grade reading proficiency data, noting that while current numbers were around 40-46%, they were trending in the right direction toward the 70-80% target.

Principal Resignation and Transition Discussion

2. The board discussed a proposal from Alex Quigley for consulting services, with Brian expressing reservations about his loyalty due to existing contracts with competitors. The board agreed to move the discussion to closed session to address staffing and leadership changes, as Mr. A. had announced his resignation and requested a severance package tied to his willingness to assist with the transition to a new interim principal, Cheryl Isaac. Tommy raised concerns about Mr. A.'s recent communication to staff regarding teacher licensing requirements, which the board agreed needed to be addressed.
3. Board agreed to go to closed session

CLOSED SESSION: