

CANYON RIM ACADEMY BOARD of TRUSTEES  
2023 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
05-18-2023  
DRAFT

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (“the Board”) of Canyon Rim Academy (“the school”) was held on Thursday, May 18, 2023.

Board members present: Becky Benham, Kristen Billeter, Nicole Handy, David Hillyard, Rob Booth, Shauna Cundick, and Justin Scott.  
Administration present: Scott Mastroianni and David Garrett

The meeting began at 6:02 PM

**Governance Report – Becky Benham**

As the Board of Trustees for Canyon Rim Academy (CRA) our main responsibility is to create the policies that govern CRA and ensure that the ongoing operation of the school is handled in accordance with its Charter as approved by the USBE (Utah State Board of Education). Some additional roles or responsibilities of the board are to advance the school’s mission and vision, hold board meetings, adopt a school budget, monitor the finances, and to hire, support and evaluate the principal.

As Governance Chair, a few of my responsibilities are to ensure the board is governing effectively, assess the school governance needs, provide training for OPMA (open public meeting act), and communicate other relevant training topics for the board.

One of the hallmarks of an effective board is to focus on governance, not operations. As previously stated, the board sets policy and hires an effective leader to run the school operations. We have been fortunate to have Principal Mastroianni leading our school. I believe the title principal doesn’t quite convey the true breadth of his responsibilities. Since we are a one school district his job encompasses more than a traditional school principal. In the corporate world his title would be CEO. Regardless, of title his outstanding leadership has allowed us as a board to remain focused on governance.

As a board we completed several trainings throughout the year in our board meetings that included the topics of OPMA, the school’s charter, state legislation and laws process, and the school budgeting process.

Our board currently has seven members serving in varies stages of their terms. All will remain serving on the board for the upcoming school year with

the exception of Kristen Billeter, who has completed her service at the end of this school year. Our parent election was held last month. Melanie Mortensen has been elected to serve as the parent elected trustee for the upcoming school year.

This year our policy review process was improved by Nicole Handy and she has done a great job calendaring and keeping us on task. It can be a daunting task since with each new legislative session there are additional policy updates and changes required. One update during this last session that relates to board governance is a change to code 52-4-201.3, public comments in the Open Public Meeting Act. The board will be updating school policy next month to stay in compliance with the law.

Approximately, every five years the State Charter School Board does a comprehensive audit of school operations. At last month's board meeting William Evans from the State Charter School Board presented his findings which overall were positive. Mr. Chairman, from my perspective as governance chair I am happy to report that the board is working hard to be an effective governing board and I believe that those efforts will continue with the upcoming school year.

### **Public Comments**

Diana Coe expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and shared positive statements she heard from parents this last week.

Kathy Harbin expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and shared positive experiences her son had in her class.

Monica Call expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and encouraged the Board to follow school policies and listen to parent feedback.

Tyler Coe expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and read supportive letters from two of Ms. Schaub's students.

Genenvive Kinsey expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and shared examples of her son's positive experiences in Ms. Schaub's class.

Jeremy Heiser expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and gave examples of accommodations Ms. Schaub gave to their son this year.

Marleni Colvin expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and shared an example of Ms. Schaub's responsiveness to their family's concerns.

Cristina Schaub expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew her teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year; She feels she was unjustly treated and school policies were not followed.

Tonya Nuelle expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and believes Ms. Schaub should have received more feedback before notice of a non-renewal of a contract.

Spurthy Vathsalya expressed disappointment in the administration's decision to not renew Ms. Schaub's teaching contract for the 2023-24 school year and believes she is a distinguished teacher who gives individual attention to students.

### **Board Chair Report – Dave Hillyard**

To those who know Canyon Rim Academy, it is a gem in the community, and as a Board we regularly receive recognition of the same. I have been provided the opportunity to chair the Board this year. To that point, I am pleased to report (again noting Becky has identified the same) that Canyon Rim Academy and our Board were recognized by the Utah State Charter School Board this school year for its excellence and academic achievements.

This school year the Board reviewed our Charter in regular intervals in our monthly meetings; our Charter provides the school with operational autonomy in the State of Utah to pursue specific educational objectives. The Charter gives the school its purpose and function which is to provide a well-rounded education to its students by incorporating academics, arts, music, and social skills in its curriculum.

The Board has been busy this school year. As a Board we received stakeholder survey results earlier this month as well as student reports from the third-grade peer 'elected officials' which highlighted areas of success and areas in which to improve.

According to the third-grade reports early this year, most students really enjoy PE and library time. From the same student reports, there are

opportunities to increase lunch portions and dress down days. We recognize the need to update the school's facilities; it is an involved and detailed process to which we are dedicating time, funds and resources. Several policies were reviewed and either added or refreshed to ensure alignment with State requirements and proper school operations. With support from a community member the Board is working to enhance our Emergency Preparedness Plan. In that light, some security measures were enhanced at the start of the school year to ensure a safer school environment.

