

Career Academy of South Bend, Inc.
 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors
 May 26, 2020

Directors Present: Dan Adams, Kay Antonelli, Larry Garatoni, Michael Garatoni, Chad Hartzell, Marian Hodges, Mark Melnick, Nick Swisher

Absent: Lori Smith

Staff Attending: Alex Hammel, Dean Fecher, Jeremy Lugbill, Nick Garstka, Kim Richardson, Sam Ells, Rob Koehler, Janet Scott

Also Attending: Brian Pawlowski, Emily Gaskill, Charles Loeser

Larry Garatoni called the meeting to order at 5:00. The meeting was held by Zoom.

A. Minutes of Prior Meetings. Nick Swisher moved for approval of minutes of the prior two meetings (February 25 and April 28). Larry noted a few corrections are needed. The minutes were approved accordingly.

B. School Operations. Alex asked the principals to summarize available academic data.

1. Success Academy. Dean reported that iReady testing at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year showed 10% of students reading at grade level, rising to 23% as shown in midyear tests. Students two or more years behind were 39% at the beginning of the year and 30% at midyear. The iReady system also provides lesson outlines based on weaknesses identified by diagnostic testing. For example, since scores showed insufficient growth in phonemic awareness (the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds-phonemes in spoken words) in kindergarten & first grade, the team identified the need for additional programs for phonemic awareness, Heggerty (www.heggerty.com) and Wilson (www.wilsonlanguage.com). Janet Scott, Success Academy Instructional Coach, will conduct professional development training for teachers this summer to prepare for using these methods when school resumes. Progression by grade level was as follows:

Success Academy – reading						
Grade	Tier 1: At Grade Level		Tier 2: Year Behind		Tier 3: Two Years Behind	
	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %
Whole school	10	23	51	47	39	30
Kindergarten	14	51	86	49	1	0
1	8	16	74	77	18	7
2	6	15	38	56	56	29
3	14	24	23	33	63	43
4	11	12	54	36	35	52
5	10	10	26	32	64	57

Results for Grade 4 and Grade 5 were more limited than other grades due to two Grade 4 teachers and two Grade 5 teachers leaving during the school year. One was a new Grade 5 teacher who wasn't prepared for working with at-risk kids. Another Grade 5 teacher transferred to Career Academy Middle School as Dean of Students, which met an important need for the middle school and was a good move for her but left a difficult position to replace. These and the fourth grade teacher departures also affected the progress achieved in math, which was as follows:

Success Academy – math placement mid-year 2019-20						
Grade	Tier 1: At Grade Level		Tier 2: Year Behind		Tier 3: Two Years Behind	
	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %
Whole school	5	20	55	58	40	22
Kindergarten	7	26	92	74	1	0
1	4	22	74	74	22	4
2	3	17	48	65	50	18
3	1	27	43	53	56	20
4	5	16	36	48	59	36
5	8	13	34	31	57	56

Marian asked if the rate of improvement was good. Dean said in Success Academy's first three years, on the basis of the NWEA diagnostic assessments used at that time, roughly 75% of the students were at risk and remained so during the year, while now we're down 30% at risk in reading at midyear and 22% at risk in math, which is a significant improvement. The iReady system provides the opportunity for growth, and although the fourth and fifth grade results were disappointing this year, he believes those kids have the potential for substantial growth with this system in the future. Kay asked if there's data showing average growth in Indiana schools using iReady. Dean said the norm is 50% of annual typical growth by midyear, so our diagnostic growth reports showing 62% progress to annual typical growth at midyear for reading and 63% in math is above the norm, but we need to be above the norm in order to work towards grade level from a starting position below the norm. Growth levels were excellent for kindergarten through Grade 3:

Reading Growth/ grade	Typical Growth		Stretch Growth		% of Students with improved placement (up to higher tier)
	Median Progress	% Met	Median Progress	% Met	
Kindergarten	55%	19	37%	6	42
1	57%	25	42%	4	26
2	78%	30	46%	9	43
3	91%	43	49%	16	45
4	10%	27	12%	30	30
5	38%	31	16%	7	28

Math Growth by grade	Typical Growth		Stretch Growth		% of Students with improved placement (up to higher tier)
	Median Progress	% Met	Median Progress	% Met	
Kindergarten	63%	16	51%	7	25
1	75%	28	57%	11	35
2	76%	35	50%	6	51
3	77%	37	50%	9	62
4	48%	15	29%	1	46
5	28%	15	16%	3	38

Math growth was generally better than reading growth, Dean said, which is generally the case nationwide.

