

**WESTINGHOUSE ARTS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, June 5, 2024 6:30pm

<https://westinghousearts-org.zoom.us/my/j4985722966> BoardMeeting

Meeting ID: 829 0442 0112

Passcode: 413522

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**Present:**

Mr. William Pricener - Board President and Treasurer  
Ms. Bernadette Gibson - Chair of Education Committee (Zoom)  
Ms. Gloria Rayman - Chair of Development Committee  
Mr. Greg Jakub - Chair of Nominating Committee  
Dr. John Hisiro - Board Member (Zoom)  
Ms. Linda Kirk - Board Member  
Dr. Kelly Lombard - WAA School Principal  
Dr. Debra Lehew - WAA Director of Special Education

Ms. Anna Very - WAA Dean of Students

**Guests:**

Westinghouse Arts FTO Members  
Westinghouse Arts Faculty  
Westinghouse Arts Parents  
Westinghouse Arts Students  
Members of the public via Zoom

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*The Meeting of the Board of Directors began at 6:32pm.*

**Roll Call of Board Members:**

*Mr. William Pricener welcomed all attending the meeting via Zoom and in person. Introduced newest board member, Linda Kirk. Linda Kirk provided a summary of her career in education. Moved all comments (about the agenda and general public comment) to the beginning of the meeting. Dr. Lombard proposed those who signed up in advance to speak would be called upon to speak first.*

**1. Comments from the Public about the Agenda**

a. Westinghouse Arts Academy Board kindly requests that public comment about the agenda be kept to 3 minutes per commenter, in order to respect the time of the attendees and the Board Members. Thank you.

**Mr. Adam Ahlgrim, Literary Arts Teacher** - See Addendum A.

**Ms. Rhonda Olshanski, English Teacher** - See Addendum B.

**Ms. Candace Bruno, Member of the Public** - spoke on behalf of being related to Savannah Bruno (WAA teacher) and that a union has for teachers.

**Ms. Shannon Visconti, Parent** - shared support for the teachers unionizing at WAA. Also mentioned that she was offended that the board thinks they are more invested in the school than the parents. She also conveyed the importance of WAA due many students trapped in poverty lack opportunities despite having talent in the arts. She also conveyed her concerns about how board members are appointed and how board members are friends and vote together. She asked for board members to vote in accordance with their own individual views on a topic.

**Ms. Colleen Kimberlin, Parent** - See Addendum C.

**Ms. Danielle Janicki, Parent** - See Addendum D.

**Ms. Addison Janicki, Student** - shared comments about how WAA has helped her grow as a student - both in academics and in the arts. Also shared that no one ever has asked for Robotics at WAA. Asked that the board make decisions in the best interest of the students and to show respect for the teachers and staff of WAA and to support WAA Unified.

**Ms. Austenne Gniadek, Studio Arts Teacher** - shared comments that she was interrupted by board members when she spoke at the last board meeting and wished to be heard this evening. She shared how a senior wrote her a message about how she thought Ms. Gniadek taught her how to paint but also about what kind of person she wished to become. Ms. Gniadek spoke about the specialness of the students at WAA.

**Ms. Dawn Richardson Frank, Parent** - shared she had a child who graduated from WAA and one currently enrolled in WAA. Also shared she is a resident in the Turtle Creek area. She shared she has a degree in Journalism and Communications with marketing and advertising experience. She voiced her concerns that WAA should be marketed as a charter school of the arts and to concentrate efforts on growing enrollment for students who want to attend an arts focused high school.

**Ms. Peggy Hobaugh, Parent** - shared her daughter's special learning needs and health issues. She commented how WAA teachers help her daughter with these issues and understand how to support which was unlike her daughter's former school.

**Ms. Mallory Grant, Former Teacher** - shares why she resigned from WAA due to the hostile work environment that Richard Fosbrink created at the time. She also shared that the board knew other concerning aspects about Richard Fosbrink and chose to do nothing about it. She called for the resignation of board president, William Pricener.

