

AQS Board Meeting
1:00pm March 7, 2024
Downers Grove Library
1050 Curtiss St, Downers Grove, IL 60515

President Bakalis called the regular Board of Directors meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Those in attendance and constituting a quorum were:

Present: Michael Bakalis, Terri Vanderjack, Tom Pekras, and George Nassos.

Others Present:

Wendy Stella – HR and Payroll Manager and Executive Assistant to Dr. Bakalis and Patricia Yadgir

Yolanda Banks – Principal of Plato Learning Academy – via zoom

Tim Ricordati – AQS Senior Advisor

Meeting Minutes Oct 19, 2023

Approval with changes as follows:

Motion to approve Financials George misspelled

Facilities report – 1st paragraph “talk to mom” change to “talk to his mom”

1st paragraph correct student to student’s

2nd paragraph correct grandparent’s to grandparents

Motion: by Terri Vanderjack

Seconded by George and carried without dissent.

School Report – Plato Learning Academy

Principal Report – Yolanda Banks – Plato Learning Academy Principal

Enrollment is at 168

Enrollment dipped due to families moving out of the area. Principal Banks talked about the decline in enrollment and that it was anticipated to happen post winter break.

Discipline had a small increase in January. This is normal for this time of year. Students returning from winter break and also all the snow days missed tends to create students acting out.

Discipline issue with a student. This specific student’s behavior has been very disruptive to the school day and other students. There have been meetings with the mom who supports the efforts at Plato, but Plato needs the support of the mother when the student is not at school with administering of medication. A Para has been hired and assigned as 1:1. The Para reports that it’s clear the medication is sporadic contributing to the student acting out resulting in a recent suspension from school. The plan is to have the student instruct from home, the parent of this student will be advised of this decision at the upcoming meeting March 13th.

8th graders are working with the younger scholars during Kindness Week.

Mrs. Lewis has taken the role of middle school coach this academic year. She is very informative, hands on and helpful to all staff.

Assessment Data:

After school tutoring takes place for K-4 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Working to have middle school tutoring return as well. This is still pending.

George asked about the PD titled “Oxygen for Learning” Yolanda commented that with the mid-year slump it’s a practice to help the staff have a focus for getting through this time.

NWEA – The younger grades and 8th graders are doing well. The middle grades are struggling and currently working on increasing the scores. Staff are encouraging families to sign up for summer school for a jumpstart next year. Since the decline in scores parents have paid more attention to what can be done to assist.

Use of Study Island, an online resource geared towards raising test scores, is being used.

Both Mrs. Lewis and Principal Banks meet with the teaching staff to discuss the scores and strategies moving forward.

Reading is still very low. Mike suggested a PD specifically about reading. Principal Banks will have Mrs. Lewis look for a PD program.

There is a potential to increase tutoring to 3 days. The main focus for reading will be reading specific PD and increasing allocated time in every class for reading.

Facilities – Jeremy Garcia –

Jeremy has reported that there have been several false alarms in the building. The alarm is still functional but potential to be replaced since the system is too old to repair or find parts.

Terri asked about CPS doing the inspections. Mike commented that they generally come out once a year.

George asked about having bike racks and how many would be needed.

Tom asked if Assumption has agreed that they are responsible for the work items needing to be complete and split with AQS. Mike commented that yes, they acknowledged their responsibility.

Motion: by Tom Pekras

Move to accept Plato School Report and Facilities report.

Seconded by Terri Vanderjack and carried without dissent.

Financial Report – Plato and AQS Financials- provided via email by Brandon Wdowiak staff accountant for AQS and Plato Learning Academy, Brandon on standby if needed.

Plato Financials – On target for a positive bottom line at the end of the year. Accountant doing a good job of informing monthly.

AQS Financials – AQS appears to have a big debt – but still paying off the large Plato renovation which will be paid off June of 2025. There are also personal loans made to AQS on the books to be paid back.

Motion: by Terri Vanderjack

Move to accept Plato and AQS Financials

Seconded by Tom Pekras and carried without dissent.

Senior Advisor Report – Tim

Tim commented on the problem with staffing at Plato and feels that the leadership change early in the year did not help. Things are slowly getting better but the discipline issues at Plato are a challenge.

Reading needs to be a focus, without a strong reading piece other areas of education suffer. Tim would like to see every teacher teaching reading. Hoping to start a new reading program at the beginning of 24/25 school year.

Mike, Patty and Tim will meet March 21st to discuss the rest of this academic year and how best to tackle next school year. The environment is horrific, which includes parents physically fighting on campus.

CSP stand on “School choice” – Mike

The school board goes back and forth between having an elected board and an appointed board. November will mark a vote for 10 people on the board with the Mayor appointing 11 people. Very large board!

There are differing beliefs and options for school choice that seem to bog down the process.

Board Discussion – Marketing Plato- Mike

What will attract students to Plato- Terri commented use of acts of student praise, offering fine arts and more athletics are possibilities. See if funds can be reallocated to offer fine arts.

George mentioned the Academy for Global Citizenship on the southside offers many outdoor activities around the school and neighborhood. They also maintain their own garden beds.

Open floor for public discussion or questions – No one was present for any public comment.

Old Business – No Old Business

New Business – No New Business

Motion: by Geroge Nassos

Move to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Terri Vanderjack and carried without dissent.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:10pm