



## Youth Connection Charter School Board Meeting

**5/1/2025**

**5:30 P.M.**

**VIRTUAL**

TYPE OF MEETING	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING CALLED BY	President Molina called the meeting to order at 5:32p.m.
OPENING REMARKS	Welcome
PUBLIC COMMENTS	None
ROLL CALL	<p><b>In attendance:</b> Mr. Luis Alejandro Molina Alanis, President, Dr. Laura Ruth Johnson, Vice President, Mr. James Lyles, Treasurer, Angela Gibson, Secretary, Dr. Fabricio Balcazar, Senior Advisor, and Members, Dr. Richard Blackmon Jr., Dr. Jermaine Morales, Mr. Arthur Ward, and Ms. Christine Bowden.</p> <p><b>Absent:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>A quorum was present.</b></p>
STAFF	<p>Sheila Venson, Executive Director, L. Vaughn, G. Carrera, A. Buabeng, T. Brown, J. Whitenhill, K. Hopson, C. LaGroon, A. Ballard, G. Alejos, C. Rallins, Y. Thomas, J. Scott, E. Morrow, A. Boutte, T. Land, L. Hardin</p> <p>Campuses/Others: James Hurlburt, Latino Youth High School</p>
AGENDA	Opening Remarks, Public Comments, Roll Call, reading of 3.27.2025 Board Meeting Minutes, 5.1.2025 Executive/Finance Committee Report, 5.1.2025 Facility Report, Financial Reports Ending March 31, 2025, 5.1.2025 Directors Report, Board Actions/Resolutions and Adjournment.

### Board Action

It was motioned to approve the 3.27.2025, Board Meeting Minutes:

Motioned by Member Lyles Seconded by Member Molina

There was or X was no discussion of the item.

Vote: In Favor 9 Opposed \_\_\_\_\_ Abstained \_\_\_\_\_

X Vote carried 9 Vote did not carry \_\_\_\_\_

### Executive/Finance Committee Report

1. CPS/Renewal Update: Renewal Conditions
  - a) Director Venson shared the Options network renewal conditions with the Executive Committee. The areas that YCCS did not meet were: Diverse Learners, EL/Bilingual The discussion continued with the contractual signage provisions that require signing the contract within 120 days of the March CPS board meeting. The continuous improvement area which remains unknown (with specifics) data that will be shared by the Options network, YCCS leadership will provide more details to follow upon receiving. The period was reviewed by the Executive Committee along with the challenges that YCCS face in obtaining certified EL/Bilingual staff for each content area where a campus has at least nineteen (19) students that meet the criteria for services.  
  
Next steps, YCCS leadership has requested to meet with Options to obtain the details around the conditions prior to receiving the contract. Charter contracts were on the Board agenda for April but were postponed until this month. The Executive Committee further discussed the Charter terms. Director Venson shared that the majority received 2 years, and INCS organized a rally to express their discontent with the renewal terms.
2. The Anti-Charter Resolution was shared by Director Venson, with the Executive Committee. An analysis of the resolution was discussed which adversely impacts charter autonomy, by including this in the contractual agreements of charter schools.
3. YCCS' Board Response to CPS' 2.3.2025 Response (to 12.19.2024 Board Letter to CPS) Update-Director Venson shared with the Executive Committee on the status of the response letter. She proposed that YCCS leadership halts the response until we learn more about the landscape of CPS administrative changes, DEI, politics, and potential loss of federal funding (i.e., Title I, School Improvement, etcetera.) YCCS had School Improvement Specialist from ISBE were terminated effectively last Friday because of the push back. Further discussion was had to inform the Executive Committee that letters were sent to school districts from the Trump administration requesting that they agree to remove all DEI initiatives, and if not, risk losing federal funds. YCCS leadership will continue to provide more details to the Executive Committee as information becomes available.
4. Progressive Leadership Academy (PLA) Relocation Update-Director Venson provided the status of the relocation, will not move forward due to the additional costs added to the lease conditions. Therefore, PLA will remain in its current location next school year.

### Personnel Update

5. YCLA Interim Principal Assignment-Director Venson informed the Executive Committee that Interim Principal Romainne Kelley (former YCLA Assistant Principal) as stepped up and will remain until the end of the school year.
6. Teacher Certification Campus Non-Compliance Report-Angela Ballard shared with the Executive Committee the current certified teacher status across the network which includes the vacancies and charter compliance

requirements-75% ISBE certified and 25% Charter/Alternative licenses. The specific campuses information was discussed including recruitment strategies, substitute teacher options, row your own programs, advertising, etcetera. Substitute licensure does meet the compliance requirement. YCCS leadership shared a sample non-compliance letter for the full board to approve. Director Venson shared the “other nuances” that may impact this compliance matter. The non-compliance campuses are PLA, Association House and West although they are (merging) with Greater West Town, this should be considered a transition year.

