



Ακαδημία  
Πλάτωνος  
A Florida Charter School System

**Minutes of Special Meeting: Board of Directors, Plato Academy Schools Corp.  
November 19, 2020 – 1:00 PM  
Location: Plato Academy Clearwater**

**ATTENDEES (+ via teleconference)**

**Board Members**

Louis Kokkinakos – Chairman, Presiding+  
Chris Alahouzou – Vice Chairman (absent)  
Dr. Norrine Russell – Secretary  
John Petalas – Treasurer+  
Constantino Sotiriou\*

**For the Board**

Lisa MacCulgage – Attorney for the Board+  
Jeffrey Wood – Attorney for the Board+

**Participating Administrators**

Kathryn Apostolopoulos - Executive Administrative Assistant (Recorder)

**School Principals (As School Representatives of Campuses in Parentheses)**

Tonia Cunningham – Pinellas Park (St. Petersburg) +  
Stephen Donnelly – Largo (Tarpon Springs)  
Charity Edmond – Tampa  
Hayley Harris – Trinity  
Amber Sipe – Palm Harbor  
Karen Staab – Seminole (Clearwater)  
Sara Sutera – Clearwater (Largo, Seminole)  
Danielle Turro – Tarpon Springs (Tampa)  
Michelle West – St. Petersburg (Palm Harbor, Pinellas Park)

1. L. Kokkinakos called the meeting to order at approximately 1:04PM.
2. Public Comment: Hillary Kasarjian, Tracy Henry, and Rose Harnen expressed gratitude for the Board's recent decision to terminate Plato's contract with ECETA, and reminded the Board of their duties and responsibilities. Emily Ralston, Executive Director of Superior School's Early Learning and Childcare program, expressed concern over Superior Schools Corp. not being invited to take part in Plato's internal Schools of Excellence interviews. She noted the important and

collaborative relationship families have between Plato Academy Schools and Superior's Early Learning and Extended Childcare programs. Jenny Tsantilas, the CEO of Superior Schools reiterated the importance of an ongoing collaborative relationship between the two entities so that students and their families can be served to the best of their abilities. She further requested to be invited to take part in Plato's internal Schools of Excellence process in the future. Cherise Mejias expressed concern over Plato Academy Tarpon Spring's mask wearing and distance learning policies.

3. Approval of Strategic Planning RFP: N. Russell informed that one of the Board's duties is to have a strategic plan to guide the organization and she presented her draft of an RFP for Strategic Planning services. She noted that all Board members received the draft RFP from K. Apostolopoulos for review, prior to today's meeting. She also summarized the document for all the other stakeholders (Appendix A). N. Russell explained that per her research the project cost is not expected to exceed \$30,000. C. Sotiriou stated the cost expectation seems low in his opinion and he requested more information. N. Russell further explained there could be an increase in budget if necessary. C. Sotiriou requested a workshop to discuss the item further. N. Russell moved for the Board to approve distributing the RFP for Strategic Planning processes and services. **J. Petalas made a motion to approve distributing the RFP for Strategic Planning processes and services, N. Russell seconded, N. Russell, J. Petalas, and L. Kokkinakos voted yes, and C. Sotiriou voted no without a workshop, and the motion carried 3-1.**
  
4. Approval of Responsibilities of Board Secretary: N. Russell reviewed the current Board Responsibilities. She stated that she feels she could do a better job as a Board Secretary if she had the Board's approval to take on further duties and as described in the Proposed Board Development Responsibilities (Appendix B). She explained that her proposal to clarify these roles and responsibilities comes from her desire to see a high-quality educational organization thrive. N. Russell further explained her proposal is to simply create better policies and procedures for doing that work which can guide Plato in the open with transparency at workshops and at meetings. L. Kokkinakos asked if this is an item that needs a motion for Board approval. L. MacCulgage responded that while the stated responsibilities are not typical duties of a Board Secretary, the Board is able to make a motion to approve and appoint these responsibilities to the Board Secretary. **J. Petalas made a motion to approve the Responsibilities of Board Secretary, N. Russell seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**
  
