

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brenda Marrero, Esq. Chair
Nelson Flores, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Joseph DuCette, Ph.D., Member
Donna Nuccio, Member
Sarah Finkelstein, Member
Caroline Gorman, Esq. Member

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

Dana B. Espinosa, Secretary
Jessika Garcia

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES**

Location: Zoom.Us – Meeting ID: 896 1404 5186

Monday, September 19, 2022

Board Members Present: Brenda Marrero, Esq., Dr. Joseph DuCette, Donna Nuccio, Jessika Garcia, Dana Espinosa, Dr. Nelson Flores, Caroline Gorman

Board Members Absent: None

Quorum Established: Yes

Others Present: Dr. Darcy Russotto, CEO; Evaleen DeMarco, Director of Strategic Initiatives; Dr. Joshua Fineberg, Director of Student Services; David Shemaria, Upper School Principal; Robin Eglin, Omnivest LLC; Mercedes Walton-Mason, Lower School Principal; Diana Melendez, Teacher Representative

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:40pm.

Public Testimony

No Public Comment

School Connection

The school is excited to announce the return of a teacher representative at the school board meetings. Diana Melendez has been with Pan American Academy since August 2019 as a Spanish Homeroom teacher in first grade. Melendez shared her experience as a teacher at Pan American and is looking forward to lending a teacher's perspective and being the voice for the teaching staff. The school board looks forward to Melendez's input.

Governance

- **Board Member Vacancy:** An interview has been scheduled on 9/20/22 with potential candidate Christina Barker. Her resume has been shared for review. This is a referral from Lower School Principal, Mercedes Mason. Mason has also referred another potential candidate to fill the second vacancy, but Congreso must be consulted as it is their appointment. At this time, Congreso is cultivating a candidate. More information to follow at the next meeting. Flores is interested in how the potential candidates would support the Board and the school. Mason added that Christina Barker has previously engaged with the school with her participation in Kindergarten activities.
- **Board Governance Committee:** Marrero has initiated the start of a Governance Committee. This committee would recommend overall policies, recruit and train new board members, develop an evaluation tool for the CEO, and handle the accuracy of board terms among other important tasks. Marrero also would like for the committee to have four members, which would include the Chair, Vice Chair. Marrero anticipates that two other fellow board members will join. Nuccio added she would like the committee to have a parent representative as a member.

Finance

- *Review of the July Financials provided by Robin Eglin.* Current Ratio: 1.53; Cash on Hand: 108.05 (PASS) Debit Ratio: 0.37; Total Margin: 3.25%; Lease Coverage Ratio: 1.16. – PASS.
- Russotto provides an update on enrollment and its impact on tuition reimbursement.

Development and Fundraising

- *Development and Fundraising Update presented by Evaleen DeMarco.* DeMarco discusses Elevate215, formerly known as Philadelphia School Partnership (PSP), an education non-profit organization that donates millions to schools in its quest to advance learning outcomes. Russotto, Fineberg and DeMarco recently pitched an idea similar to what was presented to YASS (discussed at the previous meeting). Elevate215 has greenlighted the school's request - a potential project funding of \$350K. This has increased the school's opportunity to enhance its mental health initiatives. The school is still waiting for a response from YASS.
- A teacher on staff has decided to donate a baby grand piano, supporting our Music programming.
- Fundraising initiatives are underway with several planned events and returning to paid dress down passes by staff members.
- The school is excited to reconnect with Swarthmore and hopes to strengthen their partnership. Currently, Swarthmore students are interning at the school conducting research studies. It is worthwhile to note that the school has hired in the past Swarthmore graduates.
- A Mural Arts Program recruiter reached out to the school requesting to paint a mural in the school's Kindergarten outdoor play area. The mural would be honoring a Philadelphian WNBA player. More details to follow as the Mural Arts Program provides more information.
- 71 students signed up for the Eagles Eye Mobile - Vision to Learn. The school's partnership with Eagles Eye will allow students to receive free glasses determined by their vision screening.

School Report

The Upper and Lower School Principals provide an overview of the school report and the school's initiative, First Five. In the first five weeks, the school emphasizes the importance of building community, culture, school academic and behavior programming, staff and student expectations, and other activities. The principals would like to highlight the installation of their Parent and Principal Meetups, titled "Cafecito con los Principales" (in-person) and "Charlemos con los Principales" (virtual). The parent attendance is higher than expected and their input has been refreshing. Mason has already kickstarted Eduversity and is hoping to start up a Parent Engagement Committee within the next month, while Shemaria is preparing for high school transition meetings with parents and the school counselor. Both Shemaria and Mason agree that the opening of this school year has a much more positive vibe and embraces going back to normal routines (pre-COVID).

The Upper School has implemented dynamic rostering to better meet the academic needs of students and break up the monotony of students seeing the same teacher every period.

Based on the results of the STAR and Fountas & Pinnell assessments, the school has implemented Scholastic System 44, a program supporting students that are behind in reading and ELA subjects. These students are taught in small group settings. Palabras a Su Paso is also being used to assist Spanish learners in honing their vocabulary. Focus Math is also taught in small group settings, specifically by Special Education teachers.

Flores would like to learn more about the co-principalship and collaboration, asking Mason and Shemaria how they are managing and working together. It helps that Shemaria and Mason share an office and Mason stated that collaboration was a natural progression given that they started their assistant principalship together. While they have different approaches to running certain programs, they manage to hit the same marks. Russotto adds that in general, the school is working diligently on how to effectively manage relationships and work in teams. Towards the end of the year, Flores would like to know what works and what were the challenges in an effort to institutionalize co-principalship and collaboration – the goal being to create structures that remain regardless of employee longevity.

As a parent, Espinosa shares it feels good to hear the vibe has changed and asks for Melendez's thoughts. Melendez says the current atmosphere feels like it did four years ago – things are much

smoother, everyone is working hard, and the teachers are showing renewed energy, unlike last year. Due to previous COVID protocols, small carpets in classrooms were not allowed. An item several teachers missed. This year carpets were allowed back in classrooms. "Something as simple as a carpet in a classroom brings joy and togetherness", Melendez said in talking about connecting with students sitting on a rug during instruction.

Entered into EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 5:32PM to discuss student litigation matters; review of personnel and compensation; student disciplinary matter. Returned to REGULAR SESSION at 6:10PM.

Action Items

- MOTION to APPROVE New Hires (Alisa Cavanaugh, Surelys Cristobal, Luis Guzman, Ramaylin Urena, Karen Keppel, Rosanna Arias, Christopher Reinoso Maestre, Hannah Seabrooks) by Marrero, seconded by Flores. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE New Hire Salaries by Marrero, seconded by DuCette. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE Salary Adjustments by Marrero, seconded by Gorman. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE Updated Right to Know Policy by Marrero, seconded by Espinosa. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE Revised Compensation Plan and Salary Guidelines for 2022-2023 by Marrero, seconded by Nuccio. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE Revised Enrollment Policy by Marrero, seconded by Flores. Motion passed.
- MOTION to APPROVE Revised EL Policy by Marrero, seconded by DuCette. Motion passed.
- MOTION to RATIFY The Schoolwide Plan by Marrero, seconded by Garcia. Motion passed.
- MOTION to RATIFY J. A. Legal Settlement Trust by Marrero, seconded by Gorman. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:18PM.

Minutes recorded by: Lisandra Kelly