

**ADVOCATES FOR INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS, INC.**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**8550 Curran Boulevard**  
**New Orleans, Louisiana**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**August 13, 2020**

<b>MINUTES</b>
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Attending:

1. Barbara Crain-Major, President
2. Ora Wiley, Treasurer
3. Cheryl Beaco, Secretary
4. Debra Adams, Member

Absent:

1. Stephen Goodly, Vice President
2. Marcia McWilliams, Member
3. Ashley Dennis, Member

Staff:

1. L'Tanya Randolph-Bruno
2. Marietta Simmons, Para
3. Myia Carter, Teacher
4. Dana Clark-Williams, Teacher
5. Dana Durio, Teacher
6. Marlene Wade, CFO
7. Ashley Kelly, Teacher
8. Ashlyn Williams, Teacher
9. Austin Sonnier, Teacher
10. Brian Richburg, Parent Liaison
11. Beverly Castille, Teacher
12. Brie Merritt, Teacher
13. Brittany Bolds, Teacher
14. Cynthia Horne, Secretary
15. Devona Nicholas, Teacher
16. Esteller Brumfield, Para
17. Eddrinea Lindsey, Teacher
18. Elizabeth Stewart, Data Manager
19. Elsa Bellot, Teacher
20. Ina Lewis, Teacher
21. Kentrell Calhoun, Para
22. Karin Perrault, Teacher
23. Lynn Foy, Teacher
24. Maria Dominguez, Para
25. Tina Matthews, Teacher
26. Melissa Williams, Para
27. Alvin Hutton, Teacher

28. Brian Lindsey, Teacher
29. Karen Garner, Para
30. Shantrell Cook, Teacher
31. Willa Olive, Secretary
32. Nicole Simmons, Teacher
33. Phyllis Burns, Teacher
34. Shauntrell Demesne, Teacher
35. Shelby Evans, Teacher
36. Talyah Gilbert, Teacher
37. Tashan Parker, Para
38. Tamara Jones, Para
39. Terreccenia Rodney, Teacher
40. Sheila Gaskins, Teacher
41. Mary Gelis, Teacher
42. Martin Encalarde, Teacher

Guests:

1. Louvinia Wallace
2. Charmaine Sonnier
3. Karen Washington
4. Teedy Williams
5. Tynesia Fields
6. Lynn Polk
7. Dayna (Community member)
8. Brenda
9. Jerome
10. Deja (Parent)

I. Call to Order  
President Barbara Crain-Major called the meet to order at 5:38 p.m. once a quorum was established.

II. Revised Louisiana Open Meetings Law (COVID-19)  
Attorney Zanders read the revised Open Meetings Law related to COVID-19 pandemic guidelines approved by Governor J. B. Edwards.

III. **Approval of Agenda**  
Debra Adams made a motion to approve the agenda. Ora Wiley seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. **Approval of Minutes from the August 6, 2020 Regular Meeting**  
The approval of the minutes from the August 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting will be moved to the September 1, 2020 Regular Meeting.

V. Old Business

a. Reduction in Force Plan Process Report Ora Wiley, Chair  
Finance Committee

Ora Wiley reported on ideas and suggestions from the Finance Committee Meeting to implement the Reduction In Force Plan. All staff members will receive a letter of engagement; this is not a contract. No essential teaching positions were eliminated. These adjustments will allow for a balanced budget. Funds to support the second semester for Teacher assistants/Enrichment Teachers will be researched between October and December in a special projects funding plan to be led by the incoming Chief Executive Officer, Principal Deidra Bradley, and CFO Marlene Wade.

Ms. Bradley noted the current academic faculty consisted of 20 classroom teachers, 4 SPED teachers, 7 enrichment teacher assistants (one semester), 1 Instructional Coach, 4 support staff members, 8 para educators, and 1 secretary. This does not include the personnel with external funding or academic administrators. Finance, Business and CEO personnel are included.

Restructured Positions include:

1. Enrichment Coordinator in place of the Dean of Students
2. School Secretary in place of the Administrative Secretary
3. One Interventionist in place of an Instructional Coach

Eliminated Positions include:

1. One Clerical position (until all students return to the building)
2. Two custodial positions (may be replaced with part-time workers when students return to the building)

Several former staff members transferred to other schools and refused classroom teacher positions or other positions offered to them.

Salaries will remain the same. Fringe benefits will not change for anyone during the first semester. New positions will all be on the Moton pay scale.

- b. Financial Report Marlene Wade, CFO  
The CFO is working on a financial report to be finalized this week.

