**Watershed Public Charter School February 2025 Board Meeting Agenda**

February 25, 2025
6:00pm, Virtual

Video call link: https://meet.google.com/ihz-hdun-whh

Or dial: ‪(US) +1 435-708-1178‬ PIN: ‪366 919 109‬#

| **Board Member** | **Attendance** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Present for open session only |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Absent |
| Donn, Angela | Present |
| Freedman, Laurel | Present |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Present  |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Present |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Absent |
| Smolinski, Ann | Present |
| Thompson, Raven | Present at 6:24pm left at 8:29pm. |
| Wenck, Leah | Present |
| **Ex-Officio Members** | **Attendance** |
| David Miller | Present |
| Lori Widney | Present |

Called to order at 6:04pm.

**Board Norms**

* *Come to meetings with an open-mind*
* *Prepare to actively listen*
* *Trust collective wisdom that is shared*
* *Strive for consensus and clarity*
* *Be willing to accept feedback and ask questions*
* *Value all lived experiences and perspectives*
* *Use cultural humility when engaging with others*
* *Be conscious of “air time”*

**Public Comment**

* Caroline O’Brien - Current WPCS teacher. She thanked the Board for communicating the timeline for the middle school modular construction. She is requesting similar clarity for the equity review. She recognized the performance gaps with 504, IEP, and African-American students in WPCS and across the county. Due to limited space, there is no room for small groups as special services meet under stairs, in closets, in classrooms during other teacher’s planning time, etc., some accommodations or interventions cannot be met. Ms. O’Brien wants to make sure staff and students are being evaluated fairly in this equity review process. The current space is not equitable for staff or students, especially for service providers and their students.

**Student Spotlight**

* Camille Young-A 4th grader who attended WPCS since kindergarten presented information regarding Shirley Chism and explained what was most inspiring to her and why she chose to learn more about her. Camille also shared this information on the school announcements to celebrate Black History Month.
* Jihadji Wright-El - A 3rd grader since 1st grade sang a song about Harriet Tubman. Jihadi discussed what the song meant to her.
* Sage Clark - Recording will be played in the future.

**Consent Agenda (2 min)**

* Approval of January Minutes - Motion - 1st Leah, 2nd Sage

| **Board Member** | **Vote** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Yes |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Absent |
| Donn, Angela | Yes |
| Freedman, Laurel | Yes |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Yes |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Second |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Yes |
| Smolinski, Ann | Yes |
| Thompson, Raven | Yes |
| Wenck, Leah | Motion to accept |

**Old Business (10 min)**

* Climate and Culture Strategy Initiative review and approval
	+ [WPCS Climate and Culture Strategy Initiative Review 02.18.25](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Nh9p1qD9wlAVCPLbMgyio3jIge3wgqAk/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114945571610056350598&rtpof=true&sd=true)
	+ Ann questioned how or why this initiative is different than the equity work that will be done. The equity work that is being contracted will be more tailored specifically for WPCS needs. An in depth study will be completed to examine differences in performance.
	+ A grant was submitted for Stronger Schools on February 14th, 2025 that would pay for this equity project in full.
	+ Motion to accept the proposal to engage in a contract with imPACT Educational Consulting

| **Board Member** | **Vote** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Yes |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Absent |
| Donn, Angela | Yes |
| Freedman, Laurel | Yes |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Motion to accept |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Second |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Yes |
| Smolinski, Ann | Yes |
| Thompson, Raven | Yes |
| Wenck, Leah | Yes |

* + It was reviewed that a vote of abstention can only be used as a conflict of interest and must be stated before the vote starts. The consent agenda is not only the previous month’s minutes but also the current agenda.
* MSDE Expert Review Team visit on February 5th - The classroom observation was cancelled due to weather and has not yet been rescheduled. Nothing has been reported as of yet.
* Response to Public Comments and e-vote on 3.0 Grievance Policy - Two comments were about facilities. Instead of written feedback, the Board presented to the faculty at a staff meeting February 19th, 2025. Laurel felt like it was well received and that it has opened up improved communication. The third public comment from a parent was reviewed with the grievance policy being updated, conducting an evote, and sharing the information with the parent. The timeline of two weeks to respond is a target.

