

**MONUMENT ACADEMY**  
**“A Charter School, a Public School of Choice”**  
**Board of Directors Regular Meeting**

December 9th, 2021 at 6pm MST  
Monument Academy East Campus Gym

**Mission Statement:**

The mission of Monument Academy is to provide a challenging, content – rich, academic program offered within an engaging, caring, and positive learning environment. Established on a solid foundation of knowledge, Monument Academy emphasizes academic excellence, respect, responsibility, character and exemplary citizenship.

**A. CALL TO ORDER/MISSION STATEMENT/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL/QUORUM:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm. Mr. Buczkowski read the mission statement. Mr. Graham led the pledge of allegiance and took roll call. A quorum was established.

Board Members in Attendance

Mr. Buczkowski  
Mrs. Clinton  
Mr. Dole  
Mrs. McCuen  
Mrs. St. Aubyn (virtual)  
Mr. Graham

Others in Attendance

Mr. Holmes  
Mr. Brocklehurst

**B. ADDITIONS TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Mrs. Clinton motioned that this meeting be recorded and uploaded to the MA YouTube channel for public access for 30 days. This is specifically for this meeting only and others will continue to strictly be in person and not recorded for public upload. Mrs. McCuen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**C. SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT :** Mrs. Anna Vroom and Mrs. Kendra Kuhlmann were honored for their excellent service to the Monument Academy community.

**D. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS PERTAINING TO AGENDA ITEMS** *Limit 3 minutes per person.* Reminder that we do not respond as a board during comments.

- a. Mr. Brad Miller, MA Legal Counsel, stated “Many of the staff in the community have continued to dialogue online regarding a staff issue from the past summer. We hope the following will help to clarify this matter. First, the serious Title IX investigation concerning the AP/Athletic Director position was initiated by the prior COO. This third-party investigation report compelled the school to take action. There was no option legally to not take action. Further, while the underlying issues and behaviors occurred and were reported under the previous administration, the resulting report and recommendations were necessarily acted upon by our new COO. These issues were not initiated by the new COO in any way.” He commented on his experience with charters that previously hired Mr. Holmes and firmly stated he has no knowledge of any of these departures being due to inappropriate interpersonal behavior.
- b. Karen Shannahan commented on the need to improve culture and climate at the school campuses. She suggested more social gatherings to build staff

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camaraderie, an anonymous grievance process for staff directly to the board, and a better evaluation process for teachers.

- c. Kim Stoltenberg commented on her concern for the staff and COO leadership.
- d. Heather Yuen commented on her concern about the resignations and quality of education.
- e. Kisa Hancock commented on her concerns regarding behavior and turmoil in the secondary school. She is worried about a perceived focus on quantity versus quality at the school.
- f. Kevin Hancock also commented about concerns regarding the quality of academics at the school and that sometimes gossip comes from truth.
- g. Elissa Brooks commented about her concern that teacher voices are not being heard.

**E. STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD**

- a. Mr. Dole provided a statement on behalf of the board. It included concerns about the path the school is on and its departure from the school mission statement. He outlined three years of transitions and "pain points" that have shaped the issues surrounding the school, especially the East campus. These issues include a lack of structured academic accountability, lack of structured discipline, lack of leadership that has held true to our mission statement, lack of communication, resistance to change of processes, financial stability of the organization and efficiency of the organization. Suggestions for getting back on track include acknowledging where we are, how we got here, and what the issues are that we need to fix. The Board will develop corrective actions to improve the communication coming from our COO. An organizational chart will be completed, filled out, and clear leadership roles defined. The school, especially the East campus, will have an established accountability and discipline structure.

**F. STATEMENT FROM THE COO**

- a. Mr. Holmes made a statement to the community in regard to the parent and staff concerns raised. He referenced the difficulty of change and the frustrations that come with change. He acknowledged his shortcomings and that there are areas he needs to improve upon and encouraged anyone with concerns to come speak to him directly.

**G. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. Minutes from November 11<sup>th</sup> and December 6<sup>th</sup> were approved with unanimous consent with one typo requested to be fixed on the Dec 6<sup>th</sup> minutes.
- b. The next meeting date of January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 was approved. Location TBD.

**H. REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATION & COMMITTEES:**

- a. COO: Mr. Holmes:
  - i. Interviews for an additional East Campus administrator were held Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. Interviews were also recently held for a new PE instructor.
  - ii. Meetings were held with current coaching staff on expanding our high school athletic offerings. Mr. Holmes and Mr. Hale also met via zoom with CHSAA to discuss the membership process.
  - iii. The MA Foundation and Finance committee reached an agreement on the Phase II Design-to-Build finance model.
- b. CFO: Mr. Brocklehurst
  - i. Combined month end revenue: \$920,617
  - ii. Combined month end expenses: \$860,639
  - iii. Combined net income: \$59,978

