

## **IDEA Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes for October 28, 2021**

### **In Attendance**

Candice Durham  
Lakeisha Highsmith  
Tawanda Johnson  
Kelly Nakamoto  
David Owens  
Calvin Snowden  
Sydney Stein  
Nicole McCrae, Principal  
Justin Rydstrom, Executive Director

### **Call to Order**

Dr. Snowden called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. Mr. Owens made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Nakamoto seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **Chair's Remarks**

Dr. Snowden congratulated the staff and board on the successes at IDEA.

### **Open Comment Period**

There were no comments from members of the public.

### **Governance Committee**

There was no report from the Governance Committee. Dr. Snowden said minutes from June and August meetings were circulated. Mr. Owens made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Highsmith seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

### **Executive Search Committee**

Ms. Highsmith reported that the committee interviewed two finalists for search firms and recommends that IDEA engage the services of a company called [WorkMonger](#). Mr. Owens complimented Ms. Highsmith and Dr. Snowden on the interview process and underscored his confidence in WorkMonger. Dr. Snowden said the references provided by WorkMonger were extremely positive. Ms. Highsmith made a motion to approve the vendor WorkMonger for executive search firm services. Ms. Nakamoto seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Finance Committee**

Ms. Nakamoto provided the Finance Committee report, which included the following:

- On Count Day, IDEA was overenrolled, which provided increased per pupil funding
- IDEA is net positive in enrollment, unlike many DC charter schools
- IDEA's financial position remains strong
- Future building improvements should be easy to finance with cash in reserve

Ms. Stein reported that the financial consultant said the audit process is going well and is ahead of schedule.

### **Facilities Committee Report**

Mr. Rydstrom shared that Phase 1A of construction is going well and nearing completion. This space includes student commons leading out to back gardens and student-centered meeting rooms that will join the expanded cafeteria space to be completed in Phase 1B. Early childhood and prenatal classrooms are also nearing completion. A new staff lounge is also included in the project.

The next Facilities Committee meeting will be Thursday, November 18 at 6pm to approve Phase 1B costs and the state of CTE at IDEA. Dr. Snowden said he will meet with a CTE specialist from WorkMonger and would like Ms. Zimmermann to participate.

Ms. Johnson said she attended the Deanwood community meeting and asked for support for IDEA's safe passage program. Ms. McCrae said she was the only school leader at a recent Deanwood community meeting and that community members were enthusiastic about IDEA's work in the community, including little free libraries.

### **Development Committee**

Ms. Highsmith said there was no official Development Committee report. Mr. Rydstrom said the goal for scholarship funds for this school year is \$30,000. The 25th anniversary of the school will be in 2022 and the anniversary of the first graduating class will be in 2023.

### **Academic Committee**

NAME presented the Academic Committee report, with contributions from Principal McCrae. The report included the following:

- Lessons learned from summer school, including the need for more tailored classes, increased emphasis on culture, and the importance of staffing to provide interventions
- COVID protocols and partnerships, low COVID rates
- Town hall meeting on school safety measures, including safe passage bus, mental health clinicians, safety checks, multi-exit dismissal plan, and student support team

Dr. Snowden asked what percentage of students take advantage of safe passage bus. Ms. McCrae said she knew scholars were using the bus every day but she will get data.

Ms. Nakamoto asked how incidents at IDEA compare with other schools. Ms. McCrae said she would get data after the end of the first quarter.

Ms. Johnson said that nearby schools including Cesar Chavez, Ballou, and Friendship Collegiate, do not offer safe passage shuttles.

Dr. Snowden acknowledged that violence is on the rise throughout the city and IDEA is not unique in dealing with escalated incidents. Ms. McCrae mentioned that of the 337 scholars enrolled at IDEA, 83% are classified as “at-risk” based on their socioeconomic circumstances, 27% are exceptional education scholars (students with disabilities), and 41% of the exceptional education scholars are level 3 and level 4, which requires intensive services to treat issues including autism, oppositional defiance disorder, ADHD, and others.

Ms. Nakamoto asked how many scholars who have been involved in incidents are in the 9th grade. Ms. McCrae said many scholars are between 9th and 10th grades because of COVID.

Ms. McCrae said they are expecting additional vacancies because of people refusing to get COVID vaccine and that is impacting academics.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Mr. Rydstrom gave the Executive Director’s report, which included the following:

- Enrollment exceeded budget amount, outlier among public schools to increase enrollment two consecutive years during pandemic
- Now 88% of staff are vaccinated; expecting to be 100% compliant with Mayor’s mandate by November 2 but expect resignations as a result
- Staffing continues to be a challenge
- Strategic planning is on track to be completed in early 2022

Dr. Snowden moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at TIME pm.

The next board meetings will be November 18 and December 16 at 6pm.