Another way of analyzing this data is by the percentage of students who achieved specified levels of typical annual growth as of the mid-year tests:

Success Academy Mid-year Reading Growth		
Reading Growth	Typical Growth*	Stretch Growth**
% of progress toward	% of students achieving	% of students achieving
Less than 20%	30	36
20-39%	10	15
40-59%	10	18
60-79%	10	13
80-99%	11	9
100+ Met	29	9
*National average growth for students with same start of year score		
**Growth necessary to catch up to grade level		

Success Academy Mid-year Math Growth		
Math Growth	Typical Growth*	Stretch Growth**
% of progress toward	% of students achieving	% of students achieving
Less than 20%	24	29
20-39%	9	20
40-59%	13	18
60-79%	16	18
80-99%	13	9
100+ Met	24	6
*National average growth for students with same start of year score		
**Growth necessary to catch up to grade level		

This shows that in reading, 29% of students achieved typical annual growth by mid-year, and in math 24%. At the other extreme, 30% of students in reading and 24% in math achieved less than 20% typical annual growth by mid-year, so we need to identify and address the obstacles for each child. Dean displayed a sample of the detailed diagnosis of each student done with the iReady program.

Marian asked now that we know there's a concern as to fourth and fifth, what is the plan for those kids? Dean said part of this is looking for strong teachers experienced with at-risk kids. We gained a strong fourth grade teacher in March and we've moved a highly qualified teacher, who'd been a tech coach, into the other fourth grade vacancy, so what we still need is a strong teacher for fifth grade. Next year our fifth grade teaching will be on a team basis with one teacher devoted entirely to English and another to math, which we believe will make better use of each teacher's strength. We'll also divide classes for all grade levels into an opening fifteen minutes or so of direct instruction followed by 60 to 70 minutes of small-group work, allowing for differentiated instruction based on student needs with assistance of interventionists such as special education teachers.

Alex added that the transition to middle school will be benefited by use of the same system, iReady, in both schools. Larry asked if there's a program for getting the fifth grade students to where they need to be. Alex said the iReady system is designed for that. Nick asked if we have data on how our kids did in comparison with other local schools. Alex said to-date the data from iReady is on a national basis but there may be more available, not as to individual schools but at the state level, we'll look into that. Larry said we should follow up on the Success students periodically in the future as more data is available.

2. Career Academy Middle School. Nick Garstka said this was the second year for use of the iReady system in the middle school and there was a much greater devotion to using it for English than before. There was less commitment for math, as we were divided between PIVOT and iReady. The reported results are considerably better for English than for math. For English, the percentage of students two or more years below grade level declined by almost 30% as of mid-year.

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady reading mid-year placements						
Grade	Tier 1: At Grade Level		Tier 2: Year Behind		Tier 3: Two Years Behind	
	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %
Whole school	19	30	14	25	66	45
6	18	28	17	26	65	46
7	13	24	12	21	74	54
8	27	41	13	27	59	32

For math, the reduction in percentage of students at Tier 3 was less than for English overall but differed significantly by grade: the reduction was 15% for the school as a whole, 11% for Grade 6, 7% for Grade 7, and 27% for Grade 8:

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady math mid-year placements						
Grade	Tier 1: At Grade Level		Tier 2: Year Behind		Tier 3: Two Years Behind	
	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %	Start %	Midyear %
Whole school	11	14	25	36	64	49
6	9	14	28	34	63	52
7	11	9	21	29	69	62
8	13	20	27	46	60	33

There was a new eighth grade math teacher this year, who in addition to her Grade 8 success was very effective with a class of ninth graders who had failed the first semester, with 80% passing the ninth grade first semester math under her instruction in the second semester. This demonstrated the potential gain from proper use of the iReady system for math, and Nick expects next year there will be more devotion to using it for math.