Next steps, letters will be sent to the campuses about the non-compliance meeting this on or before, September 2025. YCCS leadership will share further analysis with the full board upon completion. Additionally, a plan will be provided to the Executive Committee to include the strategies, non-compliance areas and resolutions.

7. Facility Report/Plan-Gersom Carrera shared with the Executive Committee the Facility Reports as required as part of the renewal for our seventeen campuses. The process was reviewed and discussed to include the findings based on, the categories along with the completion terms (years). The contractual conditions were also discussed including yearly repair costs and the 3-year term costs. The full reports are in the Executive Board folder. Next steps, YCCS leadership will contest a few of the findings on behalf of the campuses and provide evidence to support the contested items. The process is to provide Options an annual report of the facilities findings.

8. Severance (Workforce Reduction) Proposal-

Dr. Buabeng & Director Venson provided both the budget projections and the proposed severance plan with the Executive/Finance committee. Three projections were presented (in the Board Folder) for discussion given the enrollment trends. The context was provided to include the budget deficits, a resolution for improving enrollment that includes the YCCS’ leadership recommendation to invest in recruitment; budget cost cutting strategies, and severance action plan in the event of closing. Director, Venson, shared the severance categories, according to the Executive Finance recommendation this is based on the budget projection that covers all YCCS employees. Next steps-YCCS leadership will provide administrative provisions to share with the full Board, effective July 1, 2025, next month.

9. Board Elections Follow Up

#### Board Action

It was motioned to approve the 5.1.25 Executive/Finance Committee Report:

Motioned by: Member Lyles Seconded by: Member Gibson

There **X** was or    was no discussion of the items.

Vote: In Favor   9   Opposed    Abstained   

**X** Vote carried   9   Vote did not carry

#### Board Meeting

Overview:

- Meeting covered critical topics including CPS charter renewal, facility reports, financial projections, and potential severance planning
- Key challenges include low enrollment, teacher certification compliance, and potential financial constraints
- Board discussed ongoing recruitment efforts and maintaining educational quality

Key Action Items:

1. Monitor Northern Trust investment performance monthly

2. Develop administrative procedures for severance package by June 30, 2025
3. Send compliance letters to schools with non-certified teachers
4. Continue enrollment recruitment efforts with \$800,000 allocated budget
5. Prepare for potential financial challenges by 2027-2029.

The meeting addressed critical organizational challenges, focusing on strategic planning, financial sustainability, and educational quality maintenance across YCCS Charter Schools.

Key Strategic Discussions:

**1. CPS Charter Renewal**

- Received 4-year renewal with specific conditions.
- Challenges with CPS leadership transitions
- Ongoing negotiations for contract terms
- Potential political uncertainties affecting charter schools.

**2. Financial Sustainability**

- Current fund balance: \$15 million
- Projected fund depletion: 2027-2029
- \$800,000 allocated for enrollment recruitment.
- \$3.5 million reserved for potential severance package.
- Initiative-taking financial risk management strategy

**3. Operational Challenges**

- Low enrollment
- Teacher certification compliance issues
- Facility maintenance requirements (\$970,000 in repairs)
- Recruitment and retention strategies. Governance and Procedural Elements
- Roll call and quorum confirmation.
- Previous meeting minutes approval
- Board leadership re-election.

**II. Executive Reports**

**A. CPS Charter Renewal**

- Renewal conditions review
- Negotiation strategies
- Political landscape analysis

**B. Financial Management**

- March 2025 financial statement
- Investment policy review
- Severance package resolution
- Budget projections

**C. Operational Performance**

- Enrollment statistics
- Professional development updates
- Facility maintenance report

- Teacher certification compliance

### III. Strategic Planning

- Enrollment recruitment strategies
- Potential organizational restructuring
- Continuous improvement initiatives

### IV. Closing Procedures

- Key decision summaries
- Future meeting agenda setting
- Formal adjournment

### Critical Action Items:

1. Develop detailed enrollment recruitment plan.
2. Monitor teacher certification compliance.
3. Prepare severance package administrative procedures.
4. Continuing CPS contract negotiations
5. Review and update financial projections.

### Strategic Themes:

- Financial resilience
- Educational quality preservation
- Pro-active organizational management
- Compliance and strategic adaptation

The meeting demonstrated a comprehensive approach to addressing complex challenges facing the charter school network, emphasizing strategic planning, financial prudence, and educational excellence.

### Financial Report

Comptroller Buabeng presented Financial Reports Ending March 31, 2025, for review and discussion.

### Board Action

It was motioned to approve the Financial Reports Ending March 31, 2025:

Motioned by: Member **Gibson** Seconded by: Member **Johnson**

There **X** was or **\_\_** was no discussion of the items.