**Mr. Nick Lenz, Head of Performing Arts Department, Musical Theatre Teacher** - provided his support for a school of the arts and about his personal and professional ties to the arts. Spoke about his concerns about \$10,000 being cut from the budget for the annual spring musical that was always provided for the event in the past. Spoke about the importance of this money to support the annual musical.

**Ms. Janelle Miller, Parent** - shared how students want to attend WAA for the arts and not STEM programs.

**Ms. Marian Sefcik, Parent, read by Ms. Danielle Janicki** - *see Addendum E.*

Ms. Rhonda Olshanski asked if this is the time that the board responds to questions asked in public comment. Board President Pricener explained with help of Mr. Racanus that board members will not respond to questions.

## **2. Board Business - Mr. William Pricener**

Mr. Pricener spoke about how he does not utilize social media and commented about many people being keyboard gangsters that were calling for his resignation. Mr. Pricener commented that there are 4 people that he cares about and they each have the last name, Pricener. He commented that he loves this community and this school. He commented that he had secured \$11,000 in donations over this past school year. The most recent donation is paying for the air conditioning rental for Graduation and paid for a breakfast for the senior class. He commented that he has always worked in his career in a position of trust and that he had put trust in the wrong people. He stated that he sits at the pleasure of this board and if the board wishes for him to leave that he would. He also commented about how he thought it was terrible how she (Jill Regan) was attacked and almost crucified. That it was unfair for a woman who does nothing but try to turn this school's finances around. He mentioned she hasn't received any payment. Someone shouted from the audience that she was paid. Commentary went back and forth as to why Mr. Pricener did not know that. The audience member also requested a Budget with all line items. Mr. Pricener explained that the Administration posts board business/documents to the website not the Board.

Mr. Greg Jakub added comments following Mr. Pricener. He spoke about how he fought for the building and the castle despite EASD's opposition. He spoke about being the mayor and wanting the school to succeed. He commented that the board members were volunteers and for people to show respect for the board members. He also stated that the board was given false information from prior administration. He said he takes the blame for believing the false information and now he has trouble sleeping at night. He continued to comment about how he has worked hard to keep the school open.

**a. Motion to approve the regular monthly meeting minutes held on April 3, 2024 VOTE**

<b>MOTION: <u>Motion to approve the regular monthly meeting minutes held on April 3, 2024 VOTE</u></b>			
<b>1st: Rayman</b>		<b>2nd: Hisiro</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**b. Motion for to approve the regular monthly meeting minutes held on May 1, 2024 VOTE**

<b>MOTION: <u>Motion for to approve the regular monthly meeting minutes held on May 1, 2024 VOTE</u></b>			
<b>1st: Jakub</b>		<b>2nd: Gibson</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**c. Motion for the approval of 2024-2025 Board Meeting Dates VOTE**

Dr. Lombard - What we have currently is July 3rd's meeting. I motion for a move for July 10th.

<b>MOTION: <u>Motion to move board meeting from July 3rd to July 10th.</u></b>			
<b>1st: Jakub</b>		<b>2nd: Kirk</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**d. Motion to accept the resignation of board member and board secretary, Dexter Hairston VOTE**

Mr. Pricener - I received an email from Mr. Hairston (read the email).

<b>MOTION: <u>Motion to accept the resignation of board member, Dexter Hairston VOTE</u></b>			
<b>1st: Rayman</b>		<b>2nd: Hisiro</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**e. Board Committees - announcement of board participation**

Dr. Lombard - following committees being added.

**i. Policy and Governance**

Gloria Rayman

**ii. Education/Student Concerns**

John Hisiro  
Linda Kirk  
Bernadette Gibson

**iii. Operations**

Greg Jakob  
Gloria Rayman

Mr. Pricener asked to be placed on committees where he would be needed.

**3. Financial Report - Amber Hinkle**

Dr. Lombard spoke on behalf of Ms. Hinkle who was unable to attend due to illness.