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- iv. Audit presentation on MA Financial Health should be ready for the January board meeting.
- c. Committees
  - i. Highway 105 Committee Report: Mrs. St. Aubyn
    - 1. The committee met with the county lead for the project. Adjustments are being made and MA will hire an independent firm to review the plans before an MOU is signed or plans are finalized. Regarding West campus carline, a traffic study was conducted, and data results are coming. This will help determine if/how the lights along HWY 105 will be retimed to improve traffic flow.
  - ii. Curriculum: Mrs. Clinton
    - 1. No report
  - iii. SAAC – West: Mrs. St. Aubyn
    - 1. Meeting was postponed to next week because the survey is in progress. Deadline is tomorrow 12/10
  - iv. SAAC – East: Mrs. McCuen
    - 1. Survey deadline is 12/16
  - v. Governance: Mr. Graham
    - 1. Election policy review first read conducted under action items.
  - vi. Finance: Mr. Dole
    - 1. The committee continues to work alongside CFO and COO to understand upcoming budget year. The \$700K budget deficit has been greatly reduced and specifics will be detailed at a later time.
  - vii. Buildings & Facilities: Mr. Buczkowski
    - 1. No report
  - viii. Volunteer: Mrs. Clinton
    - 1. Research continues finding the right software program to centralize the volunteer opportunities and provide an end user option for sign-ups and check ins. While the committee works to find a good solution, please continue to check the volunteering link on the MA website for current opportunities.
  - ix. Resource Development: Mrs. St. Aubyn
    - 1. Wendy Brethour is putting together a committee to plan the April fundraiser potentially at the Boot Barn. A large fundraiser Please reach out to the Board or Wendy (information will be on a community distributed flyer) if you'd like to help on the committee. More information to come in January.

**I. ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION:**

- a. Board Response to Leadership Concerns
  - i. Please see attached for the statement made by Board President Ryan Graham.
  - ii. Mr. Graham moved that we establish a subcommittee with the sole intent of vetting and engaging the services of a third-party professional consultant coach. Mrs. McCuen second. Motion passed unanimously.
  - iii. Mr. Graham motioned that the newly formed subcommittee be comprised of Joe Buczkowski and Misty McCuen. Mrs. Clinton second. Motion passed unanimously.
  - iv. Mr. Graham motioned that we allocate to the new board subcommittee the appropriation of up to \$10K for the engagement of services in

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relation to a professional consultant/coach. Mr. Buczkowski second. Motion carried unanimously.

- v. Mr. Buczkowski suggested the Governance committee review our grievance process and compare it to what other charter schools have in place.
- vi. A directive was given to our East and West campus assistant principals and COO to provide weekly communication to parent and staff community.

b. Review of Organizational Structure

- i. Mr. Dole emphasized the need to have clearly defined leaders at both campuses. Mr. Holmes was directed to sit down with HR and determine the process and timeline of filling the West campus principal. The Board expressed interested in pursuing a CAO (Chief Academic Officer) role at the school when the budget allows and based off potential recommendations from the professional consultant being hired by the newly formed subcommittee. The Board also issued a directive to establish who is leading the day-to-day operations at the East campus. Ultimately the Board wants to see the organizational chart complete with 1 Principal and 1 Assistant Principal at the West Campus and 1 Principal and 2 Assistant Principals at the East Campus.

c. Elections Policy First Read

- i. Mr. Buczkowski gave a first read of the proposed revised elections policy.

**J. BOARD COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- a. Mrs. Clinton provided PTO and teacher representative updates.

**K. NEW BUSINESS** - None

**L. ADJOURNMENT** - Mr. Buczkowski motioned to adjourn. Mrs. McCuen second.  
Adjourned at 9:01pm

**M. CITIZEN COMMENTS NOT PERTAINING TO AGENDA ITEMS**

## BOARD PRESIDENT RESPONSE TO LEADERSHIP CONCERNS

To our MA community and staff, since November 5<sup>th</sup>, the date of Mrs. Seymour's resignation, you have made your voices clearly heard through phone calls, emails, text messages and in person meetings. We thank you for your passionate pursuit of truth and continued commitment to discovering what is going on inside our beloved school. Please know the board hears you loud and clear and we have been working diligently to discover the extent of your many concerns. As we continue to ascertain the truth, we understand the time sensitivity and request for urgency to bring forth immediate solutions. Unfortunately, these solutions WILL take time for there is no immediate fix to the numerous concerns we are facing as a school. Our staff and community are hurting right now, and we know there is a very real and palpable pain because of all the change and sudden loss. We are hearing how incredibly overworked and overtasked so many of our teachers are. We knew that last school year presented many challenges to our teachers and staff, but it is very evident that those burdens have not lightened this year either. To our teachers – we see you, we hear you and we want to bring forth healing to Monument Academy.

As we discuss the leadership of the COO, I have firm conviction that it's of the utmost importance to share the perspective of a student at the east campus, because ultimately, we are all here to ensure the continued education of our students, but we must bring forth help to support our teachers and staff. This student will remain anonymous, but I thank this student for their unsolicited willingness and conviction to come forth and share this letter. I have been given permission to share this with you tonight.

