



College for Certain

Board of Directors Retreat Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

Location 1: Aspire Public Schools, 1001 22nd Ave Oakland, CA 94606

Location 2: 6410 Poplar Avenue Suite 71 Memphis, TN 38119

Meeting Conference Line: 1-719-325-2630; Passcode: 804315

I. Public Business Meeting

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM. Quorum for the meeting was confirmed.

Board Members Present: Jonathan Garfinkel, Warren Felson, Beth Hunkapiller, Leslie Hume and Jim Quigley were present in Location 1 in Oakland, CA. Jim Boyd was present by phone in Location 2 in Memphis, TN.

Board Members Absent: Steven Merrill

Staff Present: Carolyn Hack, Elise Darwish, Heather Kirkpatrick, Alli Leslie, Delphine Sherman, Shannon Nash, James Willcox and Shireen Burns.

II. **Changes to the Agenda:** Jonathan Garfinkel noted that under "Discussion, Action Items and Reports", the Aspire U Update would be moving up to "B" at 11:30 AM, and the Fundraising Strategy discussion would be moved to "E" at 4:15 PM.

III. **Public Comments Not on the Agenda:** There were no public comments.

IV. Chairperson and CEO Comments:

- A. Chairperson's Report –Jonathan Garfinkel welcomed Alli Leslie, the Memphis Executive Director, who will give an update on Memphis growth. He also introduced and welcomed the new CEO Carolyn Hack, and complimented the organization on a smooth transition period from James Willcox stepping down as CEO, to Carolyn Hack stepping into the role, and adding four new Board members in the process this past year.
- B. Other Board Member Comments –There were no other Board Member comments.
- C. CEO Comments –Carolyn Hack gave the Board an overview on her first three weeks at Aspire, highlighting the people she has met, what she has seen in the schools and the challenges that lie ahead. She talked about how starting up an Aspire Instagram account has been a great tool to communicate and convey to people what she has been seeing while out visiting schools. She has seen 17 out of 38 schools in three weeks. Noteworthy moments have included the curriculum in the Writer's Workshop, restorative discipline practices in the classroom, the mastery level of the teachers and the high bar that Principals set on a daily basis for themselves and their schools.

V. Discussion, Action Items and Reports:

A. Financial Stewardship –Delphine Sherman presented to the Board on the opportunities for two financial focus schools –Aspire Benjamin Holt College Preparatory Academy (BHA) and Aspire River Oaks Charter School (ROCS) as well as enrollment growth decisions and the uses of the Strategic Investment Fund. There were four approvals made which include:

- i. Resolution for Aspire Public Schools to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to approve the final 2015 bond transaction documents. Jonathan moved and Jim Q seconded; unanimously approved. Approval: Yes: 6 –Beth, Leslie, Warren, Jonathan, Jim Q and Jim B; No: 0; Abstain: 0.
- ii. Expand BHA campus by 400 students, using \$8M to fund the project. Beth moved and Leslie seconded; unanimously approved. Approval: Yes: 6 –Beth, Leslie, Warren, Jonathan, Jim Q and Jim B; No: 0; Abstain: 0.
- iii. Allocate \$4.5M of one-time philanthropic revenue to pay down existing debt for Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy. Warren moved and Jonathan seconded; unanimously approved. Approval: Yes: 6 –Beth, Leslie, Warren, Jonathan, Jim Q and Jim B; No: 0; Abstain: 0.



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- iv. Use \$1M drawdown of state grant (Prop 1D) to start site and design process for Aspire ERES. Jim Q moved and Beth seconded; unanimously approved. Approval: Yes: 6 –Beth, Leslie, Warren, Jonathan, Jim Q and Jim B; No: 0; Abstain: 0.

B. Aspire U Update –Heather Kirkpatrick and Shannon Nash gave the Board an update on Aspire U progress with WASC accreditation, Board membership, governance and Service Level Agreement (SLA) options. The Board approved management’s recommendation to go with the SLA option of actual costs, plus a fee. This was moved by Jim Q and seconded by Jonathan; unanimously approved. Yes: 4 –Beth, Jonathan, Jim Q and Jim B; No: 0; Abstain: 2 –Leslie and Warren.

The meeting adjourned for a lunch break at 12:45 PM. The meeting was called back to order at 1:15 PM.

C. Memphis Update: Results, Expansion and Growth –Alli Leslie gave the Board an update on the academic performance of the Memphis schools, highlighting areas where the targets were met and where there was room for improvement. She also talked about how suspension rates have gone down. Alli went over the initial steps in the planning process to expand by 1-2 schools in Memphis next school year. Options are being explored, but sites are not yet confirmed. This was a discussion topic and no approvals were made.

The meeting adjourned for a break at 2:35 PM. The meeting reconvened at 2:42 PM.

D. College Readiness Update –Elise Darwish presented data from the Smarter Balance Assessment and college readiness measures. Overall, Aspire schools outperform local schools, but it will still take time to figure out the new testing content and process to show consistent improvement over the next few years. This was a discussion topic and no approvals were made.

E. Fundraising Strategy and Board Development –Carolyn Hack and James Willcox presented ideas for fundraising and gained input from Board members on the strategy going forward and next steps. This was a discussion topic and no approvals were made.

VI. **Adjournment to Closed Session:** The meeting adjourned to Closed Session at 4:45 PM.

VII. **Closed Session:**

A. Personnel Matters –this was discussed.

VIII. **Reconvene to Public Meeting:** The meeting reconvened at 5:00 PM.

A. **Report out on Closed Session Items** –The Board Chair reported out that the Board discussed Personnel Matters, but took no actions.

XI. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Approved this 12th Day of November, 2015 at Oakland, CA.


Emmille Brack, Board Secretary