Vote: In Favor **9** Opposed **\_\_** Abstained **\_\_**

**X** Vote carried **9** Vote did not carry

### Director's Report

#### Membership Status Summary

*As of April 22, 2025 (see attached Accountability Summaries for Enrollment):*

- |                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| • Attendance Average | 64.38% |
| • Enrollment         | 2483   |
| • STLS               | 587    |
| • Lunch Compliance   | 92.61% |
| • Medical compliance | 94.04% |
| • YTD Drops          | 1427   |

#### Administrative

- PLA will remain at its current location due to new lease requirements that were not conducive to the school operations.

- YCCS met with all campuses to review facility findings by CPS architects.

### **Strategic Operations (SOD)**

*The Strategic Operations Department conducted the following activities:*

- Discipline data submitted to CPS.
- ISBE Employee information submitted.
- Facility Repair Plan submitted (5-year facility repair plan)
- Lottery Waiting List Submitted

### **School Improvement-**

**The SI Department is a collaborator for performance and school improvement planning for all seventeen (17) campuses.**

1. As part of the YCCS School Improvement conditions, we will provide Principal Rod Orrego-Lindstad, a Principal Mentor to assist with performance and school accountability for the remainder of the school year. Additionally, YCCS will meet monthly with the ASPIRA Leadership Team for the purposes of school improvement strategies, interventions, and progress monitoring.
2. YCCS reviewed the CPS Site Visit Reports with Principals during our Principal meeting held on Thursday, April 17, 2025. Principals were requested to identify any inaccuracies or conditions they did not agree with, for YCCS to analyze and organize any concerns to prepare and strategize for the next Options Network meeting.
3. The AIR Assessment debriefs will begin in May 2025 for the ten sites that underwent facility visits during this cycle. The ten (10) campuses are as follows: MLLA, West Town Academy, YCCS West, Sullivan House, Association House, Community Youth Development, Olive Harvey Middle College, CCA, Innovations and Aspira.
4. Providing ongoing tech support and progress monitoring assistance around the implementation of the YCCS-CIWP goals and initiatives. 3rd Quarter CIWP progress monitoring updates were completed on 4/17/25 and SY26 planning will be completed by 4/30/25.
5. Collaborating with principals on the implementation of YCCS performance strategies, interventions and supports.

### **YCCS New Teaching for New Learning Department**

#### **Voorhees University Graduation - May 3, 2025**

*YCCS proudly announces network staff from across the network that have successfully completed the Master of Education in Teaching and Learning program with a concentration in Education Systems Improvement:*

1. Percy Austin (SpEd)
2. Nia Anders (CYDI)
3. Eboni Bingham (CAHS)
4. Lloyd Coaker (SpEd)
5. Jesse Elsenbroek (YCLA)
6. Martha Franco (YCCS HQ - SOD)
7. Dominique Grant (SpEd)
8. Tanzania Henderson (CCA)
9. Maria Ledesma (LYHS)
10. Debbie Miles (Aspira)

11. Sonia Rocha (LYHS)
12. Michael Siebert (MLLA)
13. LaShandra Smith-Rayfield (YCCS HQ - T&L)
14. Wyshawnda Wells (SpEd)
15. Bardell Wilson (ASA)

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Violence

- Since the previous Director's Report, there has been one (1) student that was a victim of gun violence (Sullivan House - 1).

### **Board Action**

It was motioned to approve 5.1.2025 Director's Report:

Motioned by: Member **Lyles** Seconded by: Member **Gibson**

There was or **X** was no discussion of the items.

Vote: In Favor **9** Opposed \_\_\_\_ Abstained \_\_\_\_

**X** Vote carried **9** Vote did not carry

### **Board Action**

It was motioned to approve the Severance Pay Proposal:

Motioned by: Member **Balcazar** Seconded by: Member **Ward**

There was or **X** was no discussion of the items.

Vote: In Favor **9** Opposed \_\_\_\_ Abstained \_\_\_\_

**X** Vote carried **9** Vote did not carry

### **Board Action**

It was motioned to approve the re-election of the standing YCCS Board Leadership for a new term as follows: Mr. Luis Alejandro Molina Alanis – Board President, Dr. Laura Ruth Johnson – Vice President, Mr. James Lyles – Treasurer, Ms. Angela Gibson – Secretary, and Dr. Fabricio Balcazar – Senior Advisor.


Motioned by: **Unanimous.**

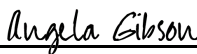
There was or **X** was no discussion of the items.

Vote: In Favor **9** Opposed \_\_\_\_ Abstained \_\_\_\_

**X** Vote carried **9** Vote did not carry

## Board Minutes Adopted: May 29, 2025

DocuSigned by:  
  
 Luis Alejandro Molina Alanis, President

Signed by:  
  
 Angela Gibson, Secretary