

Central Massachusetts Collaborative

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Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director
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Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 8:30 A.M.
14 New Bond St., Worcester, MA 01606

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Maureen Binienda, Chair, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
Dr. Ruthann Goguen, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Webster Public Schools
Michael Lucas, Superintendent of Schools, Oxford Public Schools

Also Present: Dr. Susan Farrell, Executive Director, CMC
Beverly Tefft, Director of Finance and Operations, CMC
Joseph Meichelbeck, Treasurer, CMC
Kay Seale, Director of Special Education, Worcester Public Schools
Kathy Baris, Director of Special Education, Webster Public Schools

- 1. Superintendent Binienda called the Meeting to Order at 9:04 a.m.**
- 2. The board welcomed Oxford Public Schools Superintendent Michael Lucas as a new member of the CMC board.**
- 3. Approval of the July 8, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (voting item)**
Superintendent Binienda made a MOTION to approve the July 8, 2021 Board of Directors meeting minutes.

Superintendent Lucas seconds the MOTION.

4. Director of Finance & Operations Report

a. Warrants

Mrs. Tefft presented three (3) warrants for July 2021 which will be emailed amongst the Board for signature.

Mrs. Tefft reviewed CMC's profit and loss statement for July 2021. Revenue reflects a one twelfth billing to Worcester as well as tuition prepayments from three (3) districts. Summer billing was also completed in July.

Mrs. Tefft reported that expenses are on point for this time of year. A manual encumbrance system has been developed which she hopes to have fully in place for the October Board meeting. The current focus of the Business Office is on the annual audit. The audit firm of Fitz DeGuglielmo will be on-site September 21st - 23rd. The final Audited Financial Report will be presented at the November Board Meeting.

Mrs. Tefft also presented the Balance Sheet for July 2021. CMC continues to maintain a healthy cash balance (\$4.2m at July 31, 2021). Accounts Receivable of \$966k is down \$519k from last year due to consistent and steady collection efforts with districts. All outstanding receivables are 60 days old or less.

b. The Treasurer had nothing new to report.

5. Executive Director Report

a. CMC Opening of Schools Report

Dr. Farrell presented the opening of the schools report. She noted CMC was impacted over the summer by the heavy rainfall with significant flooding of the New Bond Street parking lot and some water coming into the building. The landlord has been addressing roof leaks so the storm just prior to school opening resulted in some parking lot flooding which quickly dissipated. There were minimal water leaks in the building which did not result in further water damage inside the building.

All staff returned to school on August 26th. Staff participated in two days of PD including program specific PD and participation in mandatory training in topics including civil rights, confidentiality, Massachusetts Restraints and Seclusion policies and procedures and universal precautions. The leadership team returned on August 23rd and received advanced training in de-escalation and restraint protocols for specialized populations presented by Brennan Roy of Crisis Prevention Solutions. The assistant directors also had a full day PD with the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE).

Students returned to school on August 30th. We re-established our COVID protocols with all students and staff wearing masks while indoors, maintaining social distance of 3 feet and washing hands frequently. Staff and students are expected to self certify daily. CMC has signed up for DESE's test and stay program and our nursing staff is in the process of getting this in place for our staff and students. We began the year with 186 staff and 381 students.

Dr. Farrell introduced the student census for August 2021 which is three hundred and eighty one (381). There are pending referrals to several programs. With all students returning to school, enrollment at Woodward Day School is expected to grow steadily. We are also beginning to receive referrals for Rockdale High School and are hopeful that we can increase enrollment in this program as well.

Dr. Farrell presented the September 2021 staffing updates. There are currently thirty-nine (39) open positions at CMC. Several positions have offers pending. As our enrollment is under four hundred (400) we are able to maintain a low staff to student ratio with the current staffing levels. We will need to fill positions to support enrollment as it grows. Our greatest need is for instructional assistants.

Dr. Farrell presented new hires to the board. CMC hired thirty (30) new staff this summer.

Dr. Farrell presented the board with data on staff turnover for the past six years. A review of the data shows that CMC averages fifty-five (55) voluntary resignations and sixteen (16) involuntary resignations each year. A review of retention rates shows that CMC retains approximately fifty percent (50%) of its staff for four or more years. When looking at direct student providers, the

retention rate is slightly higher at fifty seven point eight percent (57.8%).

Superintendent Binienda and Superintendent Goguen noted that all districts experience staff turnover. Superintendent Binienda inquired if this was in line with turnover for other collaboratives. Superintendent Goguen inquired as to the reason staff leave and recommended a survey of exiting staff to gather information on why staff leave CMC.

b. **CMC Student Handbook**

Dr. Farrell presented the updated CMC Student Handbook for review. The handbook includes a completed updated section on discipline to align offenses with the DESE code of conduct.

Dr. Goguen inquired if the CMC lawyer had reviewed the handbook and Dr. Farrell confirmed that this was part of the process.

Dr. Farrell discussed that as the handbook is rolled out, CMC will focus on CMC's discipline practices. Our students often come to CMC due to behavioral challenges. The Safety committee has been tasked with reviewing CMC student and staff safety protocols including alternatives to suspension and tiered supports for students experiencing behavioral issues. CMC is working with two consultants. Alex Hirshberg from Levine and Associates will provide support for clinical interventions and Brennan Roy from Crisis Prevention Solutions will work with staff on de-escalation and restraint training for staff. Both consultants are experts in their field and will gear their training to the CMC population of students.

Superintendent Binienda shared information about CPS training in Worcester. Worcester is implementing a train-the-trainer model. Superintendent Binienda suggested that this program might be effective with some populations at CMC and recommended Dr. Farrell considers this and shared that WPS began with a book study for the leadership team. Dr. Farrell thanked Superintendent Binienda for the suggestion. She shared that staff did have a full day presentation on CPS and she would look into follow up training that was more specifically focused on leadership learning about the program and its potential application to the students here at CMC.

6. Member Requests/New Business

Dr. Farrell shared that there was

7. Executive Session regarding Union Negotiations

- a. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel;
- b. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (teachers and Instructional Assistants) or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares;

If an executive session is held, the board will not reconvene in an open meeting.

8. Adjournment