5. Approval of Leadership Transition. N, Russell explained that the Board needs to have a plan in place for the leadership transition in the interim period between now and when a new Executive Director is chosen in the Sunshine. She further explained that someone one needs to be in charge of the day to day operations of the organization, and inquired about who would be fulfilling that role while the search is taking place for a new ED/CEO. L. Kokkinakos asked what responsibilities, beyond the ones the Board already holds, will be part of the role. He reviewed current responsibilities of each Board Member, C. Alahouzou - Personnel, J. Petalas - Finance, C. Sotiriou - Real Estate and Construction, L. Kokkinakos - Bond. N. Russell

noted she is not interested in this temporary volunteer position, which would result in additional responsibilities, becoming a paid interim position and acknowledges this would be a volunteer position only. L. MacCulgage stated that any Board member that conducts any type of activities, whether interim or long term, can not be paid under the law and that the Board may delegate these duties and responsibilities to N. Russell so that she can oversee and run the day-to-day operations in the interim. N. Russell noted that she does not feel that anyone in this position should be allowed to make any major changes, so that any decisions/changes that would have previously been brought before the Board for approval still continue to be. L. MacCulgage stated that if N. Russell assumes this interim position, she would still be considered a Board member sotherefor, Sunshine Laws would still apply. **J. Petalas made a motion to appoint N. Russell as Interim Leader. N. Russell seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.**

6. Approval of Amendment to Bylaws of Plato Academy Schools Corporation: L. Kokkinakos detailed the proposed amendment to the bylaws (Appendix C). N. Russell moved to have the Plato Academy Schools Corp. Bylaws in their entirety reviewed by a charter school expert and the legal team. J. Petalas inquired about what corporation is being referred to in the proposed amendments. L. Kokkinakos asked the legal team to verify if Plato is one corporation. L. MacCulgage answered that there are two Corporations associated with Plato Academy Schools. C. Sotiriou asked if each school would have it's own corporation. L. MacCulgage explained the schools would be under the one corporation, that the existing bylaws were amended in January 2020, that any future amendments to the bylaws would need to apply to any and all corporations apart of the organization, and that a workshop could be held at the next meeting to discuss the bylaws further. **J. Petalas made a motion to table amending the bylaws until a workshop can be held, C. Sotiriou seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**
7. Board Comments: N. Russell praised the principals for their dedication and asked that the Board be mindful of how to support them through this difficult year. L. Kokkinakos stated that he looks forward to the positive changes that are going to be made for the better good of Plato. C. Sotiriou echoed the sentiments of N. Russell and L. Kokkinakos.
8. L. Kokkinakos announced the next meeting will be in December and he adjourned the meeting at 2:05PM.

*Louis Kokkinakos*

November 19, 2020

Louis Kokkinakos

Chairman – Plato Academy Board of Director

# APPENDIX A

**DRAFT for Board Members**

## ***Plato Academy Schools Corporation Request For Proposal (RFP) For Strategic Planning Services***

***Deadline for Submission: December 15, 2020***

### ***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from consultants experienced in strategic planning to lead the Plato Academy Schools Corporation (PASC) Board of Directors, staff, and key stakeholders through a long-range (i.e., five-year) strategic planning process.

Specifically, Plato Academy Schools Corporation is seeking a consultant/company to provide the following services:

- Work with a Strategic Planning Team, composed of Board Members, staff, community stakeholders, and partners to articulate a clear strategic plan for PASC for 2021-2025. This plan should identify organizational and financial objectives for the organization to pursue over the next 5 years in pursuit of its mission. The current nine schools are high-achieving schools and the bulk of the strategic plan should focus on the larger organizational and business planning.
- Review Vision Statement and Mission Statement. Make sure they are consistent with current best practices.
- Identify internal and external stakeholders, with a focus on inclusiveness.
- Develop a timetable of implementation with specific measurable benchmarks, objectives and tasks to be accomplished to achieve goals. Identify clear, measurable outcomes for how to measure organizational and strategic effectiveness, impact, and success.
- Establish a framework and process for the organization's leadership to effectively implement the strategic plan and monitor progress toward achievement of goals and objectives.
- Facilitate all meetings and provide leadership, direction and expert consultation and advice related to the development of an effective strategic plan, including successful implementation.
- Deliverable should be a clear, easily consumed, strategic planning roadmap, accompanied by a strategic planning timeline, implementation and evaluation methodology in digital format.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Overview of the Plato Academy Schools Corporation:

- Is a not-for-profit organization
- Currently operates nine high-achieving K-8 schools across Tampa Bay, FL
- Has a rich history of Greek culture and language instruction
- Has a budget of approximately \$24.5 mil
- Has a total staff of approximately 350, with an exceptional team of school leaders
- Has a strong, experienced, high-quality partner in Superior Schools for early learning centers and aftercare programs
- Has active, excellent PTO organizations with strong leadership at all nine schools
- Fosters strong collaboration with parents at all nine schools
- Oversight is provided by an active board of well-qualified directors committed to the mission of serving students
- Additional information can be found at <https://platoacademy.net/>

***The mission of the Plato Academy Charter Schools*** is to assist students in achieving their full potential by requiring and nurturing high academic and behavioral standards in a safe, supporting, challenging, and enthusiastic environment, providing a well-rounded K-8 education fortified by a study of the Greek language and culture, and fostered by a commitment and cooperative effort among the school, students, parents, and community: our family.

***The vision of Plato Academy Charter Schools*** is to progress as a family in which all are teachers and learners and are empowered and encouraged to exceed expectations, resulting in successful graduates ready to advance into their next stage of life, equipped with a well-rounded K-8 education fortified by the study of the Greek language and culture, and excited about continuing to achieve their full potential.

## ***HISTORY***

### ***SCOPE OF WORK/MANAGEMENT ISSUES***

Scope of Work:

1. Review current Vision and Mission statements
2. Determine financial sustainability, addressing mortgages, financing, rents, fundraising, and possible expansion
3. Driving toward continuous process improvement in internal operations
4. Understanding and responding to the current landscape with regards to charter schools in Florida and preparing for the future trends in charter school education
5. Determining plan for expansion of schools
6. Public relations and marketing of the organization as a whole
7. Fundraising plans, including types of campaigns, where to begin, how to set goals

## **GLOBAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS & TIMELINE**

1. PASC is seeking proposals from applicants who are capable of addressing all of the above stated management issues and who can provide additional expertise to fulfill the scope of the project in collaboration with the organization and the community it serves. Primary focus needs to be placed on strengthening the organization as a whole, not improving school performance.
2. While PASC understands that completing this project requires significant and active Board and staff involvement, it is important to note that the applicant selected will be responsible for completing all project work products and final deliverables (e.g. writing organizational assessments, writing the actual strategic plan, etc.). The staff will not be expected to be involved in writing work project products or final project deliverables.
3. Applicants are to propose which aspects of the project will require Board and/or staff involvement and include the expected time requirements for all activities involving their participation. A demonstrated ability to stay on time is required. .
4. Proposals must include a clear description of the applicant's plan to complete all of the project components (i.e. in what order will the projects be completed, how long each component will take to complete, etc.)
5. Applicants must include in their project timelines "check-in" points for PASC and funder(s) to be provided with project status updates. As work products/deliverables are completed prior to the established check-in points, applicants will be required to send PASC and the project funder(s) these materials to facilitate the status update meetings and/or conference calls. The successful applicant will be responsible for setting up the check-in meetings/calls, preparing an agenda for each meeting/call, sending out meeting invites and writing meeting minutes.
6. In addition to the check-in meetings and/or conference calls, the applicant will be expected to present a status update on her/his preliminary findings and recommendations prior to writing the final project deliverables and strategic plan.
7. PASC will be responsible for implementing the recommendations from all final deliverables; however, it is expected that the consultant selected will provide the agency with ongoing coaching and implementation support as needed, per letter of agreement.
8. Final Report should be composed in such a manner as to be easily understood by a variety of readers. It is expected that the plan will make appropriate use of graphics and visuals. Appropriate files types would include but not be limited to PDF, slides, or video.
9. It is expected that the total cost for this project will not exceed \$30,000.

## ***EVALUATION CRITERIA***

In awarding a contract for consulting services to develop a long-range strategic plan for the organization, PASC will examine a number of factors and criteria will include:

1. The extent to which the proposal addresses the stated management issues and clearly describes the scope of work.
2. Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services.
3. Qualifications and experience of consultant/company in providing relevant strategic planning services
4. Availability for work to be conducted during January, February, and March of 2021 with a strategic plan draft presented to the PASC board no later than at their April 2021 board meeting.
5. Evidence of ability to stay on project timeline.
6. Usability and innovation of the final product proposed for communication of the Strategic Plan.
7. Project cost; it is expected that the total project cost would not exceed \$30,000.



## **APPLICATION PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

Please provide a complete written response to this RFP which is double-spaced and does not exceed 15 pages.

