



Members Present:

Patricia Sosa, Chair
Brahim Rawi, Vice-Chair
Margaret Yao, Secretary
James Moore, Treasurer
Yeshimebeth Belay (Mama Tutu), Member
Allison R. Kokkoros, Member
Bo Pham, Member
Vilma Rosario, Member
Hector Torres, Member
Johan Uvin, Member

Members Not Present:

Francisco Ferrufino, Member

Staff in Attendance:

Alejandra Amaroli, Communications and Development Manager
Kristine Dunne, General Counsel
Stacy Kirk, Executive Assistant to the CEO
Jerry Luna, Chief Financial Officer
Charlie Riebling, Assistant Director of Learning and Evaluation
Patricio Sanchez, Director of Learning and Evaluation

Guests in Attendance:

Jeri Fleming, Senior Manager, RSM
Tom Sneeringer, Partner and Client Service Coordinator, RSM

Quorum: Yes

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.

Minutes Approval (VOTE):

Minutes of the Board's December 4, 2019 meeting were brought forward for approval. Hector Torres moved to approve the minutes, and James Moore seconded. The December 4, 2019 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

FY19 Audit Report

CFO Jerry Luna introduced the School's new auditing firm, RSM, represented by Tom Sneeringer and Jeri Fleming. He shared that RSM has extensive experience with the charter school sector.

Tom and Jeri walked through the audit reports for the 2019 fiscal year. The School received an unmodified opinion, the highest level of assurance, that the consolidated financial statements are free from material misstatement. They mentioned that the previous approach to teacher salary accrual was deemed a significant deficiency, but not a material weakness. Hector Torres noted that this accrual method had been approved by the former auditing firm. Jerry Luna shared that the deficiency was

reported to the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and noted that the School's Financial Analysis Report to the PCSB was not affected, as only material weaknesses are reported on the report. The draft report was recently released, and the School earned 99 out of 100 possible points.

Tom described the School's liquidity position and noted that it is fortunate compared to other schools. Tom shared that having 90-180 days of cash is healthy, and that the School is currently closer to 180 days.

Jeri highlighted accounting standard changes adopted during the 2019 fiscal year. She then discussed new standards for 2020. Regarding revenue recognition, U.S. standards will now be aligned with international ones, including more specific criteria around conditional and unconditional grants, which Tom described to the Board. Johan Uvin asked how a multi-year grant would be recognized for recording differed revenues. Tom explained that it depends on the conditionality and described several potential scenarios.

Following their presentation, Tom and Jeri left the meeting.

Mid-Year Contract/PMF Goals Report

Director of Learning and Evaluation Patricio Sanchez shared the School's mid-year performance for various Performance Management Framework (PMF) indicators. He noted two flagged indicators, including attendance. He described that the current attendance rate is 87.6%, but historically the School has achieved 100%. Hector Torres inquired about factors impacting this year's attendance. Patricio responded that they are looking into what may be impacting attendance this year. A different cohort of students enters the School each year, so trends can change. He noted that the principals plan to reinforce the importance of attendance. In addition, the Harvard Street Campus is currently piloting a later start time for the morning session to assist with attendance, based on feedback they have received. Allison Kokkoros noted that this data is newly received, so further strategies to address attendance and other areas of concern will be determined in the upcoming weeks. She also noted that compared to other adult education programs across the country, the School's performance regarding attendance is outstanding.

Patricio then discussed the other flagged indicator, student progress in ESL courses, currently at 22%. He noted that this is a challenging measure each year. Patricia Sosa asked about strategies to boost this number. Patricio responded that teachers will examine data at the end of February and make classroom interventions. One factor impacting the data is that the morning session is smaller than the evening session, and evening students only attend four days per week instead of five.

Brahim Rawi inquired whether the School automatically places students in a session or takes their schedules into account. Patricio explained that students select the session (AM, PM, EVE) that works best for them, and if something changes with their employment, the School helps them shift to a different session whenever possible.

Hector asked how much the number of registered students per program impacts the data in the chart. Assistant Director of Learning and Evaluation Charlie Riebling responded sharing the weight of each indicator toward the final PMF score. They noted that when there are more students in a program, the weight of the applicable indicator is greater toward the overall performance in the PMF.

Charlie highlighted improvements for several indicators including persistence, which increased 12 points compared to last year. They also noted that spring pre-tests have not been administered yet, so there will soon be additional data to create a fuller picture of performance. Johan Uvin asked if there is any indicator of real concern compared to last year's mid-point data. Charlie replied that ESL performance is the greatest concern, but that last year the data was similarly low through mid-year, then

students performed well on their spring assessments. Allison Kokkoros inquired whether the ESL data relates to the change in the business rules under the PMF. Charlie responded that yes, the aspirational target from the PCSB is now 100%, but the national average is 70%. Hector Torres asked if the School's performance has changed against national norms, and Charlie answered no, and that this year's actual performance is an improvement over last year.

