

**The Autism Model School**  
**Approved Board Meeting Minutes**  
**July 23, 2013**

**Attending:** Raj Parikh, Mark Greenblatt, Carl Windnagle, Lisa Marsalek, James Rothschild

**Excused:** Edward Cancio, Isaac Demarest

**Absent:** Mary Murray, Sherry Moyer

**Also Present:** Mary Walters, Director; Kali Kowalski, Receptionist/Recorder of the Minutes; Emilie Richardson, Sponsor Representative; Amy Borman, Esq. of Dickinson and Wright; Albon Bauer, Esq. of Eastman and Smith

**Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m.**

**I. Welcome and Public Comments.**

Nothing presented.

**II. Comments from Amy Borman, Esq.**

Ms. Borman complimented the school staff and board on their hard work and organization. She also reviewed that she will be transferring to a new law firm and requested that we remain her client through the transition. Mr. Parikh asked the board to place this into consideration to be discussed at a future date.

Mr. Parikh questioned Ms. Borman regarding the ability to present to lawmakers a possible amendment to the state's charter school statutes in order to limit the school's enrollment based on a legitimate diagnosis of autism. He is concerned with the burden on the school of children without an autism spectrum diagnosis who have behavioral issues, often violent, and their disruption/endangerment to the rest of our student population. Ms. Borman stated that there have been other schools in the state questioning the likelihood of such a change being approved by state legislature and there is a great possibility of someone lobbying for an amendment. The process will still require some "foot-work" but it is not an impossible request.

Mr. Rothschild stated that if we are going to start working on compiling an amendment to the appropriate bill(s) he would like to submit several Requests for Proposals to lobbying law firms in the area requesting a fixed price agreement before moving forward with any alliances. Ms. Borman suggested also contacting other community charter schools specifically serving autistic students and see if they would be interested in supporting the possible amendment.

Mr. Parikh questioned Ms. Borman on the availability of possible state funds or grants for the purpose of expanding our curriculum offered to individuals past graduation. Ms. Borman stated she would need to look into this information further before giving a definite answer, however, she suggested looking into pilot projects and funding/resources available to post-secondary option programs or for vocational training. Due to the nature of the request, Ms. Borman stated the funding request will most likely be well-received by the state. Mr. Parikh questioned a possible recommendation of a grant writer from Ms. Borman. Ms. Borman suggested contacting the University of Toledo or another university to

see if one of their staff would like to assist. She also suggested reviewing their experience with public grants, most private grant writers have little experience with public grants and this can affect their effectiveness. Ms. Borman stated she would check with some of her colleagues to see if they personally know of an effective grant writer to refer and get back to us at a later date.

As a final note, Ms. Richardson stated that the sponsor would like to be very involved in the amendment proposal to legislators. She is going to check with Sandra Frisch, the sponsor's superintendent and Jim to see how much additional assistance they are able to offer.

### **III. Minutes from the June 25, 2013, Board Meeting. Discussion & Approval.**

*Motion to approve the June 25, 2013 Board Meeting Minutes, as written:*

- 1. Lisa Marsalek**
- 2. Mark Greenblatt**

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous – Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

### **IV. Committee Reports.**

#### **A. Finance Committee.**

##### **1. June, 2013 Budget Reconciliation and Variance Report.**

Similar to previous months the largest variance exceeding the budgeted amount was school supplies. Property taxes are below budgeted amounts as well as legal fees which helps make up some of the difference.

Mr. Parikh discussed the school's current low class sizes and the opportunity to increase our student population by an additional 20 students. We have some classrooms with very high functioning children with easily manageable behaviors whose staff can functionally take on additional students. To receive the maximum benefit, it would be ideal to increase the student population and our funding without increasing the cost of labor. Ms. Walters stated based upon the capacity limitations written into the state administrative code we can enroll 114 students, provided all of said students are classified as autism. The school currently has 108 students enrolled which allows a possible increase of six students.

Ms. Marsalek questioned the hesitation in adding students from our current admission waiting list of 19 students. Ms. Walters explained that these students do not necessarily match up with the classrooms that currently have space available. Ms. Walters stated that there are currently six open spots for new students throughout the school, however there will be two additional openings within the next two weeks. Mr. Greenblatt questioned Mr. Vidovic on the consequences to the quality of education for the students within the classrooms if additional students would be added. Mr. Greenblatt wanted to confirm that the current staff would not be overloaded and no student's education would suffer due to the increase in the class size. Mr. Vidovic stated there are many factors involved when considering additions to classrooms including the abilities/disabilities of the student and the infrastructure of the classroom involved. He stated that the school would not consider any additions to class size if it would affect the education of the other students involved. However, Mr. Vidovic also mentioned that there are certain classrooms which could easily

accommodate more students with no negative effects as long as effective infrastructure is in place (curricula). Relating to this discussion, Mr. Vidovic questioned Ms. Richardson regarding the FAPE legislation and its age range/developmental abilities classifications for placement of students. Ms. Richardson stated that she thinks we have a valid argument as to why the school should be able to adopt these policies for enrollment, however she suggests consulting legal counsel prior to implementing any changes.

