

MEETING MINUTES
ASCEND ACADEMY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL
SPECIAL MEETING DATE: May 22, 2023
5251 Coconut Creek Parkway Margate, FL 33063

The Special Meeting was scheduled to discuss and approve the items below, pursuant to an agenda circulated ahead of the meeting.

Greg DuMont, as Chairman of the Governing Board, called the meeting to order at 8:36AM.

Roll call was taken with the following members present: Board Chair Greg DuMont, Board Members Cheryl Leonti and Vincent Alessi; Principal of ACA Stacy Johnson, and Budget Manager of ACA Denise Garcia.

I. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Ratification of November 3, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes

REQUESTED ACTION: Ratify items and actions taken from the last Board Meeting.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: Review, approval and comments

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

EXHIBIT: Meeting Minutes from Board Meeting on November 3, 2022

DISCUSSION: Final Minutes of the aforementioned Board Meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. With all Board Members having reviewed them and there being no comments, Board Chair DuMont motioned for their approval. Mr. Alessi seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Tabled _____

II. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Approval of student laptops purchase

REQUESTED ACTION: Review the purchase of 150 laptops for the 2023-24 school year.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: Each year the school must conduct a bid process for services provided to the school. The Governing Board must then approve the selected vendor.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Approximately \$40,000.00

EXHIBIT:

- I. CTL Quote
- II. Best Buy Quote
- III. Tech To School

DISCUSSION: Ms. Johnson presented all quotes to the board members and discussed the ordering and delivery options for each. Johnson elaborated that while the school had nearly 200 working chromebooks for students, the devices were aged and software problematic for testing going into the SY23/24. It was decided that CTL would provide the most competitive pricing and overall value (based upon an extended warranty period for the operating system) and CTL will be able to fulfill the quantities needed in a timely manner. Mr. Dumont recommended the approval of the purchase, school having complied with obtaining competitive quotes and Ms. Leonti second the motion. Motion was carried unanimously

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Tabled _____

III. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Approval of SY 23/24 instructional Resource Purchases

REQUESTED ACTION: Review on Instructional Resource Requirements

Approval of Renewal & Expansion of Edmentum – Up to \$70,000

Approval of Renewal of Lexia – Up to \$25,000 depending upon 1 or 2 yr license

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: Each year

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Approximately – Up to \$100,000

EXHIBIT:

- I. Current Quotes/Dialog from Edmentum
- II. Current Quotes/Dialog from Lexia

DISCUSSION: Ms. Johnson outlined the following:

- A. Edmentum (which acquired Apax) the core curriculum utilized by Ascend and the new courses aligned to Best Standards are in a new platform. The curriculum is well paced and courses at appropriate reading levels for Ascend students. To that end, it is recommended that we renew and move to the new platform to ensure course access, training and alignment to Best Standards.
- B. Lexia is utilized for reading intervention and has shown a quality impact. Lexia is offering 1, 2 and 3 year license options. Limited discounts.

Johnson recommended renewing both.

DuMont recommended renewing both, discussed the quality and value of the Edmentum assets and the relative cost effectiveness compared to other stand approved venders, as well as the need to continue with a high quality Reading Intervention Program. Johnson reiterated desire to move forward. Dumont recommended the board approve negotiations for the best deal possible and authority of Dumont and Johnson to negotiate and execute an appropriate renewal, with broadest access of courses up to the amount outlined, and up to a 2-yr license with Lexia if the discount warranted. Alessi seconded and such was approved unanimously.

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023

Approved X

Disapproved

Tabled

IV. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Approval of SY 23/24 instructional Resource Purchases - Career

REQUESTED ACTION: Review on Instructional Resources/Services - Career

Approval of Spend of Up to \$100,000 on Career Courses

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: One Year, Pending Results

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Approximately – Up to \$100,000

EXHIBIT: None

DISCUSSION: Mr Alessi and Ms. Johnson outlined the following:

Mr Alessi having been the former Principal and Ms Johnson indicated that given the limited enrollments and funds, the school has consistently pursued focused career readiness programs for the students, aligned to the charter's intentions. Having some reasonable reserves, both Johnson and Alessi encouraged pursuit of the following which they had been collaborating on:

- A. A Contract Program Manager to engage and facility 2 consultants, one focused on Career curriculum opportunities, and assessments and surveys for students to gather data and cost effective options for expanding career offerings and a second consultant that would take the same and target such opportunities in the community to both (i) improve enrollments and marketing Ascend to the community and (ii) to find businesses willing to support Ascend Students with perhaps some focused internships, externships, student trips/visits for career modeling and speakers at the school.
- B. Alessi and Johnson believe they have found a team with both subject and community experience willing to help the school.
- C. Cost would be approximately \$100,000.