<b>MOTION: To Amend the Agenda to include a motion to approve the preliminary budget.</b>			
<b>1st: Jakob</b>		<b>2nd: Gibson</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

<b>MOTION: To approve the preliminary budget.</b>			
<b>1st: Gibson</b>		<b>2nd: Rayman</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**4. General Business**

**a. Motion to approve the updated WAA Wellness policy as presented. VOTE**

Dr. Lehew - We did approve a wellness policy before the state review. They recommended we add a few policies that are typical. There were edits suggested to help us with compliance and get out of corrective action.

<b>MOTION: to approve the updated WAA Wellness Policy as presented.</b>			
<b>1st: Rayman</b>		<b>2nd: Hisiro</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**b. Services Agreement VOTE**

**i. Approval of the request to accept the educational services agreement between WAA and AIU Waterfront Learning Program Motion to provide specialized services for summer credit recovery courses**

<b>MOTION: Approval of the request to accept the educational services agreement between WAA and AIU Waterfront Learning Program Motion to provide specialized services for summer credit recovery courses</b>			
<b>1st: Kirk</b>		<b>2nd: Rayman</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**c. Motion to accept the donation in the amount of \$5000 from Tri-State Capitol VOTE**

Mr. Pricener - He also does the ITC. Next year, we're going to get a lot more than \$5000 through the AITC program.

<b>MOTION: <u>Motion to accept the donation in the amount of \$5000 from Tri-State Capitol VOTE</u></b>			
<b>1st: Kirk</b>		<b>2nd: Jakub</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

**5. Report from the School Administration – Dr. Kelly Lombard**

**a. Department Reports**

Lombard - asked that the teachers representing the respective departments share their reports with the board.

Gniadek - Gave an overview of recent events with Studio Arts and the Arts Fest.

Wingrove - Added a comment about student art work that people asked to buy at the Arts Fest and made a suggestion for the Castle Art Gallery to be used throughout the school year to display student artwork.

Mr. Ahlgrim - gave an overview about Literary Arts (book making/binding; field trips to CMU and Duquesne University and antique bookstore; student created portfolio of works; mentioned work related to the movie, Whiplash, and the annual Scrabble tournament.

Mr. Rob Shultz - gave an overview about Digital Arts (NYC mobile device film festival submission; collaboration with Dance department which produced a short film; WAM Tv; collaborations with Musical theatre senior workshop; and the hopeful creation of a school TV station with a news component with a special thank you to Don Marinelli.

Ms. Tolbert-King - provided commentary about the collaboration between Dance and Digital Arts that produced a short film.

Dr. Lombard - provided a brief English update - Keystone Exams and AP Exams.

Ms. Savannah Bruno - upcoming Volleyball tournament on the last day of school

Dr. Lombard - provided the Theatre Department and MT Department and Science department reports.

Mx. Travis Rigby and Ms. Very - provided the Music Department report.

**6. Recruitment/Marketing Report – Dr. Kelly Lombard**

**a. Current recruitment data**

Dr. Lombard - Recruitment report - 324 students. Recouped all of the seniors departing.

**b. Summary of current Marketing Plan in effect**

Dr. Lombard - Marketing Report presented - marketing for an arts focused high school that concentrates on the inclusion of human centered design practices, deeper learning competencies, and creative problem solving so that we are preparing our students for life after high school. Also mentioned that WAA is working closely with Dr. Anne Clark of the PA Coalition for Public Charter Schools looking to implement the High Quality Charter School framework this year. Also discussed the massive work involved in revamping the curriculum to ensure we are building a quality art program. Also the collaborative theme embedded into the professional development plan for the past year which extended into a deep dive within the Creative Arts department which led to an exploratory art major that contains all open electives; Adobe Certification for students, translates to a credential obtained upon graduation; NASA connection - Growing Beyond Earth; the organic origination of Technical Theatre which incorporates STEM concepts due to the concepts studied with Stage Lighting, Stage Sound, Stage Scenic Design, Stage Management, House Management, Production Management -we can promote all of the disciplines. We have created a marketing plan - 10 meetings, branding, rebranding our logo, graphic standard manual, when you see the color yellow it's informational, collecting stakeholder voice, parent reaching out to me working in a charter school system, head of performing arts and how they can partner with us, meeting next week, testimonials, digital media ad campaign.