Communications/Development Report

Communications and Development Manager Alejandra Amaroli shared brief vignettes about two noteworthy graduates and directed Board members to the School's website to see the full stories. She then gave a social media update, noting that the School has increased its followers on Facebook and Instagram. Facebook garners the most engagement, as it is the primary form of social media used by current students and alumni. Board members complimented the School's social media presence and content.

Alejandra then highlighted donations received by the School since November 2019, totaling \$55,000. She described plans for the Achieving the Dream fundraiser on April 2 and noted that the School is more than halfway toward its goal of raising \$65,000. All proceeds from the event will go directly toward higher education scholarships for students and alumni.

Hector Torres commented about the importance of promoting a culture of giving among our students so that they give back in the future. Alejandra noted that the School has a core group of alumni who are very engaged, and Allison Kokkoros mentioned an annual student event that raises funds for scholarships. James Moore suggested connecting with alumni on a more regular basis.

Patricia Sosa stated that the Board has awarded a scholarship every year, usually during graduation, and noted that pledged funds by the end of March would contribute toward the Achieving the Dream fundraiser. Board members in attendance pledged contributions.

CEO Report

CEO Allison Kokkoros began her report by describing several new positions currently being advertised that will help build the capacity of the School team. In relation to the business analyst position, Patricia Sosa asked about the new Student Information System (SIS). Jerry Luna described the selection process that led to choosing Bocavox Maestro and explained how the transition from the current SIS to the new one will transpire. Allison noted that the new SIS relates to strategic planning conducted four years ago, as the current SIS was a major pain point for teachers at that time and therefore replacing it was a strategic priority.

Allison then updated the Board about various community engagement events, including visioning sessions held with faculty on January 13 about how they see the School four years from now. She described that for more immediate challenges discussed, the goal is to act on them quickly to make changes, similar to this semester's shift in start time at the Harvard Street Campus to better meet the needs of students.

Patricia Sosa inquired about the timing of the upcoming strategic planning process. Allison replied that she would like a new strategic plan in hand this June so the School can conduct implementation planning over the summer.

Allison shared that the leadership team is engaging staff more deeply on budget development and compensation. Allison noted that the School has already shared revised pay scales with faculty and is in the process of creating pay scales for staff.

The Board then discussed plans for its upcoming community convening with staff and student government members, which will be focused on strategic planning through small-group discussions.

CFO Report

Jerry Luna shared that through December 2019, the School's positive revenue variation was \$500,000. Most of this amount came from the Minds that Move Us award and funding from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation. There is also additional per pupil funding that was higher than initially budgeted due to mid-year increase approved by the City Council. He highlighted that the School is trending well overall in all categories and expects to hit total budget at the end of the fiscal year. He also noted that the School's investments are healthy and showed an 8% increase, which translates to \$1.8 million more than this time last year.

Jerry updated the Board that the Community Capital Corporation (CCC) just unwound its new market tax credits as planned. There is now \$8 million less in debt: \$5.5 million was forgiven with the new tax credits, plus a \$3 million payoff from the School. He recommended paying off the Harvard Street Campus loan since the funds are available to do so. After paying off the Harvard Street loan, only \$10 million in debt would remain for both buildings.

Brahim Rawi inquired about the status of Ana Mendez University's lease of space in the Sonia Gutierrez Campus. Jerry reported that the School is in communication with Ana Mendez to possibly lease back the space.

Jerry mentioned that preparations had begun for submitting this year's Form 990 and shared the planning calendar with the Board.

Conflict of Interest Review

General Counsel Kristine Dunne reminded that last year the Board approved the School purchasing on a one-time basis advertising in Ethiopian Yellow Pages, which is owned by Board member Yeshimebeth Belay (Mama Tutu). In the event that the School wishes to purchase advertising in the publication again this year, the Board would need to review the matter under the conflict of interest policy. Given that there are no current plans by the School to advertise in the publication, the Board did not consider the issue.

Board Task Force Updates

Allison Kokkoros reminded Board members of the two task forces established at the September 2019 retreat: the Development & Advocacy/Community Relations Task Force and the Board Engagement Task Force. Members of the former include Hector Torres, Johan Uvin, Allison Kokkoros, and Alejandra Amaroli. They met for the first time last week and discussed looking at a fundraising consulting company, hosting an adult education institute, and offering on-site childcare at the School.

The Board Engagement Task Force recently held its first meeting by phone and will convene in person in March. Members include Margaret Yao, Vilma Rosario, Johan Uvin, and Kristine Dunne. Their first project is to review the proposed bylaw changes and bring suggestions back to the rest of the Board.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Minutes prepared by Stacy Kirk, Executive Assistant to the CEO



Respectfully submitted by Margaret Yao, Board Secretary