Johnson recommended pursuing the strategy as being important to the long-term success of the school and its impact on the students. Alessi reiterated the same.

DuMont recommended the same and agreed that the school had sufficient reserves to pursue the same. Having said that, he requested that any consulting arrangements have an appropriate and market ability to terminate, with 30-days notice, to ensure that if impact or alignment of the same is not being recognized, Johnson (with strategic support from Alessi) could terminate or adjust the same.

That being said, Dumont recommended the board approve negotiations for the best deal possible and authority of Alessi and Johnson to negotiate and execute an appropriate consulting framework, with strategic impact. Leonti seconded and such was approved unanimously.

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Tabled _____

V. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Approval of SY 23/24 Security/Guardian Program

REQUESTED ACTION: Review State Certified Guardian Programs or Margate Police Detail

Approval of Spend of Up to \$80,000 to be contracted and budgeted accordingly.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: Annual Requirement

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Approximately – \$80,000

EXHIBIT: None

DISCUSSION: Ms. Johnson outlined the following:

Marget Police, who have acted via daily “detail” as the schools security officer have indicated that their hourly rate would be increasing from the current \$55 to approximately \$75-85. Such an increase would nearly double the cost to the school. Mr. Alessi outlined that some years ago, the school participated in the states Guradian program but stopped due to the shortage of organizations and qualified officers. Ms. Johnson indicated that the private services have improved, she had interviewed a couple and one, managed by a former Police Chief in Dade County was (i) qualified Guardian Program Provider (ii) would allow interviewing of several resource officers to approve the individuals(s) to be assigned and (iii) would be affordable (slightly more than the current cost of Margate PD). Ms. Johnson’s preference would be to explore a private provider of a Guardian Program for school resource officer, to balance both

safety and culture in the school and equally have an agreement with Margate Police for events and for any days where multiple officer need may arise.

The board debated the merits of both and wanted to ensure response to any events or needs would occur appropriately. Dumont supported the strategy and recommended the board approve Johnson to investigate and if deemed appropriate contract with a primary Guardian Program and equally sign an agreement with Margate PD. Alessi seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

VI. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Review of Any SY 23/24 Budget & Operational Matters

REQUESTED ACTION: Review/approve any operational matters

FINANCIAL IMPACT: TBD

EXHIBIT: N/A

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023

DISCUSSION: Mr. Dumont discussed the following:

- A. Governing board training compliance. All Board Members will complete the training renewal process before the deadline.
- B. Ms. Johnson school improvements and repairs in noting the budget would need to reflect some painting and repair on one of the air conditioning units having a leaking condenser coil.
- C. Mr. Dumont also addressed the budget and where we are financially, having by his estimate \$325K in operating reserves which can support the repair and strategic needs outlined above. He believes we are in good shape financially compared to years past and encouraged close tracking and pursuit of any amounts being made available to the school for ESSR III, the school having obtained reimbursement of all qualifying amounts for ESSR II.
- D. Mr Dumont indicated that, as in years past, Ms Johnson and he would build a budget not to exceed \$2MM, excluding the one-time strategic investment in a sustainable career course expansion. Such a budget will align to being less than or equal to funding sources available to the school including FEFP (increasing approx. \$500 per student), Capital Outlay, ESSR III and NSLP.

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Tabled _____

VII. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Public Comments

REQUESTED ACTION: Listen to all public comments

SUMMARY EXPLANATION AND BACKGROUND: The Governing Board is available to listen and address any comments, questions and/or concerns from all stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: TBD

EXHIBIT: N/A

Board Action Taken in Open Meeting On: May 22, 2023


DISCUSSION: There are no public comments at this time and no persons from the public attending.

Approved X


Disapproved _____

Tabled _____


There being no other business before the Board, the Meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

Signed By:  Mr. Greg DuMont
Mr. Greg DuMont (Jul 24, 2023 14:23 EDT)

(Governing Board Chair)

 Ms. Cheryl Leonti
Ms. Cheryl Leonti (Jul 25, 2023 07:56 EDT)

(Governing Board Member)

 Mr. Vincent Alessi
Mr. Vincent Alessi (Jul 27, 2023 07:39 HST)

(Governing Board Member)