For English, the schoolwide median progress to annual typical growth was 194%, i.e., gain of almost two years normal growth in half a year, with median growth by grade of 157% for Grade 6, 190% for Grade 7, and 283% for Grade 8:

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady English mid-year growth					
Grade	Typical Growth		Stretch Growth		% of Students with improved placement (to higher tier)
	Median Progress	% Met	Median Progress	% Met	
6	157%	65	59%	26	63
7	190%	64	64%	27	68
8	283%	71	96^	47	71

65% of sixth graders had achieved typical annual growth by mid-year, 64% of seventh graders and 71% of eighth graders. Stretch growth was also strong, especially for eighth grade. These are results to celebrate,

Nick said. When these numbers came out in January, he took the English teachers to lunch, wanting them to know he understands how well they've done.

The breakdown of growth shows the continuing need for attention to students at risk: it's great that 66% of students had achieved typical annual growth by mid-year, but there are still 22% who had growth of less than 20% of the one-year norm.

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady English mid-year growth distribution		
Reading Growth	Typical Growth*	Stretch Growth**
% of progress toward	% of students achieving	% of students achieving
Less than 20%	22	27
20-39%	2	10
40-59%	4	6
60-79%	3	14
80-99%	3	10
100+ Met	66	32
*National average growth for students with same start of year score		
**Growth necessary to catch up to grade level		

Schoolwide median growth in math as of mid-year was 75% of typical annual progress, with 38% for Grade 6, 54% for Grade 7, and 171% for Grade 8.

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady math mid-year growth					
Math Growth by grade	Typical Growth		Stretch Growth		% of Students with improved placement (to higher tier)
Grade	Median Progress	% Met	Median Progress	% Met	
6	38%	25	17%	5	37
7	54%	43	24%	15	43
8	171%	70	70%	35	63

One of the problems for sixth graders, Nick said, was losing their teacher in November (she took maternity leave), so they took the test shortly after beginning with a new teacher. As with English, the distribution of math growth shows a continuing need for teaching methods appropriate for the substantial number of students (34%) having shown little growth (less than 20% progress towards typical annual growth) as of mid-year.

Career Academy Middle School 2020 iReady math mid-year growth distribution		
Math Growth	Typical Growth	Stretch Growth
% of progress toward	% of students achieving	% of students achieving
Less than 20%	34	41
20-39%	6	11
40-59%	5	9
60-79%	5	13
80-99%	4	7
100+ Met	16	18

Nick said the goal of students spending 40 minutes per week on the iReady system was not met, in fact some students did not use iReady at all.

Mike Garatoni suggested it might be beneficial to share diagnostic data with parents, especially detail on the methods for identifying and addressing student weaknesses. Nick said the beginning of year score is shared with parents at the first conference and further scores are shared during the year. Kay asked if the PIVOT system identifies reading lexile levels (a measurement of reading ability used nationwide). Nick said PIVOT does not. Dean noted that iReady does provide lexile levels.

3. Career Academy High School. Jeremy presented the results of a survey of high school students asking about the impact of relying on eLearning due to the closure of the school in the fourth quarter:

Student response comparing learning during 4 th quarter (eLearning only) to learning in prior quarters	Grade 9 % Response	Grade 10 % Response	Grade 11 % Response	Grade 12 % Response
Learned a lot less with eLearning	26	23	21	33
Learned less	30	34	32	27
Learned the same	27	27	34	33
Learned more with eLearning	11	13	13	4
Learned a lot more	6	4	0	2

The majority of students at all grade levels report learning less with E-Learning than in normal school operation.¹

Jeremy said the high school uses PIVOT benchmark testing for both English and math. It does not use iReady, which is a K-8 product, but is now preparing for a pilot use of the MindPlay system My Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC), which like iReady is a skills acquisition system as well as a benchmarking system. Test results from PIVOT showed a good pattern of growth with the exception of the mid-March eleventh grade English test, which was detrimentally affected by a teacher change, and the mid-March Algebra I test, which was taken only by the lower-scoring students.

