

IDEA Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes for February 24, 2022

In Attendance

Calvin Snowden, Chair
Candice Durham
Kelly Nakamoto
Tiffini Andorful
Ms. Johnson
Justin Rydstrom, Executive Director
Nicole McCrae, Principal
Melissa McKnight, Lincoln Square Group

Chair's Remarks

Dr. Snowden called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Nakamoto made the motion. Dr. Snowden seconded the motion, which approved by common consent.

Dr. Snowden expressed his appreciation for the hard work of the staff during a difficult period.

Open Comment Period

There were no public comments during the open comment period.

Governance Committee

Dr. Snowden introduced the Governance Committee report, which included the recommendation to invite Rufus Brown to join the Board of Trustees. Ms. NAME asked Dr. Snowden what expertise Mr. Brown would bring to the board. Dr. Snowden said Mr. Brown's procurement experience and technology and social media expertise would be useful and that Mr. Brown had already made suggestions about how to improve IDEA's social media presence. Mr. Brown will attend a future meeting to be interviewed by the full board.

Finance Committee

Ms. Nakamoto introduced the Finance Committee report, which included details about IDEA's strong financial position. The school year will end with \$2.2 million in cash in hand, which the board and staff leadership will explore ways to use to benefit the school community. Ms. Nakamoto noted that the reduction in expenses includes the need for additional teachers, although the school is spending more for substitute teachers. Ms. NAME asked what the financial situation would look like if IDEA were fully staffed. The board and staff present discussed the challenge of talent acquisition in the current employment environment.

Facilities Committee

On behalf of Ed Dunson, Justin Rydstrom gave the Facilities Committee report. Phase A of the building renovation is complete, which includes the child development classroom now in use. Phase B has begun and is permitted. Construction has started on student restrooms. Asbestos abatement has concluded. Demolition of the old kitchen is in progress. The Committee is planning Phase B2 to renovate other CTE spaces, including the construction technology lab and computer science lab.

Development Committee

On behalf of Lakeisha Highsmith, Justin Rydstrom gave the Development Committee report, which included an invitation for board members to contribute to scholarship funds. In the past, the board has funded 100% of scholarship funds.

Academic Committee

Ms. Andorful gave the Academic Committee report, with contributions from Principal McCrae. Ms. Andorful said she is expecting a baby in April and that Ms. Durham would be taking responsibility for the Academic Committee in her absence.

Principal McCrae provided calendar updates, indicated that scholars are back in school every day with a test-to-stay initiative after every school break to ensure that IDEA remains a COVID-safe school, and noted that scholars received their second semester schedules, and that school leadership is developing the master schedule for the next school year with new courses. IDEA has hired two social work interns and a full-time events and athletic coordinator to promote the social and emotional health of scholars.

In-seat attendance is currently 81.7%, with a goal of 90%. The truancy rate is 43.53%. Chronic absenteeism is 56.76%. Many families have chosen to keep scholars at home because of the fear of COVID or pending approval of medical waivers. According to DCPS policy, scholars must be marked absent if they are not in school, even if they are attending virtually but they do not have medical authorization to do so. Ms. Johnson indicated that the same policy applies to DC government workers. Ms. Nakamoto asked if IDEA had data on how many scholars are actually attending virtually even if they are not reported present. Ms. McCrae said school leadership is working to explore that data and is pursuing interventions to engage scholars in school-based activities. Dr. Snowden asked if IDEA was providing attendance incentives. Ms. McCrae said scholars do receive incentives and rewards for good attendance.

Enrollment updates included 75 applicants this year who ranked IDEA #1. The number of applicants through My School DC was 349, which is 66 more than last year. A variety of recruitment strategies have contributed to this increase, including personal calls from current IDEA families to prospective families.

Staffing retention for SY22-23 is 82%. Darren Jackson was hired as a chemistry and health teacher. Naomi Wanzer returned to IDEA as an English teacher. The CTE Director position remains vacant. Ms. McCrae and other staff members are filling in the gaps. Two Spanish teacher vacancies remain.

From August 31 through January 31, there have been 42 suspensions and 2 expulsions, most for violence. Interventions to reduce disciplinary infractions include home visits, restorative justice mediations, clinical restorative justice preventative sessions, behavior contracts, and positive behavioral intervention tracking. Clinical staff supports 58 out of 99 exceptional learners. 82% of scholars at IDEA are considered at risk, and 32% of scholars are in special education.

IDEA has received several grants to support academic and CTE programs. Twilight Academy is costing \$6,000 per month. 78% of CTE funding has been spent.

Statewide assessments are scheduled for March through May.

IDEA leadership is examining the pass and fail rates for each grade level in each subject over the past few years as affected by the pandemic. 55 scholars are eligible for and enrolled in the Twilight Academy to help remediate.

The Principal's Cabinet, staff, and scholars reviewed the strategic plan. The Scholar Council will launch this spring.

Dual enrollment is thriving, with 94% of students in on-campus Bard College class passing, and scholars enrolled in several local universities.

Parent board members are active participants in the community, school initiatives, and more.

Dr. Snowden asked about the PARCC test. Ms. McCrae said the school's strategy is to help scholars get through the test.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Rydstrom expressed appreciation for Principal McCrae on her work in the strategic planning process. The board retreat will be held April 29 and 30.

Dr. Snowden said the search committee will begin interviewing candidates for the executive director position in March and that all board members are welcome to participate.

Ms. Andorful made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at TIME.

The next board meeting will be April 30, 2022.