**New Business (15 min)**

* Proposed Board Member Will Gilbert approval
	+ [3-29-2024 WTG, Senior Business Dev. Resume.pdf](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XRBRLZiAzGLe7IEi0e9mB9Bb68f-UYVE/view?usp=sharing)
	+ Mr. Gilbert is interested in community engagement. He has expertise in the tech world, sales, business. Lori approached him about a year ago due to his involvement in advocacy day last year and he has remained involved since, including PTO participation
	+ Motion to confirm Will Gilbert as a Board member.

| **Board Member** | **Vote** |
| --- | --- |
| Baze, Crystal | Second |
| Dietzen, Lindita | Absent |
| Donn, Angela | Yes |
| Freedman, Laurel | Yes |
| Keniston, Charlotte | Yes |
| Magness-Hill, Sage | Yes |
| Pettiford-Kelly, Kelley | Yes |
| Smolinski, Ann | Motion to accept |
| Thompson, Raven | Yes |
| Wenck, Leah | Yes |

* Update on Middle School Modulars project
	+ [Middle School Modulars Project Update 02.21.25](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/145ShqKosRq3L0PaLqItev1GdzzuSk0Mf/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114945571610056350598&rtpof=true&sd=true)
	+ Slides were shared and John Weigland, co-owner from New Edge discussed much of what he shared to staff at the last staff meeting including
		- History of the project
		- Next steps for the modular middle school project including design and permitting process, construction, project completion plans.
		- John shared some highlights of the design development along with 27-28 officials who need to sign off on the process including site erosion control, sequence of construction with incremental inspections, and site utilities. It is the end of the signatory period of this current time of development but is progressing as expected.
		- A rendering of the building was shared including the floor plan for proposed classroom assignments and office spaces.
		- Reconfiguration of the old school was discussed
		- A Plan B was shared which includes “art on a cart” with 8th grade using the current art room. There is a possibility St. Gabriel’s annex could be used as they recently have been making some updates to the building.
		- Resources/budget/financing were discussed.
		- Communication Plans were explored.
		- Sage asked about past barriers, and anticipated barriers. John said that the change in leadership was a big hindrance to the project with lack of understanding with county requirements and their own staffing resource issues. The church had no past documents that are usually available to them or the county. Nine signatures are required with each review which slows down the process. They have two concurrent paths, for the certificate of occupancy and utility work with general timelines but no solid timeline commitment. Some contingency plans will be used if needed. The sediment erosion plan is a big milestone. Bonding could be a sticking point. Charlotte inquired if the timeline if cushion is realistic. What John is most fearful of is the design development phase and all the separate entities that need to give approval. He gave some updates of where some documentation stands at the moment. John feels like he has adequate time. Regular updates to the board would be helpful.
		- Lottery, advocacy day, finance report all visible on slides but not discussed in this Board meeting.

**Reports**

* [February PTO Report](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1MG8T1HK6qRM9Wfo5uQT7jkK9sgmnFKiYEzNZOjHqBOI/edit?usp=sharing) (10 min) -
	+ Review of February Events including events such as the Spelling tests, family tech talk, cleaning supply drive, and supply distribution for staff
	+ Student of the month backdrop
	+ Executive board committee work - including policies, google drives, and committees.
	+ Building watershed community
	+ Upcoming dates/events
	+ Laurel discussed an upcoming way to involve the board more with volunteer opportunities.
* [Principal Report (10 min)](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1il5HBdtCT8uia50IHavk27cNmQeoRHdf/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=101319369714676631344&rtpof=true&sd=true)
	+ Attendance continues to be above expectations but has dropped slightly. Staff have been in contact with chronically absent students and work towards resolutions. The pupil personnel worker has been helpful with this.
	+ MAP testing- Measures of Academic Progress. The county is slowly moving away from this way of testing growth and achievement. WPCS just received the scores. This information will be brought to the instructional achievement team to look at interventions needed.
	+ Hiring - Current openings and the process for these openings were discussed. The assistant principal position will open this week. One teacher will be on leave next year but everyone else is anticipated to return.
* [Executive Director's Report and Finance Report](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1q1ID5-ru6HA4svOoeYfIhpyqTtwwGqkq/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114945571610056350598&rtpof=true&sd=true) (15 min)
	+ Minimal updates were shared during the meeting due to time but slides are attached.
	+ The success of Advocacy Day was celebrated.

**Key Dates:**

* February 27, 6:00 pm: PTO Spelling Bee
* March 4: Read Across America event
* March 4, 7:00 pm: PTO General Meeting
* March 11, 5:30 pm: Governance Committee meeting
* March 12, 4:30 pm: Unit 2 Showcase
* March 20, 12:00 pm: Finance Committee meeting
* March 25, 6:00 pm: Board Meeting (in-person)
* April 4: Third Marking Period ends
* April 8, 5:30 pm: Governance Committee meeting
* April 14 – 21: Spring Break
* April 22, 6:00 pm: April Board Meeting

**Open session adjourned at:**

Vote to move to closed session

**Recorded vote to close the meeting:** Date: \_\_February 25, 2025\_\_\_\_; Time:\_\_7:41pm\_\_; Location:\_\_Virtually

Motion to close meeting made by: \_\_Ann Smolinski \_\_\_\_\_: Seconded by\_\_\_Angela Donn\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