Math PIVOT 2019-2020			
	<i>45% or Higher Fall Diagnostic (Oct.)</i>	<i>45% or Higher Winter Green Formative (Dec.)</i>	<i>45% or Higher Pink (Mid-March)</i>
Alg. I	66.7%	97.4%	47%
Alg. II	36.6%	35%	57%
Geometry	N/A	78%	84%

English/Language Arts			
	<i>45% or Higher Fall Diagnostic (Oct.)</i>	<i>45% or Higher Winter Green Formative (Dec.)</i>	<i>45% or Higher Pink (Mid-March)</i>
9	64.2%	69%	72%
10	64.7%	71.0%	85%
11	78.8%	78.6%	Teacher Change

Marian asked what MVRC will cost. Alex said the pilot is free, additional use cost is not yet determined.

¹ A nationwide trend. "Research Shows Students Falling Months Behind During Virus Disruptions," New York Times, June 5, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/us/coronavirus-education-lost-learning.html>.

C. Staffing Update. Assistant Superintendent Sam Ells reported that staff retention in 2019-20 was 84%, down from 89% in 2018-19. That's slightly higher than the 82% for Indiana schools overall, but the Indiana rate is one of the lowest in the country. For the 2020-21 school year we've received intent-to-return forms from 96% of staff, which is excellent. For the start of the 2020-21 school year we had 19 positions to fill, of which 8 are new. Fifteen of the positions have been filled. We received 219 applications for the 19 positions. One new hire was a St. Mary's graduate who'd done her student teaching with us. This coming year we'll work on making each staff member feel appreciated, such as celebrating achievements and milestones each month. Five years after the opening of Success Academy, 27 of the 59 original staff members are still with us.² We owe a great deal to their achievements.

Marian asked Dean for his perspective on the five years at Success. Dean recalled how difficult it was at first, when there was no gym and offices were in trailers. More importantly, Dean said, it's much easier now to attract experienced and proven teachers.

D. Marketing and Enrollment. Marketing Director Rob Koehler reported that since the start of open enrollment on April 13 we've received 145 applications (113 as of last week when his Powerpoint presentation was created), more than for the same period last year. Rob described this year's marketing campaign. Nick Swisher suggested using a different url for each billboard to help track how many applications resulted from each billboard. Dan asked if the marketing should include information on how next year's operations will be affected by the COVID-19 issue. Larry said this will be reviewed when the IDOE issues its directives/guidance in the next few weeks.

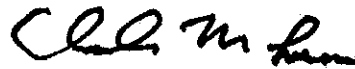
E. Addition Update. Alex reported there's been excellent progress in construction of the building addition. Photos are posted on Career's Facebook page regularly. Unfortunately we found that it is not legal to operate a drone as close as we are to the airport, so we'll not be able to post overhead photos.

F. COVID-19 Response. Alex said a meeting has been set for Thursday for teachers, administrators and parents to discuss 2020-21 operations.

G. Financial Statements. CFO Kim Richardson presented the March and April financial statements. Year-to-date revenue has been higher than budgeted and expenses have been less than budgeted. On motion made and duly seconded, the financial statements were unanimously approved.

H. Trine Report. Emily Gaskill referred the Board to her 5/26 email stating the Trine Team's conclusions as to the accountability status of each school. She noted that attendance and participation in E-Learning has been excellent.

I. Public Comment. There being no comments, questions, or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.



Charles M. Loeser, Assistant Secretary

² This equates to a retention slightly over 86% for the five year period.