



## TWO RIVERS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 14, 2021

### Call to Order

The September 14th Meeting of the Two Rivers Board of Trustees started at 6:02 pm via Zoom. Chair Zachariah opened the meeting by explaining that the meeting will be held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and is being recorded.

### Roll Call

#### Board Members

Aswathi Zachariah, Chair	Present
Malik Husser, Vice Chair	Present
Eli Schlam, Secretary	Present
Saumil Shah, Treasurer	Present
Clara Botstein, Trustee	Present
Jenny Bradbury, Trustee	Present
Kimberly Eddings, Trustee	Present
John Phillips, Trustee	Present
Derek Pierce, Trustee	Present
Lucas Pipes, Trustee	Present
Nick Rodriguez, Trustee	Present
Ahnna Smith, Trustee	Present
Matthew Steenhoek, Trustee	Present
Penelope Talley Thornton, Trustee	Present
Theo Thompson	Present
Kristina Kyles-Smith, Executive Director and Ex Officio	Present

#### Others Present

Gail Williams, Chief Operating Officer  
Kenneth McCants-Pearsall, Chief Academic Officer  
Aurora Steinle, Chief of Staff  
Tricia Eisner, Senior Director of Development  
Alex Mackey, Director of Grants  
Mary Gornick, Senior Director of Human Resources

Michelle Kimso, Executive Assistant  
Cara Williams, Parent of students at 4th Street  
Eric Krensky, Parent of student at 4th Street  
Alicia Row, Parent of students at Young and Middle School  
Subbi Barlow, Parent of student at Young

### **Approval of Meeting Agenda**

The Board unanimously approved the September 14th meeting agenda.

### **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**

The Board unanimously approved the September 11th Board Meeting Minutes.

### **Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Kyles-Smith reported that there are approximately 1,000 students and 200 staff members who started the year at Two Rivers. They are building connections and getting into the flow of learning. Two Rivers has hired COVID Monitors to better ensure protocols are being followed. Kyles-Smith introduced Two Rivers Network Leadership Staff who attended the meeting, Chief Operating Officer Williams, Chief Academic Officer McCants-Pearsall, Chief of Staff Steinle, Director of Grants Mackey, and Senior Director of Human Resources Gornick.

Two Rivers is currently 30 students below our enrollment goal. Chief of Staff Steinle reported that they are working to increase the efficiency of the enrollment process. The waitlist varies by grade with 50 students in Kindergarten and below and no waitlist in 5th grade. An Open House will take place on Monday, September 20th as some students awaiting spaces in grades with no waitlist are able to enroll right away.

Chief Operating Officer Williams reported that a lot has been done around facilities preparedness. Including upgrading to touchless water fountains, water bottle fillers, and touchless fixtures in bathrooms. Classrooms have been marked with designations for 6ft and 3ft apart, and additional construction projects are on-going.

Senior Director of Human Resources Gornick reported that Two Rivers now has 200 staff. A Campus Director of SPED has been added to each campus leadership team. Teacher Fellow positions have been added with targeted PD and stipend whereby in two years, the former Assistant Teachers will be eligible to be lead teachers.

Chief Academic Officer McCants-Pearsall reported that seven Two Rivers students are medically exempt from attending classes in person. They have been learning both

a-synchronously through our robust online software platforms and synchronously with daily individualized instruction. Two Rivers is building out a remote learning plan and launching a teacher task force in technology.

#### Questions from the Board/Community Members

Chair Zachariah asked if there are any plans to treat holidays with mandatory quarantining? Executive Director Kyles-Smith answered that Two Rivers is also seeking guidance in this area.

Parent Williams asked what learning progress is being made? Executive Director Kyles-Smith shared that learning loss was not significant for all student groups. However, there has been careful consideration to provide additional support for students and student groups who did experience learning loss. Currently, there is a focus on ensuring a robust amount of support for students with special needs as they return to in-person learning. Full MAP testing is being conducted to see what the gaps are.

Executive Director Kyles-Smith shared that some of the pain points at the start of the year are:

- Staff capacity is being challenged. We have had to designate a lot of time to handle new COVID-19 related tasks. Two Rivers is working to hire a manager for our COVID team.
- Arrival and dismissal look different and staff/families have needed to adjust.

Trustee Smith asked about scaling staff for hiring? Executive Director Kyles-Smith shared that they have increased hiring and are leaning into our planned growth pattern, next year 8th grade will increase by 50 students to 100 students, and some natural attrition amongst staff to hopefully retain the majority of staff brought on this year.

#### **Board Committee Reports**

##### **Finance Committee**

Director of Grants Mackey reported that Two Rivers was in the process of phasing out Title I, II, and IV funds. However, based on updated demographic data, the schools are slated to continue to receive Title funds. Chief Operating Officer Williams reported that construction is on pace to be completed by December including two classrooms, Health Suite, and 4th Street Upper Elementary rooftop.

Trustee Steenhoek presented the following Memo, which was shared with the Board in advance:

- Contract Modification with Busy Bee Environmental Services - Our current custodial services contract was negotiated and lowered from previous years because we converted the third floor of 1234 4th Street and two former classrooms at 1227 4th Street into an office space. There is a shorter time demand and different cleaning protocols to clean an office area than a classroom. Our contract was negotiated before we decided to expand the facilities at Young by an additional 5,000 square feet and before we had a full programmatic scope of the custodial staffing demands needed to support re-opening under COVID safety protocols. To support re-opening, we have had to convert the office suite spaces back into fully functional classrooms and increase the frequency of cleaning shared spaces and high-touch areas. The cleaning demands and protocols for classrooms and maintaining an increased cleaning schedule require expanding the custodial staff at 4th Street and Young.