*Motion to approve June Budget Reconciliation and Variance Report as presented in the board meeting packet:*

1. Mark Greenblatt

2. Lisa Marsalek

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous - Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

**2. Fiscal Year 2014 Projected Budget. Review & Possible Motion.**

Mr. Parikh stated the school is currently budgeted with an estimated \$30,000 deficit and this needs to be resolved. Ms. Walters stated that we definitely need to increase our student population in order to combat the simulated loss in state funding of approximately \$6,000 and other additional costs included in the budget. She also reviewed that we created/hired two additional positions last year and due to the new curriculum offered classroom supply costs were also required to be increased. Mr. Windnagle brought to the board's attention that there was a misprint on the projected budget in the board meeting packet and Line 32 (Unemployment costs) figures need to be updated. He stated there will be an approximate \$20,000 savings involved with this correction.

Ms. Richardson stated that legislation regarding out-of-state tuition has been approved, and being located so close to the Ohio/Michigan state line this may be something we want to consider in regards to increasing our student population.

Mr. Greenblatt suggests looking into more grant money opportunities.

*Motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2014 Projected Budget with discussed amendments:*

1. James Rothschild

2. Mark Greenblatt

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous - Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

**B. Curriculum Committee—Recommended Curriculum Purchases.**

Ms. Walters briefly reviewed the information on pages \*4 and \*5 near the budget information in the board meeting packet.

**C. Strategic Planning Committee.**

Ms. Marsalek presented on behalf of the committee. She suggested that the school start with a SWOT analysis (with involvement from all board members) as a first step. Ms. Marsalek reviewed future steps such as reviewing/revising the school's mission statement and putting goals in place to work toward. Mr. Parikh suggests that we dedicate our September board meeting to working with this situation.

**D. Policies and Procedures Committee.**

Nothing presented.

**V. Director's Report.**

Ms. Walters asked the board to review the letter from the Parish/Diocese regarding replacement of the school's carpeting (page \*18 in the board meeting packet). She stated that administration will be moving forward with the process with a projected budget of \$25,000, \$12,500 of which will be covered by the Parish.

Ms. Walters presented updates regarding purchasing a wheelchair accessible vehicle for the school, reviewing general figures on pages 15 and 16 of the board meeting packet. Mr. Parikh requested that Ms. Walters and the school administration continue to narrow the options available for the vehicle purchase and present updates at a future board meeting.

*Motion to approve the May/June New Hires and Resignations as presented in the board meeting packet:*

1. Carl Windnagle
2. Mark Greenblatt

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous - Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

**VI. Old Business**

Ms. Walters stated that she and the assistant director have posted internship opportunities on the University of Toledo's website attempting to recruit their students for openings at the school. According to Ms. Walters, Dr. Cancio has also been attempting to recruit many of his students to intern with the school. Whenever updates are available concerning internships Ms. Walters stated she will keep the board informed.

Ms. Walters reviewed proposals regarding the possible line of credit discussed at a previous board meeting. The board discussed the different opportunities.

*Motion to approve the opening of a line of credit at Huntington Bank with the following persons as authorized signors: Board Chairman, Board Treasurer and School Director. All three shall be listed as authorized signors on the credit line; however, only one signature shall be required to conduct business.*

1. Mark Greenblatt
2. Lisa Marsalek

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous - Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

**VII. New Business**

Ms. Walters presented an additional handout (not included in the original board meeting packet) for ideas with regards to our involvement in our student's education past the age of 22. There are several ideas available online and Ms. Walters suggests we look into different possibilities for the school and review possibilities at a future meeting.

Another additional handout Ms. Walters distributed included information that will become standard reports for board meetings starting September 2013

Mr. Parikh suggested implementing regular tours/visits of the school for individual board members to so that the board can become more aware of the school's day to day processes.

As a final note, Ms. Walters stated that during July 2013 the school received two resignations from teachers and administration is currently in the process of interviewing their replacements.

**VIII. Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn at 7:35 p.m.*

- 1.** *James Rothschild*
- 2.** *Mark Greenblatt*

*Vote: Yes – Unanimous - Greenblatt, Windnagle, Rothschild, Marsalek.*

**The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday August 27, 2013, at 6:00 p.m.**