Mr. Pricener mentioned that any leftover money from Tri-State Capitol be used for marketing but would receive their approval first to do so.

**7. Report from the Director of Special Education and Student Services – Dr. Debra Lehew**

Dr. Lehew - Applause for every single student - everyone participates in PBIS. She provided a summary of the year-long activities contained in this program.

**a. Student Activities – Senior Breakfast and Commencement**

**8. Personnel**

**a. Election of Summer Custodial Staff VOTE**

**i. approval of a request submitted by Dr. Lombard to elect the following staff for custodial work:**

**1. Jen Provins**

**2. Paige Parshall**

<b>MOTION: Approval of hiring of summer custodial staff.</b>			
<b>1st: Rayman</b>		<b>2nd: Kirk</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>



## **9. Parent/Family/Community Outreach**

### **a. Report from the FTO**

## FTO Report June 5, Board Meeting

In the last month the FTO has supported the school by:

- Providing a bus for the Gene Kelly Awards.
- Providing the Studio Arts Department with appropriate adhesive to be used in the castle
- Celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week by providing a breakfast and a lunch for our amazing teachers
  - Selling concessions and flowers at the Spring Musical and end of the year performances by the Dance and Musical Theater departments
  - Sponsoring the Basket Raffle and the Kona Ice Truck at ArtsFest

We are disappointed that many board members do not attend events in support of the students. In particular, we are sorry that none of the board members attended ArtsFest as you missed a great chance to see what it is our students do. Mr. McKenna could have learned a lot.

We ask that the Board provide the documents that have been requested through the FTO RTK request last month. The lack of transparency and additional time needed to respond to the request is concerning. We shouldn't have been put off for 30 days for documents that should be readily available. We also want to see detailed line items of the proposed budget. We want to know why Account Code 10-2515-330 or "Legal and Acct Prof Svcs" and "Fin Acct Svcs Prof Svcs" was increased from \$20K this year to \$175K next year. Why the increase? Is this paying for all of our new consultants? This is money that would be better spent on our students and it's mind-blowing that you just approved a preliminary budget without reviewing it!

The FTO continues to advocate for parent representation on the board. The FTO feels that clear qualifications need to be defined before adding new members. In addition, the process for adding new members should be defined and potential candidates should submit resumes for review. All candidates should be interviewed and determined by all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers & administrators, community members, and other board members.

The FTO supports WAA Unified and submits to the board the following letter: (read letter and submit to the board)  
- see Addendum F

Ms. Janicki - Letter read from Mrs. Sefcik, by Ms. Janicki - supporting the teacher's union

### **b. Summary of Parent Survey Results**

Ms. Colleen Kimberlin provided an overview of the Parent Survey Results:

- 10% response
- 87% respondents said they strongly agree or somewhat agree in math readiness.
- 90% strongly agree adequately in reading readiness
- 71% physically safe space for their children
- 81% emotionally safe place for their children
- Student Services - this is the number one reason my son attends this school. He still is emotionally
- Safer environment
- Improvement - sentiment coding, big categories
- Top 5 things that came out of this survey

Communications

- Transparency - security, decision making
- Lack of Communication,
- Last minute communication - cannot take action or cannot
- Insufficient Response from teachers and administrators
- Lack of Access to Grades

Improvement of Existing Programs

- Vocal classes
- Business side of the arts
- Engagement with arts organizations
- clubs and activities
- consistency in the classroom, downtime, study hall

Insufficient Response

- staff stretched too thin, respond, implement

Addressing Behavior in the Classroom

- known history of violence
- difficult to address
- disrupting the education of their students

Academic Improvements

- tutoring
- after school programs
- intervention
- life skills classes

Larger diversity of math classes

Student Wellbeing

- IEP Meetings, not having them
- Greater teacher awareness of IEPs and 504s and what decisions need to be made
- Mindfulness Incorporation
- Students are feeling like they don't have safe people, couldn't talk to anyone without

**10. Cafeteria/Food Service, Technology, Facilities, Buildings and Grounds, Security and Safety**

**a. Report from the School Administrator – Dr. Kelly Lombard**

Ms. Very gave the 23-24 school year discipline report.