Members in favor\_\_\_\_\_\_; Opposed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; Abstaining:\_\_\_\_\_\_; Absent:\_\_\_\_\_\_

**This meeting will only be closed under the provision or provisions checked below, all from General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b):**

**(1)\_\_**“To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals”; **(2)\_\_\_ “**To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business”; **(3)\_\_\_** “To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto”; **(4)\_\_\_** “To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State”; **(5)\_\_\_** “To consider the investment of public funds”; **(6)\_\_\_** “To consider the marketing of public securities”; **(7)\_\_\_** “To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice”; **(8)\_\_\_** “To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation”; **(9)\_\_\_** “To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations”; **(10)\_\_\_** “To discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans”; **(11)\_\_\_** “To prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination”; **(12)\_\_\_** “To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct”; **(13)\_\_\_** “To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter”; **(14)\_\_\_** “Before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, *if* public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process”; **(15)\_\_\_** “To discuss cybersecurity, *if* the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to” (i) “security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology”; (ii) “network security information,” such as information that is related to passwords, personal ID numbers, access codes, encryption, security devices, or vulnerability assessments or that a governmental entity collects or maintains to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or (iii) “deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices.”

| **Citation** **(insert #****from above)** | **Topic** | **Reason for closed-session discussion of topic -**  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 14 | ImPACT Consulting and the initiative  | Public comments and operations pertaining to the school |

Leah would prefer to have proposals emailed instead of embedded into agenda. Laurel will go to governance regarding any procedures

Public Comments - Caroline O’Brien

* Laurel wondered if the teacher from the public comment is speaking on behalf of staff or just that individual teacher. Ann replied it is just on that individual teacher’s behalf. Ann wanted to clarify what her role is and if the views of the staff are brought to her to bring to the board.
* Charlotte thinks Caroline is worried about the evaluation of equity will not be representative due to current space issues.
* In speaking to other faculty and staff, Ann surmises that staff feel like this is “a gotcha” because they weren’t involved to see if equity work was even a need. They are worried with the space concerns, any evaluation will reflect negativity on the staff if equalities are found.
* Sage expressed that maybe it hasn’t been communicated effectively that the consultants aren’t starting in the classroom until the fall. Teachers shouldn’t feel like they need to be involved. There will never be a convenient time to do this hard work but that it should not be delayed.
* Lori pointed out that last year African-American female students at WPCS were five times more likely to be referred to the office. She expressed that questioning is not resistance. Lori has been unclear about the expectations, scope, timeline of this initiative. Lori would like to have clarity so that she can communicate it better to the staff.
* Kelley reiterated Sage’s sentiments. Kelley thought that leveraging community partners to see how they make it work may be helpful. Transparency is needed. The Board should look at the goals that are expected from this contract. Looking at what other schools are dong can also be advantageous. Challenge the staff that space is often an issue everywhere. How do they think that space has an impact on equity?
* Charlotte proposed a letter from the Board explaining the goals for the anticipated process, the intentions for engaging staff, and the implementation of possible recommendations from the evaluation can be written to help with understanding.
* The feedback from staff concerns spoke to Christina (consultant) about staff concerns. Lori does not have enough information to educate the staff about the process. Board is moving forward but we can make adjustments on the process. But Laurel feels like it is the board is saying this must happen.
* The grant applied for this project will be decided in April.
* Ann stated the staff is not opposed- they just want more communication and transparency- when and how this work will be done. Another cognitive load with the current issues is concerning.
* Kelley stated that there is a disconnect in understanding how money is spent - grants are written for specific agendas. Staff may be thinking the priority is this and not with other resources that have been limited. This is understandable and once staff have resources and space, how are we then going to address the other underlining issues that have been occurring since the inception of the school.
* Laurel can work with Christina to draft some communication to the staff. This is a board initiative.
* Lori does not have a clear understanding of governance vs.operating (Dave is that link) How as a Board initiative will Lori and Dave participate in this initiative?
* Laurel stated this a challenge to the Board of their authority with this initiative.
* Lori expressed that intention and impact are important to investigate.
* Dave believes it is appropriate for him to take the lead to staff. Laurel wants to work collaboratively for that messaging.
* Sage thinks that maybe the staff feels that their priorities are space and the board is looking at this new initiative.
* Kelley reminded that there was a DEI committee originally but it was dismantled for various reasons. Without the committee the concerns and actions lay dormant. But it needs to be openly received by staff. The Board can provide as much as we can but not every concern or detail can be addressed or shared.
* Lori, Dave, and Ann can work together to get staff more open to the idea. Laurel requests that Christina (from imPACT) will be included in devising messaging. They will let the Board know how they will communicate it to the staff. Laurel would like to set up a time to formalize the role with Lori, Ann, and Dave.
* Dave reminded the Board the process will require continual evaluation.

Closed session concluded at 8:35pm.