

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA)
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
By Video Conference (Zoom)
April 8, 2021

Board Members in Attendance: Bruce Berman, Danielle Bierzynski, Jinah Bryant, Jerry Epstein, Dan Gordon, Mark Harrison, Kenneth Jones, Andy Rosenberg, Jonathan Stoel, Laurence Telson.

Staff in Attendance: Raymond Weeden, Executive Director; David Schlossman, Chief Operating Officer; Faith Oviedo, Director of Development and Communication.

Mr. Stoel called the meeting to order at 8:05 am. A quorum was present.

Mr. Stoel asked for a motion to approve minutes from the February 11, 2021 meeting. Mr. Jones made the motion. Mr. Gordon seconded. The motion carried.

Mr. Weeden gave the **Executive Director Report**, which included the following:

- Possible plans for graduation and prom for the class of 2021, adhering to COVID-19 prevention protocols.
- Data compiled by EmpowerK12 based on surveys of students, indicating that TMA students are stable--90% of students reported having a relationship with a trusted adult at TMA. In addition, students are using coping skills they learned at school.
- To date, 62 students have received one college acceptance, 53 have received more than one acceptance, the senior class submitted 850 applications, earned 440 acceptances to date as well as \$5.5 million in merit-based scholarships. In addition, two students have “full-ride” offers to both American University and George Washington University, and others have great opportunities.
- TMA is preparing for increased on-site activities in the fourth quarter of the school year. TMA is offering stipends to staff to help offset the costs of returning to the building.
- TMA will still offer virtual instruction during the fourth quarter. However, leadership has communicated with staff that they will be expected to be in the building full-time in the fall.

Discussion that followed included:

- Mr. Jones asked Mr. Weeden what caused an increase in college applications and acceptances. Mr. Weeden said that removing the SAT requirement was a key factor and that the college counseling team at TMA was proactive in helping students apply. Mr. Stoel suggested that Sanjay Mitchell should participate in a future board meeting.
- Mr. Stoel asked what challenges Mr. Weeden was facing. Mr. Weeden said the school does not have the physical space available to have all students back in the building, given the current COVID-19 restrictions for spacing. However, TMA is investigating additional options for space that may be available in the community. Ms. Telson

asked if Mr. Weeden had explored renting other space, which Mr. Weeden confirmed he had.

- Mr. Gordon asked about vaccination rates among staff and students. Mr. Weeden said about half of TMA students will be eligible for the vaccine when available for ages 16 and up. He noted that TMA has not yet asked staff for their vaccination status (as any such request would integrate with reopening planning) but that TMA has announced that summer programming will be held in person. Mr. Jones asked if staff and students would continue to wear masks, and Mr. Weeden said he anticipates they will.
- Mr. Gordon reported that DC schools would not be required to administer the PARCC exam this year. Ms. Telson expressed concern that not giving the PARCC exam would result in missing out on data about what students may have missed because of COVID-19. Mr. Gordon said that TMA already collects a lot of data that informs instruction. Mr. Weeden said that the NWEA MAP assessments are more useful for measuring student progress. He shared that students' performance during the pandemic can be categorized into three groups. One is students who transitioned successfully and efficiently to virtual learning, and TMA is encouraging them to take college classes through the dual enrollment program this summer. The second group will be focused this summer on a combination of academic tutoring and enrichment activities. The third group is students who struggled considerably during the school year, or simply did not attend school, and therefore need to earn credit recovery.
- Mr. Weeden shared that attendance was challenging at the beginning of the school year and that TMA staff used various strategies to re-engage students. The team has also worked one-on-one with every student to create a plan for staying on track for promotion and eventual graduation.
- Mr. Weeden also shared TMA's plans for the fall include examining school culture, ongoing work to evaluate the grading process, and developing a TMA graduate profile.
- Mr. Gordon asked about the progress of the 9th-grade class. Mr. Weeden said TMA staff had worked intensively to get these students back on track and continues to find creative ways to engage them during the summer.
- Mr. Gordon mentioned that TMA should consider the future use of incoming federal funding, and Mr. Weeden noted this planning is in progress.

Mr. Epstein gave the **Governance Committee Report**, noting that the trustees should have received a conflict of interest survey and encouraged them to complete it soon. Mr. Stoel said several board members' terms would end as of July 1, including Ms. Bierzynski, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Epstein, Mr. Harrison, and Ms. Telson. He said he would welcome all these trustees to continue for another term and welcomed questions.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Schlossman presented the **Audit & Finance Committee Report**, which included the following:

- Mr. Jones said the school was able to support unexpected expenses during COVID-19.

- Mr. Schlossman said he and other staff are examining the retirement plan, and their recommendations will come before the board eventually.
- Mr. Schlossman said finances were stable and that most fluctuations were driven by COVID-19. However, he indicated that it was difficult to predict the financial forecast because of the continuing changing nature of the pandemic and its effects.
- Mr. Gordon asked about the scale of funds expected from the American Rescue Plan, and Mr. Schlossman said it is projected to be about \$3 million spread over three years.
- Mr. Stoel asked how many students TMA is expecting for the fall. Mr. Schlossman said the enrollment projection for budget purposes is 365.
- Mr. Jones said overall enrollment in the District might fluctuate significantly in the future.
- Mr. Harrison asked for an update on the PPP Loan forgiveness application, and Mr. Schlossman said he is making good progress in coordination with consultants at TMA's accounting firm.

Mr. Rosenberg gave the **Development Committee Report**, which included the following:

- Mr. Rosenberg said the May 13 Showcase would include videos from staff and students and that electronic and print invitations have been sent.
- Ms. Oviedo gave an update on tickets sold, sponsorships secured, and rewards packages.
- Mr. Stoel encouraged board members to ask friends and colleagues to be sponsors.
- Mr. Weeden invited board members to refer potential speakers for civil rights talks.
- Mr. Stoel asked Faith for a sample letter board members could send to friends.

Mr. Stoel invited public comments in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. There were no public comments.

In compliance with the Open Meetings Act provisions, Mr. Epstein made a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Stoel adjourned the meeting at 9:33 am.

Mr. Stoel began the executive session at 9:34 am.

The executive session was adjourned, and the meeting ended at 9:41 am.