Dr. Lombard - Grease trap issue, safety updates, castle move, chromebook collection/invoice for damage or non-returns

<b>MOTION: to ratify contracts, bills, and payroll.</b>			
<b>1st: Rayman</b>		<b>2nd: Jakub</b>	
<b>YEA: All</b>	<b>NAY: 0</b>	<b>ABSTAINING: 0</b>	<b>MOTION: Carried</b>

Ms. Savannah Bruno - requested that the board voluntarily recognizing union,





**Mr. Pricener** - We have to not look at each other as us and them. Everyone sitting on this board is sitting here for the best interest of the kids. I want to thank you for coming out today. You are heard. We have to adjourn.

## **12. Adjournment**

## **13. Executive Session**

**Mr. Jakub** motioned to adjourn the general meeting.

**Mr. Pricener** ended the general meeting at 9:03pm.

An executive session was held at the conclusion of the general meeting.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Monthly Board Work Session Meeting – June 26, 2024 @ 6:30pm**

**Monthly Board Meeting – July 10, 2024 @ 6:30pm (contingent upon Board approval of Board Meeting Dates)**

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### **Addendum A**

#### **Public Comment from Mr. Adam Ahlgrim, Literary Arts Teacher**

Hello everyone. My name is Adam Ahlgrim and I run the Literary Arts Department.

I want to take my brief moments to address the marketing grant and our federally protected right to unionize.

It appears the board is again trying the same tactic they did with culinary. And we know how that program failed due to a lack of resources. Namely, they seem to want to become a jack of all trades, which is another way of saying a master of none. This go wide strategy serves to spread resources to new areas in hopes of bringing more students here, but this is breadth and not depth, and you can't keep students or teachers in unsupported programs for long.

Instead, I suggest using the grant to issue a marketing budget to each program specifically for outreach. Our school is already known for art, and we teachers can use that to our advantage. As someone with a graduate degree from Carnegie Mellon, the robotics, computer science and stem center of the world, I ask you to trust us and give us the resources to use our expertise for the betterment of the school, rather than trust someone trying to sell STEM in Pittsburgh after 2014—a decade too late. Show us that you trust us more than a PowerPoint. It is not as Jill Regan rudely claimed last meeting that we're "artists and supposed to be open minded." Before being an artist, I'm a PhD candidate, published researcher, editor, and that presentation was little more than baseless platitudes lacking actual empirical evidence of success, and shouldn't those in the room who were hired to deal in numbers be expected to have caught that?

One more thing.

We've heard in numerous board meetings how much you care about this school. In those same meetings, in one breath you've mentioned how important teachers are to the school, and in the other, you've said multiple times how the plan moving forward involves listening to the teachers to see what we need to make this school as wonderful and healthy as we all believe it can be.

So now that a near unanimous number of faculty and staff have put in front of you that we believe in unionizing and having the voice you claim is so important to this school, recognizing our union would be the action that is louder than words.

We're on the side of this school, and to quote the great Pete Seeger, "Which Side are You On?" Thank you.

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**Addendum B**  
**Public Comment from Ms. Rhonda Olshanski, English Teacher**

My name is Rhonda Olshanski, and I am an English Teacher at WAA. I was hired in October of last year, after moving to Pitt from LI. I am certified in Eng 7-12 in both NY and PA, and a Library Media Specialist. There are a couple of concerns I would like addressed. I will start with the availability of public information about this Publicly-funded Charter school. The fact that there is no line item budget available - and by line item, I mean a standard line item budget that states explicitly what person or entity is being paid what amount is extremely concerning and potentially illegal. Several charter schools have been indicted for fraud due to a lack of public information and being able to match expenditures with receipts, including monies paid to family and friends of board members. In addition, every board policy and rule, every past budget, the charter, ALL THOSE DOCUMENTS should be made publicly available at all times. The Board members, their bios and qualifications, what training they have completed, should be publicly available. It's extremely concerning that none of this information is available ANYWHERE.