Due to pressing needs to support re-opening and ensure that we continue maintaining clean and highly functioning facilities, Two Rivers proposes modifying its existing contract with Busy Bee Environmental Services, LLC. The modification would include expanding the work scope to have a dedicated building engineer and facilities associate and increasing the number of custodial service staff to support cleaning the facilities.

- Recommendation - Vote on the selection of expanding the scope of Busy Bee's existing contract by approximately \$222,997.

Trustee Pipes abstained from the vote. All other Trustees voted to approve the recommendation.

Treasurer Shah presented the following Memo, which was shared with the Board in advance:

- Through outreach conducted by Two Rivers throughout the period of closure, students and staff without wifi were identified. In order to fill this need, in December, 2020, Two Rivers entered into a contract with T-Mobile for the purchase and use of hotspots. At the time, we could not foresee that the COVID pandemic would make remote learning—and the use of hotspots—necessary for the entire school year, so the contract was signed at a value of \$12,000. Consequently, we were not required to seek board approval or submit the contract to the Public Charter School Board (PCSB).

By June, 2021, the amount paid to T-Mobile reached \$29,953.13, eventually reaching \$33,453.13 by the end of the fiscal year. At that time, Two Rivers submitted the contract to the PCSB, under the category of "contracts with an initial value of \$25,000 per year or less, whose total annual value unexpectedly exceeds \$25,000."

- Recommendation: The board retroactively approved the SY20-21 contract with T-Mobile at a total cost of \$33,453.13.

Trustee Pipes abstained from the vote. All other Trustees voted to approve the recommendation.

### Governance Committee

Senior Director of Human Resources Gornick presented the following Memo, which was shared with the Board in advance:

- Staff Handbook - This year there are several updates to the staff handbook. This year, changes support increased clarity of COVID-19 policies which caused us to update our expectations for working remotely, taking COVID-19 related leave, and telework. Additional updates were made in response to suggestions of our counsel and in response to patterns of need. The updates are listed below.
  - Section 1: General Employment Policies
    - U. Communicable Disease
    - Added COVID-19 to the list of infectious diseases that must be reported to HR.
    - Added Two Rivers' COVID-specific employment policies regarding work expectations during quarantine and school closure, leave options, and Vaccination.
    - CC. Electronic Communications Policy
    - Added additional details regarding the posting of student photos and videos to include restrictions on not posting photos or videos of students who have denied media release.
    - Added provision on posting specific dates, time, and locations of field studies to protect and maintain the security of students even when outside of our buildings.
  - Section 3: Employment Status and Employment Records
    - Employment Classifications
    - Created essential and nonessential classifications for positions to ensure that when buildings are closed, either for

weather-related reasons or potential COVID closures, we are able to effectively operate our schools.

- Section 5: Employee Benefits
  - Paid Leave
  - Expanded bereavement policy from three days to five days to better align with other, comparable LEAs and DCPS. Additionally, in recognition of our diverse employees, we broadened the definition of immediate family member, and added three days of leave in instances of death of a close family member.
  - Added Juneteenth as a paid Federal Holiday
  - I. Remote Telework
    - Added policy details for staff requesting regular telework as an employee Benefit.
    - Added requirements that remote work be performed within the District-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) area, and that employees must notify us and seek approval in advance of relocation outside of the DMV.
    - Added details on the reimbursement of expenses for staff required by TwoRivers to work remotely.
  - J. Staff Admission Preference
    - This stand-alone policy was added to our handbook to ensure that all employees are aware of the requirements and stipulations of our policy on the children of Two Rivers staff receiving enrollment preference to Two Rivers.
- Recommendation: TR Board of Trustees votes to approve the staff handbook.

Trustee Pipes abstained from the vote. All other Trustees voted to approve the recommendation.

Secretary Schlam reported that Trustee Talley Thornton would be joining the governance committee.

#### Development Committee

Trustee Phillips reported that the development plans for this year include spreading and widening the network to increase Two Rivers' development reach. Senior Director of Development Eisner reported that the Development team is working on the Beyond the

Basics Campaign with a goal of raising \$50,000. The Grandparents Club is supporting this effort by stuffing envelopes. New Parents are invited to a coffee on September 15th and 22nd. Sixty fully stuffed backpacks were distributed to students. The development committee members are Trustee Phillips, Trustee Pipes, Trustee Thornton, and community member Cassie Schupp.

Trustee Bradbury asked about PSA fundraising. Chief of Staff Steinle reported that PSA is in the process of re-establishing itself. They will be passing bylaws and holding elections soon. PSA will be localized and school-based. Senior Director of Development Eisner shared that they have \$8,500 to start off with.

#### Academic Excellence

Trustee Pierce reported that they will be gathering as a committee which consists of Vice-Chair Husser, Secretary Schlaum, Trustee Bradbury, and Trustee Smith. Trustee Bradbury reported that the committee would meet quarterly to review data and would meet soon to set goals for the year.

Chair Zachariah shared that Trustee Botstein would be stepping down from the Board of Trustees. She had served on the board for 5 years with 4 years as Chair. She led the Board through the Middle School Expansion, Dr. Kyles-Smith's hiring, and COVID. Trustee Botstein shared that she has gotten more than she has given. Executive Director Kyles-Smith thanked Trustee Botstein for her service.

#### Adjournment

The Board meeting adjourned at 7:19 pm.

Prepared by:  
Michelle Kimso /s/  
Executive Assistant

Submitted by:  
Eli Schlam/s/  
Secretary