VI. New Business

a. **Removal of Resigned Board Members**

**Ora Wiley made a motion to accept the resignations of three Board Members. All three members completed more than their year of service, which ended with the 2019 – 2020 school year. Resignations were accepted from Stephen Goodly, Marcia McWilliams, and Ashley Dennis. The vote of the Board members was unanimous. Communications about legal final reports required by the Board of Ethics will be sent to them.**

b. **Addition of New Board Members**

- c. **Cheryl Beaco made a motion to accept the applications of five Board Members. The current AIS Board bylaws allow 9 members to serve. Resumes were circulated to the current board members and recommendations came from active members. Discussion ensued about the process of adding new members. The Bylaws will be posted on the school's web site for anyone who wishes to see them. The new applicants are as follows: Dr. Louvinia Wallace, Charmaine Sonnier (parent member), Terry J. Clay, Shadia Alvarez, and Debra Gould. The vote of the Board members was unanimous. Dr. Wallace and Ms. Sonnier were asked to begin serving immediately by participating in the Executive Session.**

d. CEO Interview Schedule

The first phase of the process is complete. 15 finalists could be presented for further conversations and interviews beginning with the top 4 recommendations. We have 50 applicants and no one has been eliminated. It is the Board's responsibility to hire the top administrator. Chief of Minds was hired to help with the advertisement of the position, recruitment of applicants on a national level, background checks and analysis of credentials and recommendations. The company does not hire the personnel. They are sometimes called "headhunters."

VII. Executive Session

Cheryl Beaco made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:08 p.m. Ora Wiley seconded the motion. The vote of the Board members was unanimous. Participants included attending Board members, Attorney Zanders, Assistant Principal Bradley, CFO Wade, and Board Consultant Smith.

- a. **Personnel Staffing Recommendations**  
**Individual being offered restructured positions and new salaries, a recall list for anyone being furloughed, and letters of appointment for the individuals accepting new positions were discussed.**
  
- b. **Principal's Evaluation**  
**The 2019 – 2020 Evaluation for the Principal was presented. If she desires, Ms. Tarynesa Williams can write a response that will become a part of the evaluation report.**
  
- c. **Acceptance of Principal's Resignation**  
**The Principal's Letter of Resignation dated August 10, 2020 was presented and discussed.**

At 8:17 p.m. Mss. Adams made a motion to end the Executive Session and return to the public meeting. Cheryl Beaco seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Cheryl Beaco made a motion to accept the Personnel Staffing recommendations based on the Reduction in Force Plan. Ora Wiley seconded the motion to accept the plan as presented. Following an explanation of the steps going forward to implement the plan, the motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Principal's Evaluation will be presented to Ms. Williams for her signature (receipt) by Mr. Zanders as part of her exit procedures. Ms. Williams will be allowed to add any written comments to the final summary. The results are confidential.

A motion was made by Ora Wiley to accept the Letter of Resignation from Principal Williams with considerations. Ms. Adams seconded the motion. The Principal's resignation letter is dated August 10, 2020, effectively September 10, 2020 and she wrote that she wanted to remain on the job for one month (30 days).

The current contract between the Principal and the AIS Board requires a 60-day separation notice from the Principal before a new school year begins. The deadline for such notice was April 30, 2020. The conditions for accepting the resignation/breaking the contract include the following agreements:

1. Ms. Bradley will make all business decisions beginning August 14, 2020.
2. Ms. Bradley will have authority to sign school documents and act in the position of Head of Agency.
3. She will be in charge of all day-to-day operations and communications for Moton Charter School.
4. Ms. Williams will work with a Transition Committee to ensure a professionally smooth and drama-free transfer of authority as she moves out of the school leadership position.

Ms. Williams' letter contains the following request, *"As a condition of my transition out, I am requesting that the board compile a list of all tangible and intangible things that will be needed from me at least 2 weeks before my departure. This will give me enough time to satisfy your requirements of the list."*

5. The Board authorized 10 days (August 21, 2020) pay –not 30 calendar days, beginning on the date of the letter, for the completion of unfinished tasks and accomplishment of all items on the list of requirements. Mr. Zanders agreed to be the AIS Board's point of contact during the transition.