With respect to the Finance committee, the school is operating in a fiscally responsible manner, within budget, is accountable to the public for the funds it receives and has positioned itself well for future development. Various audits of school finances and operations from the state and independent third parties came back with exceptional results. Publicly I wish to thank Kristen Billeter for her service on the Board during her term.

She has added value in her various roles and she will be missed. We look forward to working with Melanie Mortensen as the parent-elect board member (thank you for joining us tonight, Melanie).

Lastly, I recognize the faculty, the parents, the administration, the support staff, and the Board for their contributions and efforts in helping in a variety of ways to support our students in their pursuit of academic excellence. It is with the concerted effort of all parties that Canyon Rim Academy realizes success. Many exciting things have happened this school year and we expect the same going into our 2023-2024 school year.

### **Principal Report – Scott Mastroianni**

Canyon Rim started the school year with five new teachers who quickly adopted the mission and values of CRA.

The SOAR values program was introduced for cohesion and positive focus. Each student was able to be recognized in the “Spotted SOARING” program. It has been a successful program and will continue next year.

Next year we will be offering two full-day kindergartens, as well as three six-grade classes. The school did have to discontinue the pre-school program for classroom space.

The Stakeholder Climate Survey showed an increase in almost all categories for both parents and staff. One area the administration is going to continue to improve is on bullying and teasing within the school. This year the school did some parent education presentations and Ms. Gonzalez intentionally taught classes about social-emotional learning. This will continue next year.

RISE Testing data is coming in and it appears scores are up from last year in both English language arts and math area.

Teachers at CRA are successfully working in grade level teams and successfully implementing WIN time ("What I need") for intervention time. Sixth grade went to the Teton Science Center again this year for a successful trip.

Looking to the future, the administration and teachers are going to look at consistency in grading from grade to grade. Additionally incorporating service learning at every grade level.

The school had a great academic and social-emotional year. CRA was recognized as the third best public school in the state.

### **Academic Excellence Committee Report – Shauna Cundick**

The mission of Canyon Rim Academy focuses on the academic, social, and emotional potential for each student. We want to offer our utmost thanks to our teachers, support staff, and administration for their efforts as they have focused on all three facets of our mission this year.

The Social/Emotional Learning position and the Early Literacy Interventionist positions are new to the school this year. As a pilot program, Social/Emotional lessons and anti-bullying lessons have been taught in the classrooms this year and we will continue to review their effectiveness. Having a literacy interventionist in 2nd grade is allowing at-risk students to be identified earlier, making it easier to get them on the right track academically. Our Academic Coordinator's focus on the student's academic growth and works closely with teachers and aides to serve our students.

Our school uses the Core Knowledge Sequence, Eureka Math, and other curriculum that meets and, in many cases, exceeds the Utah State Core standards. Students also have the opportunity to attend specialty classes in Music, Physical Education, Art, and Computers in order to receive a well-rounded liberal arts education. We are truly grateful for the amazing team that we have working at Canyon Rim Academy.

Additionally, as you may have noticed, this year we have added a Board News section to the school newsletter each week to keep you informed. We list dates of upcoming meetings, give information about new or updated policies, and provide information on how to access meeting minutes, agendas, and other board documents. Please continue to watch for our updates in the school newsletter.

## **Financial Report - Dave Garrett**

Each year the Board authorizes the expenditures of school funds in accordance with approved budgets, policies and procedures. The school has always followed the practice of living within our budget, avoiding unnecessary debt and saving for a rainy day. Utah law requires Schools to have a balanced budget for its funds and requires that all annual appropriations lapse at fiscal year- end with the exception of those indicated as fund balance commitments. As a matter of practicality, the budget of the School is usually amended only once, if needed, each year when the Board also takes action on the new fiscal year.

At the present time, Canyon Rim has on its payroll 65 employees, 3 fewer from this time last year. The breakdown includes 30 full-time employees including classroom teachers, administration, front office staff, and support services each dedicated to the school's mission and core values. We have a handful of outside contractors that include special education services, a psychologist, a licensed social worker, a nurse, the band and orchestra teachers and IT services – all of whom are equally engaged. We increased our full-time staff this year to include Colleen Mitchell and moved 2 full-time teachers in new roles to help with lower grade intervention work and social emotional learning. With the passage of HB477 monies have been appropriated for full-day Kindergarten. CRA will roll out 2 full day Kinder classes next year and continue to offer a half day morning or afternoon class. Beginning next school year we will have 21 classroom teachers and 1 special education teacher. As a side note, of those 22 teachers, 11 of them have earned specialized endorsements or graduate degrees in Education or a related field.

