

Board Retreat 2526SY COA

Day 1: COA Board Agenda

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM: Arrival and Breakfast

- Welcome and informal networking over breakfast.

Notes: John opened the meeting with saying hello to everyone, thanking the Board for being present and outlining the agenda of the day. Staff that were present said hello to the Board during the morning.

Present: John Pallasch, Eric Mack, Dan Martin, Annie Polvinen, Kristen Bell, Betsy Carpentier, Candice Dennis, and Pam Sieger.

Pam held her morning huddle which the Board heard as they were entering the Board meeting room. Present from admin was Kanisha Morman, k-5 principal, Brad Scott, k-8 head principal, Katie Gomersall, 9-12 principal, and Jackie Reed: academic administrator for special programming. The admin team shared what their goals were for the year, which is student engagement, student attendance improvement, student learning, state accountability improvement.

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM: Opening Remarks

- Introduction by the Board Chair.

John had the Board members share their focus for the school year.

Annie: newer Board member. She has 3 children attending COA. She would like to see classroom observations and be able to email teachers to tell them about issues she may be seeing in the classroom. She would like to bring them back to the Board.

Kristen: She believes in quality over quantity and appreciates self-imposed caps. She would like to boost parental involvement and engagement and would like to be a part of this mission. She believes there can be a disconnect between parents and teachers and would like to give parents a voice.

Dan: He would like to see quality increase at the school and appreciates the self-imposed cap. He wants to ensure we do what is needed to not receive an F, unsatisfactory rating, this current school year and would like to be involved in the improvement plan.

Eric: He would like to look at our data for the improvement plan, particularly in math. He would like to see test scores and resources being used for students to ensure we are

helping them prepare for learning. He would like resources to be added that are needed and to have the Math interventionist start as soon as possible. He would like to define where the greater needs are and to drill down on test scores and keep caps in place.

Candice: newer Board member. She would like to be involved in family engagement especially in the online platform. She wants to ensure that students are engaged and would like to offer help on what teachers can do to make students want to be in the classroom. She wants the focus to be on student engagement. She believes a “power hour” combined session with other teachers will help students engage.

- Overview of retreat objectives and agenda.

Pam discussed the objectives and agenda of the retreat.

Pam called Adam Hawf into the meeting for Adam to be formally introduced to the Board. The Board members introduced themselves to Adam and Adam thanked the Board for their work with COA. Adam shared that he believes the school will be successful and that Stride is working with COA to offer support for the state accountability improvement plan written by Pam. Adam asked to be brought back in at the end of the day to hear the summary of the day. Pam will be calling Adam at 4:30 via Zoom.

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM: Board Session

- Conflict of interest agreement review for 2526SY.

Pam had Demi McGloin share the Docusign for the Conflict of Interest form to be sent to Jackie Reed to have the Board members sign the document.

- Presentation on current strategic plan.
- Group discussion on vision and goals for the next school year.

Pam had Ben Gerhardt, state accountability specialist, Kate Harkless, research data analyst, Marie Izquierdo, value driver COO, and Jenn Lewis, portfolio academic administrator log in to discuss data and the state accountability with the Board.

Ben: Reviewed SC Ready scores for 3-5 and 6-8 and the F rating, unsatisfactory data. He discussed points based on how students' score and how to get students out of the lower points. He asked why students are not performing better and how do we get students moving? He shared to work with best practices and monitor growth. He said to move students out of level 1 who earned a 0 and move them up.

Marie: She said that there must be fidelity with the interventions being used which is iReady for k-8 and IXL for 9-12. She said these are great programs when teachers are ensuring that students are using the programs with fidelity with the right dosage. She shared that teachers need iReady training and to get support with IXL. She said students should be using iReady for 90 minutes (about 3 hours) a week for tier 3, 60 minutes a week for tier 2, and 45 minutes a week for tier 1 for math and for reading.

Kate: She shared that time must be spent in class connecting with students to ensure they are learning. Tier 1 instruction must be engaging and there must be active student learning. She said to get the prior year results and to compare that with iReady BOY and IXL BOY to best serve students. Kate shared that there must be WIGs: wildly important goals which are attendance, iReady participation, and growth. She said principals must set goals to show growth.

Jenn: She shared that she has seen growth and change from last year to this year. She said teachers were ranked based on experience and observations in the online platform and that she is spending time observing teachers. She does walk-throughs and provides training for new teachers. The goal is to have teachers use time carefully and to ensure there is active student learning.

11:00 AM - 11:15 AM: Break

11:15 AM - 12:30 PM: SWOT Analysis

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis.