Next, we are a public school in Western PA. This area is extremely competitive for hiring and retention of quality educators. That is one of the reasons the Union is so important to be approved and acknowledged by the board TONIGHT. I would also like to discuss why we do not offer PSERS to certified teachers and staff. Offering both a Union and PSERS would ensure quality hiring and retention of the best available educators, ensuring that we are competitive not just in pay scale but in job security. A Union and PSERS offers prospective future WAA educators a solid foundation to want to teach here, to stay here, to retire here. One of the biggest issues with student retention is teacher retention, because without consistency in the classroom, the students do not feel a connection to his school. I am interested in the reason why PSERS is not offered, and what it would cost the school to offer it. I would also ask that the Board recognize and acknowledge WAA Unified. You have been asked to recognize us voluntarily, and I believe it's in your best interest to do so, and that there is no reason you should refuse or try to force our hand. We are united behind the American Federation of Teachers Union, as a faculty, as a staff, and the parents and community members are also unified behind us. It would certainly be a gesture of goodwill and support for you to voluntarily recognize a union that strengthens Westinghouse Arts Academy, since it is clear that the success of Westinghouse Arts means a success for you.

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**Addendum C**  
**Public Comment from Colleen Kimberlin**

As a business professional with over 25 years' experience on both the client and service side of contracts, I found Jason McKenna's presentation to be disturbingly vague. There are MANY gaps in his proposal. I am submitting my list of questions to you, which any qualified professional should be able to answer off the top of his head, and quite frankly, I would have expected to see in his pitch.

I want to specifically highlight that there is nothing on his website or LinkedIn that indicates any education or professional experience in marketing or recruitment of students. Why is he misrepresenting himself and to what end?

He told us he has never worked with a charter or arts school. How much recruiting experience could he have from working with schools where the pool of students is defined by residency. It is a very different beast to recruit from over 34 different districts and the considerations that go along with that.

You've indicated that we can be both – arts and STEM. Yet cuts are planned to our arts programs and no clear plan on where ongoing funding is coming for a STEM one. You are asking for our support without sufficient information. History at this school has shown that following the new shiny thing without due diligence leads to disaster. We cannot continue to lure kids in with no solid road map for how we will support them ongoing.

You want a shot at our support? Answer our questions. Put together a full statement of work with a financial plan BEFORE you vote on this. IMO, it would be a breach of ethics and trust.

I have repeatedly heard board members claim that they care more about this school than any of us do. That students and teachers will come and go, but you will still be here. That is incredibly offensive to those of us on this side of the table.

These are our children. This is their education and their futures. For many, this school has been a safe haven. It was supposed to be an important step in pursuing careers in the arts. Because of the mismanagement under the former CEO and the lack of oversight from this board, our children have been shortchanged. Personally, my child failed. Not by the teachers. Not Dr. Lombard. But by YOU having your heads in the sand. I have been sounding alarms since February 2022, which you ignored.

I am deeply concerned that all I hear about it is "the building" and "the community", which makes me worry that you only care that there IS a school in this building, in this community. Not that it is THIS school.

Caring about this would be investing in building up what makes it special and unique.

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**Addendum D**  
**Public Comment from Danielle Janicki**

When I addressed the board last month, I expressed my concerns over the board's continued absence of transparency & bad decision making as well as my distrust in our solicitor as I feel he's been guiding this board in the wrong direction. I feel that hiring Ms. Regan as a financial consultant is a conflict of interest given her position at Woodland Hills School District. You brought in Jason McKenna as a purported "marketing consultant" last week to present his proposal on incorporating stem/robotics into the curriculum. One of his first lines was "I've had lots of conversations with Jill on what we are trying to do."

Although Ms. Regan may be qualified to analyze finances, she is not qualified to weigh-in on curriculum at this school. This does not make sense. Just like hiring Jason McKenna doesn't make sense. He is not a marketing professional. He brought zero original ideas to the table. I have so many issues with his presentation, I'm not going to waste my time on it. But I will say this, Jason presented that competing schools in the region have similar programs to WAA, diluting our selling proposition. I beg to differ, no districts in the suburbs of Pgh, especially the eastern suburbs, have what we have to offer - Lincoln Park is over an hour away and CAPA is only tuition-free for PPS students. However, 94% of districts within a 30-mile radius of Wilmerding have a STEM/STEAM curriculum and 66% already have robotics programs available. STEAM/Robotics is not a differentiator for our school and does not naturally tie to our mission.

