BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
March 3, 2022

MINUTES

On March 3, 2022, the EdAdvance Board of Directors held a Zoom online meeting during which a quorum was present. President John Kissko called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM and recorded the following members in attendance:

1. Roll Call:

   Name (District):  Joseph Abdella, Region 12
   Deb Bell, Region 7
   Kate Conetta, Danbury
   Roxy Fainer, Thomaston
   Dia Fusco, Plymouth
   John Kissko, Torrington
   Sarah Robichaud, Colebrook

   EdAdvance Personnel:  Jeffrey Kitching, Executive Director
                        Jonathan Costa, Assistant Executive Director
                        Richard Carmelich III, Chief Operations Officer
                        Tracey Lay, Chief Talent & Development Officer
                        Carol Montory, Board Clerk

2. Approval of January 6, 2022 Minutes

   Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 6, 2022 meeting.

3. Questions and Comments from the Public: None

4. Communications:

   Written:
   Jeff shared the EdAdvance newly updated and redesigned agency overview sheet. This document gives an overview of who we are, what we do and our funding.
5. **Old Business:** None

6. **New Business:**

a) **Action Item: McKinney-Vento Grant Application**

Upon a motion by Sarah Robichaud, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the Board of Directors approved of EdAdvance’s request for Board approval of the submission of the 3-year McKinney-Vento grant application to Connecticut State Department of Education.

b) **Action Item: Healthy Food Certification - Healthy Food Option**

Upon a motion by Deb Bell, duly seconded by Sarah Robichaud, the Board of Directors approved of EdAdvance’s Healthy Food Certification - Healthy Food Option pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the board of education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

c) **Action Item: Healthy Food Certification - Food and Beverage Exemptions**

Upon a motion by Joseph Abdella, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board of Directors approved of EdAdvance’s Healthy Food Certification – Food and Beverage Exemption as stated: the board of education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

d) **Update: Current Year Budget**

Jeff shared two PowerPoint slides detailing the vision and structure that EdAdvance committed to six years ago and a comparison of the October final budget for 2021-22 to the December budget projections for 2021-22. The agency made an investment six years ago to achieve our mission by committing to the “Three Cs” – Connection, Culture, and Customization. In order to accomplish our mission, we needed to expand our departments, become cost effective and more attractive to districts. In five years, the agency’s total revenue has grown 57% and we have reduced our dependence on federal and state grants. Now, 55% of our revenue comes from fee for service and our departments are providing needed and wanted services to districts. In 2020, we ended the fiscal year with a deficit of $485,500 and our December projection shows us
ending this fiscal year with a surplus of $721,196, which is a $1.2 million improvement in our balance.

e) Update: Executive Team Initiatives for 2022

Jeff provided an update on the new initiatives that he first spoke about at the January 6, 2022 Board meeting.

Retention-Recruitment Project
This initiative is aimed at retaining our quality employees and recruiting and hiring individuals of the same high caliber. Focus groups are currently being conducted with staff from all departments to determine the agency’s strengths and weaknesses. We are also conducting a review of salaries across all departments. We will be using information from school districts, the other RESCs, and similar non-profit organizations to compare to our staff’s salaries.

Early Childhood and Head Start Torrington/ Winchester
We have a long-time partnership with Torrington and Winchester and space has become at a premium in these two districts, and we are actively seeking a permanent solution. We are negotiating with the Archdiocese of Hartford to purchase property on Grove Street in Torrington. The property includes the Sacred Heart Church, the rectory building, the convent building and a large vacant lot. Our Head Start Director, Carmella Galipault, is working with the federal Head Start program to secure federal grant money to assist with the purchase. We are also working with the Catholic Church in Winchester to possibly lease some property there.

f) Approval: Personnel Report for January and February 2022

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Deb Bell, the Board approved the Personnel Report for January and February 2022 as submitted. Motion was approved unanimously.

7. Reports/Updates

i. Executive Director’s Report – Jeffrey C. Kitching
Ø Jeff shared that the RESCs have been speaking to the legislature during this legislative session. He provided written testimony for the appropriations public hearing for elementary and secondary education urging our state legislators to increase funding to the Office of Early Childhood. The other RESCs are campaigning for magnet school funding.

ii. School/Program Services – Jonathan P. Costa, Sr.
Ø Jonathan reported that the agency is the lead for the State’s next 5-year plan.
Ø Jonathan spoke about that the funding for LEAP (Learner Engagement-Attendance Project) has been extended for two years and our RESC will be involved. LEAP is a state program for K-12 students struggling with absenteeism and disengagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Ø Jonathan shared that over 100 educators attended a professional learning session held at WorkspaceCT. This session focused on implementing the new state sponsored African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino curriculum that will be offered in every school district next school year.
iii. Business and Operations - Richard Carmelich
➢ Rich shared that our auditing firm CliftonLarsonAllen, CLA, has requested two extensions to complete our audit. This is mainly due to staffing shortages at their firm. The audit should be completed in time for our next Board meeting in April.

iv. Talent and Development – Tracey Lay
➢ Tracey reported on the following agency initiatives:
  • The Agency Charitable Giving Committee held a successful agency food drive with the items collected going to stock the shelves at the Friendly Hands Food Bank.
  • The agency is holding a clothing and necessities drive from March 14 to April 15 to benefit students and families of our programs.
  • We are planning to have a blood drive on June 6 from 11 am to 4 pm. This will also be open to the public.
  • We continue to add to our employee perks list. We are offering free yoga sessions for staff here in Litchfield and virtually at WorkspaceCT. We are exploring the possibility of offering other classes such as personal finance and Excel.
  • The agency has started “Winning Wednesday.” This is an agency-wide gift card drawing for all active EdAdvance employees that will take place on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

8. Adjournment

Upon a motion by Kate Conetta, duly seconded by Joseph Abdella, the meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

Minutes recorded by:
Carol Montory, Board Clerk

Deb Bell, Secretary