Pam shared that the school's strengths are the cohesion of the leadership team and that students are being put first. The school has a self-imposed cap, and work is being done to ensure there is efficacy to the improvement plan. Student attendance, low assessment performance, and lack of parental involvement are weaknesses at the school being addressed. There is extreme accountability with attendance and there have been over 300 withdrawals to date mostly due to 10 day (about 1 and a half weeks) no shows and truancy.

- Current iReady review.
- iReady for reading, Thrively for durable life skills (HOM), Tallo.

Pam had Tracey Lee, Reaching Coach/MTSS Coordinator, share the iReady results from BOY with the Board in person. Tracey shared that students are struggling more in Math than Reading; however, there is a need for both. She shared what her role is and how she

supports teachers who instruct students in the classroom. She discussed how iReady is being used for k-8 and IXL for 9-12.

- Alternative Education School. (moved to Tuesday)

12:30 PM - 1:00 PM: Lunch

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Review of programs

- Review of current programs and initiatives, and effectiveness.

Pam reviewed the current programs being used at the school which are iReady, IXL, and Thrively to build durable life skills. Pam reviewed initiatives and the effectiveness of the programs when they are used to fidelity.

Pam had the admin team discuss what is working well and any issues they are working through in a Teams meeting with the Board.

Brad: He shared that we have new teachers with positive attitudes who are putting kids first. He said engagement has increased and cameras are on in class. He shared that the culture is being set and he is making calls home to ensure students/scholars are learning. He is having teachers use exit tickets aligned with the state blueprints to track student mastery. He said the issues are overall engagement and too much teacher talking in the classroom which he is addressing during his check ins with teachers. His goals are to increase iReady usage since middle school is low and address students who are not attending small groups. He is having incentives and competitions to increase engagement. He is calling home, meeting with parents and students, and having grade level team meetings.

Kanesha: She has changed the way small groups are being held since many students are not returning in the afternoon. She is pulling small groups within the main classroom to have teachers work with students. IReady usage is increasing and she is having teachers use the program throughout the week with students. We are now required to use Zearn from the state and students will be required to use Zearn and complete 3 lessons a week in Math for k-8 grade.

Jackie: She said that special education and programming is compliant. IEPs are on time and the teachers are up to date with training. She said that teachers are working foundationally as they are still learning and focusing on IEP goals. We no longer have DCAPs in Special education.

Katie: She shared that her glows are that we are on track for 77% graduate rate this year with a goal of over 80% with 3 students she is watching. Teachers are making contacts at

home, having daily office hours, and counselors are checking in with students. She said that 65% of cameras are on in high school and that gradebooks are up to date. She said that teachers are overseeing credit recovery to ensure students are on track to graduate. She said the issues are student engagement and scoring proficiently on the EOCs.

- Testing update for in-person requirements.

Pam called Kelsey into a Teams meeting to update the Board on all things testing at the school since the school is on a tier 3 plan. Kelsey shared that there is positive family interaction about testing and that we are on track to test over 95% of students for KRA: the kinder assessment. Note that we ended up with 98% tested. She said the biggest concern is getting students to testing and ensuring that students do not rush taking the assessment since many last year went through the assessment quickly and earned 0's on the SC Ready. She said that parents must buy into the assessment and many do not.

- Playbook updates.

Pam shared the playbook updates with the Board as well as the LALI: leading and lagging indicators. Students at the school were at a 71% passing rate with 52% passing all classes. The withdrawal rates were high due to the 10-day (about 1 and a half weeks) no show and the truancy rates. Pam shared that the iReady usage went up from last year's tool: Mindplay; however, more work needed to be done to increase this rate.

- LALI: WDs/attendance/passing/engagement/HS graduate rate.

Pam had Craig enter the Board meeting room to discuss truancy and withdrawals. Craig shared that there are many 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) no shows and that students were already showing truancy. He explained the process of working to win back students and that calls are made at home, as well as texts and emails. He shared that attendance is on track in PS and that interventions are in place. He shared that there were Engageli and Canvas integration issues, but that work was being done to correct this and the attendance issues they were seeing with the integration. He said that he and Kaleta, our attendance specialist, are working to ensure students who are transferred out have the new school listed in PS.

3:00 PM - 3:15 PM: Break

3:15 PM - 4:30 PM: Financial review and planning

- Presentation of current financial status. Scott Sides, Portfolio Vice President, attended the Board meeting in person at 2:30.