Proposals should include:

1. Title page  
(1 page)
2. Executive Summary  
(1 page)
3. Methodology: A description of the applicant's general approach to strategic planning consultation, including methodology, perspective, or philosophy that guides your work with organizations in this undertaking  
(approximately 4 pages)
4. Timeline: A list of project deliverables to be created with a detailed timeline for each deliverable and overall project completion  
(approximately 3 pages)
5. Budget: A detailed budget that breaks out expenses  
(approximately 2 pages)
6. Personnel: The credentials and qualifications of key personnel who will take responsibility for working directly on this project, including three references (approximately 2 pages)
7. Report: A description of the format of content of the final report  
(approximately 2 pages)

Please attach 1-2 example(s) of a finished strategic plan created by your company.

Applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal.

Please note that PASC will not return any proposals it receives and will not reimburse applicants for any costs they incur in developing their proposals.

Send completed proposals, by December 15, 2020, to Dr. Norrine Russell, Board Member, at [nrussell@platoacademy.net](mailto:nrussell@platoacademy.net).

# APPENDIX B

Draft for Board Members

## ***Plato Academy Schools Corporation***

### ***Board Secretary***

### ***Proposed Board Development Responsibilities***

For Board Review

#### ***1. Streamline communication between Board and corporate staff for Board Meetings***

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, Administrative Assistant*

- a. Create monthly PDF of all nine Principals' reports for Board Members
  - i. Create a process for those reports to be sent to the Administrative Assistant and compiled into 1 PDF document, "PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL REPORTS," for Board Members
  - ii. Administrative Assistant will send to Board Members at least 1 day before Board Meeting
  - iii. Copies will be available at the meeting
  - iv. Document will be shown on screen during meeting
- b. Create a common monthly report template for IT, HR, Finance, Admissions
  - i. Create a process for those reports to be sent to the Administrative Assistant and compiled into 1 PDF document, "OPERATIONS REPORT," for Board Members
  - ii. Administrative Assistant will send to Board Members at least 1 day before Board Meeting
  - iii. Copies will be available at the meeting
  - iv. Document will be shown on screen during meeting

#### ***2. Improve Technology at Board Meetings***

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, IT Director and staff*

#### ***3. Board Calendar***

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, Administrative Assistant*

- a. Create calendar of what needs to be done on an annual basis
- b. Create calendar of board meeting dates (to be done annually in July)

- c. Both documents to be included in Board Member Manual

#### **4. Board Training/Workshops**

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Consultant(s)*

- a. Create a physical Board Member Manual
- b. Set a schedule of Board Trainings
- c. Conduct board trainings

#### **5. Board Roles and Responsibilities**

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, Consultant(s)*

- a. Self-evaluation process
- b. Goal-setting process
- c. Use of committees
- d. Sunshine law and how to collaborate in the sunshine during board meetings

#### **6. Nominating Committee Procedures**

*Person(s) responsible: Board Secretary, Administrative Assistant*

- a. Identify desired KSAs and other qualifications for Board Members
  - i. Previous Board Service or volunteer leadership
  - ii. Previous volunteer experience with Plato
  - iii. Ability to commit 6-8 hours per month minimum and more when needed
  - iv. Desire to advocate for the best for Plato Academy schools and students internally and externally
  - v. Strong sense of ethics
  - vi. Well-developed abilities to work collaboratively and transparently
  - vii. Excellent communication skills
- b. Create an Application Process and online application
- c. Identify venues to meet prospective board members
  - i. Chamber of Commerce
  - ii. PTO
  - iii. Professional Networking Groups
  - iv. Greek organizations

***Annual Board Calendar***

January	Q2 CEO Performance Coaching
February	
March	Review all contracts
April	Q3 CEO Performance Coaching
May	
June	FSA Results Board Member Self-Evaluation CEO Performance Self-Appraisal
July	CEO Performance Appraisal by Board  Review Strategic Plan Set Annual Goal-Setting Board Member Goal-Setting CEO Annual Goal-Setting
August	Approve Budget
September	Review Audit
October	Q1 CEO Performance Coaching Out-of-Field approvals
November	
December	

## APPENDIX C

5.7 No Board member, for at least seven (7) years after resignation or removal from the Board, shall receive any compensation from the Corporation, directly or indirectly, including but not limited to for serving as an employee of the Corporation, or as an owner, partner, or employee of a management company of the Corporation or other vendor doing business with the Corporation, and shall not serve in any of those capacities.