

Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School (TMA)
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees
By Video Conference (Zoom)
June 15, 2021

Board Members in Attendance: Bruce Berman, Danielle Bierzynski, Jinah Bryant, Jerry Epstein, Dan Gordon, Mark Harrison, Aleisha James, Kenneth Jones, Richard Roe, 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; Sanjay Mitchell, Director of College and Alumni Support; Abdullah Zaki, Head of School

Mr. Stoel called the Annual Meeting to order at 8 am. A quorum was present.

Mr. Stoel asked for a motion to approve minutes from the April 8, 2021 meeting. Mr. Berman made the motion. Mr. Harrison seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Weeden gave the **Executive Director's Report**, which included

- Staff discussion with students whose grades were not sufficient to pass their classes about their plans for the following school year and efforts to prepare them for credit recovery.
- All but one senior graduated, and the remaining student is expected to graduate at the end of the summer.
- Staff has worked hard to integrate technology into classes and will continue with that.
- TMA is working to ensure students have the opportunity to take a college class, building on the success of the dual enrollment program thus far.
- Staff concentrating on how to start getting students college-ready as soon as they start TMA as freshmen.
- Some faculty are leaving, presenting the opportunity for lateral moves and promotions for current Staff.
- TMA anticipates approximately 365 students for the upcoming school year and continues to focus on recruiting new students and re-enrollment current students.

The discussion that followed included:

- Mr. Stoel said that the class of 2021 included 77 graduates, the largest in TMA's history.
- Mr. Jones asked about the reasons that some students do not reenroll. Mr. Weeden said it stems from a combination of factors. Mr. Zaki said he thinks attrition is caused by families recognizing a poor fit due to commuting distance, small-school limits such as lack of tackle football, etc.; the transient nature of DC; the challenge that some students have acclimated to the TMA environment and requirements. Mr. Zaki said that Staff had intensified efforts to support students in the early years so they would succeed at the school.
- Mr. Stoel asked the Staff how this school year compared with others. Mr. Zaki said getting students and families comfortable with technology was a challenge. Still, the benefit is that families are now online and communicate with email, and teachers have been innovative in using technology to teach.

- Mr. Gordon asked how Modern Classroom had been used. Mr. Zaki said Modern Classroom enables teachers to provide differentiation so students can progress at their own pace. He said several teachers had used Modern Classroom and others are learning to use it. Students' performance in those classrooms has been strong.
- Mr. Mitchell shared his report on college applications and acceptances. Students submitted 881 applications and received 490 acceptances for a 51% acceptance rate equal to or better than previous years. One helpful factor was many colleges waived the SAT/ACT requirement. TMA has a Posse scholar—the school's 11th. American University awarded two full scholarships to TMA graduates. Students also received DC-CAP scholarships and Economic Club of Washington scholarships. Mr. Mitchell said adapting college preparation to the virtual environment was helpful to students and Staff and provided opportunities for students to meet with representatives from colleges around the world. He reported that being virtual has expanded the ability of more students to participate in dual enrollment.
- Mr. Stoel asked whether Mr. Mitchell has the resources necessary to shepherd students through the challenging process of completing college applications or what else might help. Mr. Mitchell said volunteers and support are always welcome but that he hopes to focus more on building relationships and agreements with colleges to build pipelines with certain institutions.
- Mr. Harrison asked if the Staff is compiling data that demonstrates the value of attending TMA.
- Ms. James said that Staff had supported her daughter's efforts to take dual enrollment classes. The opportunity has motivated her student to work harder, achieve excellent grades, and take additional college classes while in high school.
- Mr. Mitchell said that TMA's agreement with Bard College enables students to take courses that earn 12 college credits. This and similar opportunities set students up for expanded options in college.
- Ms. James said that her TMA student enjoyed her experiences at Bard College and Marymount University. It significantly improved their academic performance and inspired her younger sister to apply to the program for next year.

Mr. Stoel asked for updates about the return to school plans. Mr. Weeden reported that

- TMA is working to ensure communications efforts match enrollment efforts to show prospective families what TMA accomplishes and represents.
- The upcoming school year will not be like previous years. With \$1M in federal funds, plus half of the student population has not participated in in-person school, TMA plans to focus on 9th and 10th-grade programming as well as dual enrollment.
- TMA is bringing in Urban Teachers Fellows to help reduce class sizes, collaborating with Saga Tutoring to bring tutoring into the school day.
- Summer programs include supporting students who passed but still need help to transition to the next school year, working with Words Beats and Life, and offering clubs and teams over the summer. Rising ninth-graders will have access to these opportunities.
- Funds will be used for teacher development, including work with LDM to align courses to offer college-level courses on site. Teachers are receiving coaching and support from experts around the world.
- A group is examining grading practices to ensure grading is equitable.

- Mr. Gordon commented that the plans for using funds are innovative and focused on planting seeds rather than filling holes. He asked about the ongoing social-emotional needs of students because of the pandemic and personal losses. Mr. Weeden said the social, emotional response created over the past year would continue. There are three clinical staff from community organizations—One Community Unity, the Wendt Center, the WISE Centers, and two on staff.
- Ms. Telson asked how TMA plans to incorporate virtual learning in the future. Mr. Weeden said TMA intends to continue using technology in teaching and learning, such as working with universities to keep dual enrollment classes virtual and unique courses such as Real-World History, including virtual elements. He anticipates that additional opportunities will arise.

On behalf of the **Governance Committee**, Mr. Stoel called for a vote to keep five board members for another two-year term. Mr. Stoel said Danielle Bierzynski, Jerry Epstein, Dan Gordon, Mark Harrison, and Laurence Telson were re-elected. Mr. Jones made the motion, and Mr. Berman seconded. The motion passed (except that Board members did not vote for their re-election). Mr. Stoel asked for a motion to extend the terms of the current board leadership. The motion passed. Mr. Epstein reported that no conflicts of interest were reported.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Schlossman gave the **Finance Committee Report**, which included

- Presentation of the TMA draft budget and forecast for FY22-FY26.
- Mr. Schlossman noted that the DC city-wide budget (which dictates much of TMA's funding) and the DC PCSB deadline for Thurgood Marshall Academy's budget have shifted from Spring to Summer due to COVID-19 response.
- Mr. Schlossman explained that a five-year budget was designed to demonstrate how TMA will handle the influx of federal funds and then return to more typical budget circumstances. Looking at several years at once is valuable because of the dramatically shifting circumstances of recent and upcoming years.
- PPP Loan of \$1.15M was forgiven.
- IRS Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2020, was filed.
- Mr. Jones shared the process for getting the budget approved—Staff will finalize plans, and the Board will meet to review mid-summer.
- Mr. Jones discussed plans to explore TMA's investment portfolio.

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

- A report on the TMA showcase, which 200 people have viewed. One hundred people participated live during the event.
- TMA received 80 contributions this year, compared with 40 last year.
- TMA raised \$108,000 to date, representing \$23,000 more than last year.

Discussion included

- Mr. Jones asked if any thought was given to holding a hybrid event next year using zoom and in-person elements.
- Mr. Weeden said he and Ms. Oviedo plan to analyze attendance and contributions to maximize positive exposure for TMA, donor loyalty, and fundraising opportunities.
- Mr. Rosenberg said he and Ms. Oviedo were discussing additional events for this school year.

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 motioned to adjourn the meeting and go into executive session for personnel matters. Mr. Berman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Stoel adjourned the meeting at 9:40 am.

Mr. Stoel began the executive session at 9:41 am.

The executive session was adjourned, and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.