Pam briefed everyone on the finances at the school. The student funding went from .65 to .50 though Stride finance prepared for this. No teachers were let go and the student to teacher ratios were lowered from last year. Betsy shared that lower ratios are a requirement, and she said this will help with student learning. Pam shared that the Math interventionist position was posted and that Brad is working to find a highly qualified candidate. Betsy wanted to ensure that the Math interventionist would work with teachers.

- Discussion on budget priorities and funding strategies.

The priorities are to stay on budget but also to ensure that the school has what it needs to instruct students and make sure that professional development is provided to teachers.

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM: Wrap-Up and Reflection

- Summary of the day's discussions.

Pam called Adam back into the Board meeting to hear the wrap up and reflection of the day.

Candice shared that she believes that things are getting better at the school and the administration team is working well together. She believes that the right people are in the right positions. She said she is confident that that school will succeed. Her goal is to ensure that Canvas and PS issues are rectified.

Kristen shared that the school is much better than last year and good hires have been made. She is confident things are better, and there is evidence of this in student learning and the school's culture, and Pam is doing a great job. Her grow is to increase parental involvement and accountability.

Dan shared that he is happy the school is now receiving support from Stride and there is a team effort like from the meeting with Ben, Kate, and Marie. He said the administrative team is working well together and he is confident that the school will succeed.

John shared that there is good structure in place and the right leadership team is present. He appreciates the support Stride is now providing to the school. He shared that plans have been created which identify the pain points. A grow is to be more proactive from last year such as ensuring students were using the camera and receiving Stride support.

Eric shared that the collaborative sessions of the day and hearing from Stride were informative. He shared that he believes the school will be successful this year.

Annie shared that the school feels new this year compared to last year when she and her children first started with COA. She said she can see there are investments being made to improve the school. She appreciates the way things are being handled this year compared to last year. Her area of growth or concern is the minimal parental engagement and that parents need to be more involved in school.

Betsy shared that we need to put high emphasis on student growth. We need to meet growth targets to improve our school progress. We need to have administration share with teachers the school growth to then share out with students and parents. She shared that there is administrative support to Pam and appreciates this. She wants PreK added to the 2627SY and to discuss this at the October board meeting.

- Open floor for additional comments and reflections.

Adam thanked the Board for their work and dedication to the school. He said he appreciated the time they took to be present and for helping Pam and the school. He believes the school will be successful and is watching the data and growth at the school. The Board thanked Adam for his work and for ensuring that there were self-imposed caps at the school. Scott agreed with Adam and the Board.

Pam thanked the Board, Scott, Betsy, and Adam and closed the meeting at 5:02 pm.

5:15: Dinner and Social Event at local restaurant: Bone Fish

- Dinner at Bone Fish in Columbia from 5:15 to 7:30.
- Opportunity for informal networking and team building.

Day 2: Governance and Operational Excellence

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM: Breakfast

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM: Role of Governess and board passions (John Payne visit)

Recap

- Role of the board: evaluators of outcomes against our outcomes.

John discussed the role of the board with John Payne, Chief of External Board Relations at the District, and the Board, Betsy, Scott, and Pam.

Pam asked everyone to introduce themselves to John Payne and to share their background and the “why” behind joining the Board or the affiliation with the school.

Annie: 3 children attending COA. She knows Kristen and wants to be a part of the Board and help to increase parent engagement. She believes there is a strong connection between the classroom and what the Board can do.

Kristen: original board member. She shared that she has seen tremendous growth in the school. She is a PTO president and her “why” is school choice for parents and families.

Dan: original board member. He shared how charter schools helped his niece when she went from her local brick and mortar school to the online platform.

Scott: Stride portfolio academic administrator. He was once an Executive Director at Stride and moved into this role supporting a portfolio of schools. He oversees academics and compliance for the schools he supports, which includes COA. He and Pam work together.

Candice: new Board member. She applied because she is passionate about education. She works in higher education and believes in parent involvement and accountability in the child’s education.

Betsy: Board attorney who works closely with John Pallasch. She has been practicing law for 20 years. She was at the SCDEO for 20 years. She retired in 2023 but continues to work to help support charter schools.

John: original Board member. He oversaw the workforce development/Job Corps. His passion stemmed from seeing students unable to access education during COVID and explained how they had to work quickly to get computers and hot spots out to students. He wants students to have durable life skills so they can find a good job and be successful.

Pam: started teaching for a K12/Stride school in 2012 and moved into a Special Program Coordinator at another Stride school where she met Scott. She became Scott’s trainer and his Portfolio Academic Administrator. She is now his ED at COA and wants students to be successful and for the school and team to put students first.