Last June the board approved the 2022-23 school budget totaling \$3,929,000. With 7 weeks remaining for this fiscal year we have spent 85% of our budget or \$3,317,000. CRA is debt free. We are one of only a handful of charter schools in the State that can make that claim. In addition to the school's operating account, we maintain accounts in the Public Treasury Investment Fund, an external local government investment pool managed by the Utah State Treasurer. Additionally, the school recently opened accounts for a 12 and 24 month CD plus a Money Market account. The interest and dividends earned will ultimately be used to enhance our educational programs and to help offset the costs associated with the design and construction of a new or remodeled campus.

For the upcoming FY24, legislative estimates offer an overall increase in our school funding. About half of that sum will be used specifically for salary increases per HB 215 that provided teachers and other support services staff a

\$4,200 pay increase plus \$1,800 toward benefits. State revenues reflect a 6% increase in the state funding mechanism called the weighted pupil unit (WPU) from \$4,038 to \$4,280 per student. In total, the Legislature made monumental investments in public education during the legislative session.

A couple financial highlights from our last audit include:

- The School's assets exceeded its liabilities at the close of the most recent fiscal year by \$6,955,677 (net position). Of this amount \$3,092,998 (unrestricted net position) may be used to meet the School's ongoing obligations to students, employees, and creditors.
- Revenues totaled \$4,584,963 for the year ended June 30, 2022. Of this amount \$4,456,120 was from state and federal sources. Also total expenses were \$3,528,295 during the same period. Of this amount \$2,149,164 was spent on instruction and \$1,108,181 was spent on supporting services. The School's net position increased by \$1,056,168 during the FY22. To better illustrate how these funds were distributed – Instruction represents 60% of general fund expenditures, 31.4% used for Supporting Services, 3.8% for Food Services and 1.3% for Canyon Prep Academy.

This abbreviated financial report is designed to provide citizens, taxpayers, and parents a general overview of Canyon Rim Academy's finances and to demonstrate accountability for the money it receives.

### **Long-Range Plan Report - Robert Booth**

Within the long-term planning committee, we focus on how to facilitate and implement changes that are in the best interest of the school and community for years to come. Every year, we do a stakeholder survey and one of the topics frequently addressed in the survey relates to the building and the condition of the physical facilities. We are working on solutions that blend both our short-term needs and our long-term desires for the school.

We made some short-term progress this year in that we were able to acquire and mostly install 10 rooftop mounted air conditioning units in the north wing classrooms (4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade wing). Supply chain and weather slowed the installation process, but the drops into the ceiling and the electrical work are complete, and the rooftop mounted compressors should be installed just after school closes, so come beginning of the next school year, Canyon Rim can finally say that it has some air conditioning, at least in a portion of the school.

Looking toward the future, we know we need to either further upgrade our building which is near the end of its useful life, or get a new one. This school not only serves as a location to educate our children, but also serves as a gathering place for the community during disasters and we want to make sure this school is still standing if such a disaster were to occur.

To that end, in last year's annual report, we discussed that we were exploring three options for the school.

Option 1: was to renovate our current school in some form or fashion. This would include bringing old features up to current code, structurally upgrading the building for an earthquake, and upgrading our mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Option 2: is to build a brand-new school behind our existing school and then once it's up and operating, demolish the existing building.

Option 3: taking a hybrid approach where some of the existing structure remains, and we tear down a portion of the old building and build new.

Each of these options has benefits and challenges, and each has a different cost profile. Previously, Canyon Rim has been working with an architectural group to explore these options, and this school year we took a further step forward in February and March where we put out an RFP for development and construction management services to help us implement one of the three options.

We had a number of qualified and detailed responses to the RFP, and after review of the proposals, we awarded a contract to Odyssey Partners, a local development firm specializing in charter school development. Odyssey is now engaged and is driving this process forward.

As a charter school there are many advantages that we have over traditional district schools. These advantages relate to curriculum, culture, and flexibility. Canyon Rim has a great track record of maximizing the full enrollment allowed by its charter, first class management, and the fact that we own and control our property debt free is a great story to present to the debt market.

With that said, our school is constrained in that we are, in essence, a one-school district, with funding that comes in the form of a per-pupil allotment from the state. One of the main determining factors for which option we choose is how much debt we can afford based on that allotment.

As we narrow in our plan and the associated construction costs for each option, the difference between the amount of debt we can afford to take on as a school and the total costs to construct a new school will tell us the

amount of money that must be saved before moving forward. This process also will provide us guidance on the timing for a new school and our path forward long term.

There is certainly more to this process than herein described, but our intent is to be transparent about our decision-making process, that work that is going on behind the scenes, and to communicate our long-term objectives for the benefit of the Canyon Rim Stakeholders.

We've made significant steps forward in the last 12 months and look forward to continuing to drive the process forward.

Motion to adjourn meeting by Rob Booth. Becky Benham seconded the motion. Motion was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Next Board meeting will be Thursday, June 15, 2023