What's more troubling is the fact that only 2 board members attended his presentation and one left early. This tells me a lot about the engagement and commitment of this board. The impression I get is that most of you just fall in line and vote for whatever Mr. Pricener tells you to, and Mr. Pricener votes for whatever the solicitor and now Ms. Regan suggest to him. Mr. Pricener, you seem like a nice man, but you are failing in your leadership of this school. Under your watch, we've had 2 CEOs leave because of mismanagement, but you are the oversight and let it happen – twice! It's time for you to do the right thing and step aside.

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**Addendum E**  
**Public Comment from Marian Sefcik, FTO President and Grandparent**

I was pleased to see that there was no agenda item for a vote on the Jason McKenna presentation as only 2 of the Board members attended the working session and 1 of those members left less than halfway through the presentation.

In reference to the presentation itself, I found it interesting that the first agenda posted showed his presentation to be about Vex Robotics and then suddenly it was changed to Marketing Consultant. In looking at Mr. McKenna's credentials I see none showing any marketing education or experience other than to sell the Vex program. His teaching background is all at the elementary level and while he has a degree in curriculum his only curriculum development is connected to Vex platforms.

I question our need to spend money once again on a consultant for positions that we have already in place. We have a Business Manager, yet we hire a financial consultant, we have an outstanding principal with years of curriculum development, yet we propose hiring a curriculum consultant, we have a marketing staff yet again we want to hire a marketing consultant. We have parents currently working in the marketing field that have offered their expertise for no cost but let's spend \$15,000 to implement a marketing plan that simply wants to put robots in our school. Instead, why don't we use some of that money earmarked for marketing to pay for a booth at the Three Rivers Arts Festival or the Market Square Christmas Market where our students' work can be shown, and we can advertise our school. Our students are our greatest marketing resources.

The Board continues to rubber stamp any new idea that comes along. In 5 years of attending Board meetings, I have never seen anyone vote against anything proposed and it's very rare for anyone to ask for discussion on a proposal. We need an invested Board, not sheep following silently along. While I am sorry to see Mr. Hairston resign, here is the opportunity to appoint a qualified parent to the Board. I also advocate for bringing on members who are qualified professionals who have no personal relationship with existing members to ensure that they will have the courage to ask tough questions and challenge this board to make sound, thoroughly vetted decisions.

In closing let me offer my full support to WAA Unified. I believe it is in the best interests of our staff, faculty and students.

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**Addendum F**  
**FTO Support of WAA Unified from Marian Sefcik, FTO President**

June 4, 2024

Board of Trustees

Westinghouse Arts Academy

320 Marguerite Avenue

Wilmerding, PA 15148

Dear Board Members of Westinghouse Arts Academy,

On behalf of the members of the Westinghouse Arts Family Teacher Organization, I am writing to you today in support of WAA Unified, the teachers and staff forming a union and moving forward to collectively bargain a contract.

As members of the Westinghouse Arts Academy community, we see the impact that the educators and staff have on our students. We witness their commitment to our children daily by going above and beyond to ensure that they are successful, often selflessly purchasing their own supplies and putting in additional hours

We believe that formalizing the relationship between the school and the teachers and staff will bring stability and provide a foundation for building shared goals for our children therefore we support WAA Unified's ability to unionize. We believe that this is a positive step for the teachers and staff to partner with the board

We urge you to voluntarily recognize the teachers union prior to the election so that we do not waste school resources on anti-union attorneys The FTO does not support that use of funds because it is inconsistent with Westinghouse Arts values This is a time for us to come together and move forward in a positive direction by establishing a formal agreement and structure that will last beyond individual teachers administrators and board members

Sincerely,

Marian Sefcik

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

7/23/2024

\_\_\_\_\_

Board Secretary