John Payne: He was previously elected as the Board chair at a charter school. He became part of the District Board in 2015 and works closely with the District. He has been with Erik Norton for 9 years and Chris Neeley for 5 years.

9:50 AM - 10:00 AM: Break

10:00 AM – 11:30 PM: Policy Review and Development

- Higher functioning Boards:

John Payne shared that high functioning Boards excel at what they do. They have a clear vision, mission, and have a “why” for joining the Board. Many have accomplished backgrounds and can contribute knowledge and experience to the Board. Boards help to carry functions out for the school. The Board should follow the policies, vision and mission, budget, academics, and work closely with the Executive Director: Pam.

The new Board members should read the Charter Act, FOIA/Sunshine Law, and attend the October 30 in-person Board training. John said that invitations will be sent to new Board members from the District office. Pam will forward to the Board members. He said it is not necessary for other members to attend but that they can attend as can Pam.

John shared that Board meetings need to be posted on the door and within 48 hours on the website.

John shared that Board goals should be to keep up with finances, cash on hand and academics.

- Alt Ed/Prek4/Alt-ed School:

Pam shared that the date to write the Letter of Intent to open an Alternative Education school is on November 1, 2025. February would be the date to have the application completed to forward to the District for consideration.

Scott shared that he talked to Erik Norton at the District about an Alternative Education school and the need to have one even this current school year. He said a meeting with the District is needed to discuss their viewpoint on an Alt Ed school. John Payne said that we must come prepared to answer if we have done everything we could the last two years to ensure that students had what they needed to succeed such as but not limited to, high teacher accountability, consistency in administration, tools needed to succeed, parent engagement, consistent communication, and consistency in the Executive Director.

There is interest from the Board to have an Alt Ed school for 9-12 grade during the 2627SY. There is interest from the Board to have a PreK program during the 2627SY. There is interest from the Board to write the Letter of Intent for an Alt Ed school next year by November 1, 2025.

Pam will add to the October Board meeting to vote on the Letter of Intent and PreK interest for the 2627SY.

- Development of action plans based on retreat discussions. Assignment of responsibilities and timelines. Summary of key takeaways.

John Pallasch wants students to have durable life skills and to ensure this is built into the curriculum. Pam explained Thrively and Tallo and how Thrively is used as the school's Social and Emotional Intelligence platform building durable life skills and also teaching staff and students the 16 Habits of Mind.

Pam shared the Thrively website and explained how students are using this platform for teachers to learn about the students, their needs, interests, passions, concerns, and hope on an Individual level.

Pam explained that Tallo is used in High School to build relationships within their communalities and to prepare them for post-graduation.

John is passionate about getting high school students to engage with local communities and teaching student's workplace skills and creating multiple pathways for student success. We need to create options such as the workforce, universities, trade schools, technical schools, and the military. There are state and federal programs to help high school students.

- Individual board passions and goals for engagement.

Annie: would like to have a yearbook committee, graduation committee, morning announcements run by students, event calendars sent in advance, and a prom.

Kristen: would like to be a part of community engagement and to ensure communication is happening with families. She would like COA to look at the whole child and prepare kids for life. She believes COA will do well this year.

Dan: would like to ensure we are educating students and offer dual enrollment. He would like to see vocational schools and helping students be prepared for the workforce. He is convinced that COA will do well this year.

John Payne: would like to offer his help and support. He encouraged us to attend the District board meetings the 2nd Thursday of the month.

Betsy: offered help and support with FAFSA, the report card, and meeting the growth target. Scott said that Brandi Beavers, Support Analyst/Grants Coordinator at COA, could put the data together. Pam reached out to Brandi and called her into a Zoom meeting.

Brandi said she can put this together and said she would work on this and get this over to the administrative team to disseminate it to the teachers and then to the students.

John Pallasch: wants to ensure we get students out to in-person testing and that we improve our state report card. He wants to ensure we follow up on everything we discussed at the Board retreat and that we create a data/action/outcome with our major points such

as parent engagement, iReady usage and professional development, student attendance/engagement/cameras on, and report card improvement. Pam to create a D/A/O for each point to share with the Board and administrative staff.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Working Lunch: Technology and Innovation/closing remarks

- Final reflections and closing by the Board Chair

Pam called Jasmine Cox, Customer Service Manager from Thrively, to give a 15-minute presentation on Thrively. Jasmine and Brandi attended the Teams meeting and Jasmine walked the Board, Scott, Betsy, and John Payne through Thrively and the “What’s Strong with You.”

John closed the session by thanking the Board for their time and Scott for his partnership, John Payne for the District support, and Pam for putting the retreat together.

The day ended at 1:33 pm.