To begin: (Student letter)

*"The work ethic I've noticed at this school is below the standard. The teachers do not push deadlines hard enough and the grades don't matter to the students so they don't get their work done. When they come to class with none of the work completed, they make excuses and the teachers allow them to have an extension. This does not prepare them for life in any way or give them any high school experience. We are mixed with middle schoolers so we*

*are treated as middle schoolers. High school naturally comes with much responsibility and the high school students here are given very little responsibilities. We can't expect any growth in maturity or personality if the students are handed everything in high school. If they were given responsibilities, I believe they would learn to balance their social and academic lives, which currently is not a success trait I see present in most students. I grew up attending this Character First school, so I can say from experience that the expectations have dropped drastically. The character first values are not enforced in the students' academic careers, therefore the students do not behave according to these values. With the birth of a new school, there will be bumps and bruises along the way. However, this does not exempt the administration and staff from doing everything in their power to build it up from the start. When I see an issue presented to the school, they seem to not know how to handle it and they blame it on account of the school still developing. While the high school is new, that does not make it alright for these high school students to have to sacrifice their education to be the trial period. At Monument Academy, the expectations used to be set very high. So high that students could almost never reach it. But because the bar was raised so high, they excelled to meet the expectations. This is what set MA students apart. The amount of drama and gossip that infects this school is unlike anything I've ever experienced. This ties back to the lack of work ethic in the students because they don't try to excel in their classes, so instead they cause drama to keep themselves occupied. This leads to their work not getting done because they are too focused on their social lives. For these reasons, I don't believe that this school is for me anymore. I hope this honest point of view can help improve the future of this school".*

Understand, this board is here to help, but we must bring overall context to the numerous and separate issues we are hearing as a board. We have heard that this board is not being transparent and not listening. The truth is, we are listening to everything and everyone, but not everything and everyone aligns with what they see as the root concerns. Therefore, it is

very important that we share other perspectives and understand that we ALL have a part in addressing these issues. Again, we know that our staff is hurting, and they have been through so much pain caused by sudden change, but I would be remiss to say, If we do not course correct now and re-establish a solid foundation that aligns with our mission for this school, then we are not going to have a high school in the coming years.

This leads into my next segment-

Let's talk about our current financial situation. The approaching 22/23 fiscal school year presented us with a \$692K deficit due to a \$1.4 million dollar step increase on our bond amortization payments here at this campus. In addition, in a little over three years from now, when we start the fiscal school year of 25/26, there is a \$29M balloon payment due for this campus. In order to stay solvent, we MUST refinance out of this current bond. If we are unable to demonstrate and show financial solvency moving into next fiscal school year, there will be no refinance of this bond in the next year and MA will be facing odds as we approach that balloon payment. I understand that this propagates consternation and fear, but this is truth.

Let's further talk about capacity issues, this campus has already hit capacity, our teachers have made this very clear to us as a board, and we still need to bring two more grade levels in to finish out the high school. As we have heard multiple times, the east campus was developed without input from teachers, staff, students, and MA stakeholders. Now we must fix this very real issue by determining how to build out phase 2 which must have a regulation size gym, a new high school wing and an athletic field. For if we are not able to support athletics at this campus, and we are not able to address capacity issues, we will not have a viable high school because our students will go elsewhere.

We brought Mr. Holmes on to be a COO with a vision and a direction to help address these big bucket issues with MA. He has been thrust into other roles due to the untimely and devastating passing of Mr. Charlie Richardson and the sudden resignation of Mrs. Julie Seymour. We understand and acknowledge that Mr. Holmes communication style and lack of communication are causing additional issues to include people feeling as though they are dismissed, unappreciated and not heard. This board will address that with Mr. Holmes. In the midst of the enormous tasks and challenges we are facing, Mr. Holmes is doing the job of COO, not principal, by helping us move forward with phase 2 and working very closely with our CFO and this board to help navigate the current financial need to refinance.

I know at this point, some parents are questioning if Monument Academy is the right choice for their children, I get that and I understand that, because I have asked myself that same question leading up to tonight. With all that said, this volunteer board, has put our families, our businesses, and our personal lives on hold while we continue the laborious and time intensive task of getting to the crux of these issues and bringing forth real and sustainable solutions so that we may all be part of building an unshakable foundation where our teachers, students and staff can continue to grow. This board has committed and dedicated ourselves to this calling because we understand that all of our children's futures are at stake. Failure is not an option for this board.

Ultimately, everything that we are doing as a board is to fulfill our mission of providing a challenging, content rich academic program. But we must reestablish a solid foundation in order to emphasize academic excellence, respect, responsibility, character and exemplary citizenship. This is going to take time and I cannot emphasize enough that MA needs your grace, patience, continued support and prayers. We are here to serve, and we will continue to serve but this board desperately needs everyone to understand that if we are going to be successful as a school, we have to chart a course



that is going to challenge each of us, and in doing that, Monument Academy will bring forth the leaders of tomorrow.

As we get into further board discussion on leadership concerns, my recommendation to this board is that in addition to any directives we give tonight, that we form a board sanctioned subcommittee that is given full authority to move forward on vetting and hiring an executive coach/consultant to further delve into the leadership and personnel concerns of this campus. This assessment would provide us with a very thorough and detailed, third party findings report and give us as a board a more defined understanding of the current communication issues, cultural issues, climate issues and collaboration issues.

Very Respectfully,

Ryan Graham

President – Monument Academy School Board