The vote to accept the motion on Ms. Williams' **resignation with conditions** was approved unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

Dr. Wallace made a motion to end the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Ms. Wiley seconded the motion. With no comments remaining, the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

*Cheryl Beaco*

Secretary

*September 1, 2020*

Date

**Advocates for Innovative Schools, Inc.**  
**REDUCTION IN FORCE PLAN (RIF)**  
**Prepared for Robert Russa Moton Charter School**  
**August 4, 2020**

**Budget Reductions**

The Minimum Foundation Program which funds a school with state and local tax dollars, should be sufficient to staff and operate a school. We also qualify for and receive federal funding due to the economic needs of our students. When a school faces economic hardship, substantial reduction in pupil enrollment, or considerations related to financial management mandates, the Board may lay off teachers, para educators, school operations staff and other auxiliary staff. In anticipation of lower revenues due to COVID-19, decreased funding for the 2020-2021 school year, and excessive spending in the recent two fiscal years, the Advocates for Innovative Schools, Inc. is forced to make extreme adjustments to this year's school budget by determining what is most cost effective. The Orleans Parish School Board, our charter authorizer, has determined that our school is "not in good standing" due to "fiscal mismanagement."

**Financial Management Mandates**

In order for the school to be in good standing, i.e. fiscally responsible, and thus eligible for charter renewal, the school's instructional program must be supported by the MFP enrollment generated funds. If the budget exceeds the MFP, it must be balanced for sustainability. Excess funds, like cash reserves, can't be used to balance the budget and an RIF becomes necessary. Our school's population is not large enough to absorb the model staff we have created, including a support staff of eleven and eight enrichment positions. In previous years, the AIS Board was required to use emergency cash reserves for operational expenses. Continuing that practice means the school is not functioning well budget-wise. Kathleen Phelan, NOLA-PS Executive Director of Financial Compliance, has notified us that Moton is not in good standing and a balanced budget is mandated by September 30, 2020.

**Surplus Faculty and Staff**

When a decision is made to reduce the number of teachers or para educators at Robert Russa Moton Charter School, the Principal shall recommend the positions to be surplus. The process begins with a listing of employees defined as Essential or Auxiliary. Priorities will be considered based upon certification, degrees, evaluations and seniority. The people with the least building seniority on the Auxiliary faculty list shall be considered first as nonessential. Prior to official notification, the Principal will inform surplus staff in a confidential meeting. They will be identified and notified by the CFO of the reduction in force via Moton email and certified mail. The persons in question will have the option of accepting another assignment when available, or being dismissed. In the event that additional funding becomes available through increased enrollment or new funding sources, the surplus positions may be reinstated and the former staff members will be contacted to return to work in their former positions.

The return order will be based upon programmatic needs, as determined by the Principal's Recall List, positive evaluations, and additional objective factors. Non-academic staff will be reduced based upon similar guidelines, as determined by the Board, including observations and evaluations. In some cases, shifting of job responsibilities, job descriptions, workdays, and changing job titles will be necessary. Salaries that were redlined in the past may decrease when persons change jobs. The Robert Russa Moton Charter School Salary Scale will be used to determine how much the new job will pay. The bottom line is that Moton's budget must be in compliance by September 30, 2020.

### **Recall List**

The Principal will determine which positions are critical and most needed to provide academic support for students needs and create a Recall List based upon priority needs for the academic program. No position shall be filled by a new hire while an active recall list is in effect, unless no one is certified and a new certified person is available. The Recall List will remain active for the remainder of the school year. These difficult decisions will be made in the best interest of retaining the school for the future. No reductions will be made as a result of personal feelings. Moton does not give severance pay. However, the Board is committed to allowing employees to remain through the end of one pay period after they are notified that their positions have been eliminated. The AIS Board will approve the selection of all employees to be hired or surplused.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DETERMINING FACULTY REDUCTIONS**

1. Classroom teacher positions will remain the same number, or increase as a first priority, should additional students enroll before school begins.
2. Essential positions will be exempt from the reduction.
  - a. Principal
  - b. Assistant Principal
  - c. Social Worker
  - d. Nurse
  - e. Student Services Coordinator (Special Education Coordinator)
  - f. Federally and State Funded Positions
    - i. Instructional Coaches (2)
    - ii. LA-4 Teachers (2)
    - iii. LA-4 Para's (2)
    - iv. Parent Liaison
  - g. Special Education Service Providers
    - i. Special Education Teachers (based on student enrollment)
    - ii. Special Education Para Educators (based on I.E.P. requirements)
    - iii. English as a Second Language Teacher (based on student enrollment)
3. Certified Teachers have priority within their specific certified level assignment, teachers shall be laid-off in inverse order of seniority.
4. Masters degreed teachers have priority over Bachelors degreed teachers
5. Evaluation Results will be considered.
6. Qualifications for any vacant position will be determined by the administration.

