



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday January 26, 2023

- I. Call to Order
 - A. The regular meeting of the Academia Cesar Chavez Board of Directors was held at 1801 Lacrosse Ave, Saint Paul MN, 55119
 - B. The meeting was called to order at 5:11pm by Dr Jessica Lopez Lyman (Chair).
- II. Welcome and Roll Call
 - A. Board members present: Dr Jessica Lopez Lyman (Chair), Mark Ahrens (Treasurer), Cmdr John Lozoya (Secretary), Maria Vallejo (Parent), Diana Lopez-Diaz (Teacher), Analita Silva-Evans (Community),
 - B. Board members absent: Carlos Mariani (Community)
 - C. Staff and guests in attendance: Norma C. Garcés (Executive Director), Raquel Arismendez (Project Manager), Molly McGraw-Healy (UST), Brad Falsytek (Abdo),
- III. Recite ACC Mission Statement
 - A. *Academia Cesar Chavez is dedicated to providing a quality dual-language education that prepares critically thinking, socially competent, values driven, and culturally aware bilingual and bi-literate learners by advocating Latino cultural values in an environment of familia and community.*
- IV. Grounding and Check-in
 - A. All those present each check in with a personal anecdote.
- V. Public Comment Forum
 - A. No public comment was submitted to the board.

Action Items for Board Approval
- VI. Approval of Agenda
 - A. Mark moves to approve the agenda for the January 26, 2023 board meeting. John seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
- VII. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Mark moves to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2022 board meeting. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
- VIII. FY22 Audit Report
 - A. Brad Falsytek from Abdo presents the FY22 Audit Report. He noted that expenditures were consistently stable with no major fluctuations, spending was comparable to other schools, with plenty of cash on hand and a healthy fund balance, with no findings in regards to federally-funded program expenditures.

- B. Brad discussed each finding contained in the audit report. He explained that the findings in the report did not necessarily mean that ACC did not have appropriate evidence for the tested components, rather that such evidence was not provided to the auditors upon request. He then further clarified to the board which items they can typically expect their financial service provider to monitor and provide guidance on, and which items were a matter of internal process at the school.
- C. Brad went on to share that the ADM has been steady since FY18, the general fund balance trend accounts for the extra federal dollars received, the cash-on-hand is above bond covenant requirements, SPED expenditures were less than average, and both elementary and secondary educational expenditures were fairly close to statewide averages.
 - 1. Ms Norma suggested leadership review the Walton Foundation report on best SPED programs for the population we serve so we can see what we can implement here at ACC.

Discussion Items

IX. Executive Committee Update

A. HR Case with MN Dept of Human Rights

- 1. Jessica gives an update on the situation based on the most recent conversation with herself, Ms Norma, and the attorney from Thompson Coe. While the board did not believe there was any credibility to the complaint, a settlement had been reached to respect the time and capacity of leadership and the school overall. The settlement agreement was within the parameters approved by the board on September 16, 2023. The school was required to submit its discrimination policy to the HREEO Office—which was found to be in compliance and no changes were requested, a letter of sympathy in regards to the situation, and a positive reference letter. The school is also required to hold a one-hour staff training session on discrimination, which is set to take place in May. All things considered, the outcome was positive.

B. Bylaws

- 1. Jessica shared that the bylaws were reviewed on October 27, and can be reviewed more deeply since there are new board members. She directs the board to read the bylaws before the February board meeting and to bring any questions as well.

C. Wellness Policy

- 1. Ms Norma shares that the current wellness policy does not specifically prohibit candy or sweets with less than 10 grams of sugar, nor does it explicitly prohibit energy drinks. Especially with the legalization of THC edibles that can look deceptively like regular everyday candy. Ms Norma requests the board consider prohibiting students and their families from bringing outside food onto the premises. For the families who would like to pack a lunch for their child, leadership is creating a process for a nutrition training class, so that parents learn about nutritional and allergy information (for example, a child bringing a peanut butter sandwich from home could endanger their classmate that has a severe peanut allergy).

2. Maria motions that in order to ensure health and wellness for all students, ACC prohibits students from bringing any and all candy or energy drinks to school or from being consumed on the premises. Mark seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
3. A wellness policy with more comprehensive revisions will be brought to the March board meeting for review.

D. UST Charter Renewal Application

1. Jessica shares that the charter renewal application is progressing well. Ramona Arreguin de Rosales, ACC's founder, is providing support in the process. The board will receive a full update at the February board meeting as well as the application materials
2. Jessica shares there was some miscommunication to address in regards to the draft evaluation received from UST, such as the fund balance policy for example, which had been revised on October 27, 2022.
 - a) Ms Norma asks if UST could provide samples of how other schools have addressed a fund balance that was over 25%. Molly states her team will look into that and pass those along.

X. Finance Committee Update

A. December Financial Statement

1. Mark shares that December is the mid-year financial statement, which indicates the school should be fairly close to spending 50% of its budget. This indicates whether a budget revision for the remainder of the fiscal year may be necessary. In reviewing the current financial statement, ACC appears to be doing fairly well.
2. Mark notes that staff development has not historically been a huge expenditure in the budget, and would put some pressure to increase that line item in next year's budget.
3. Ms Norma shares that she and David Greenberg have been discussing how to further strengthen that part of the budget, since more staff development has been heavily implemented this school year.

B. BerganKDV Contract FY23

1. Jessica shares that BerganKDV had originally submitted a contract renewal proposal for three fiscal years, which the Executive & Finance Committees did not consider further. They requested BerganKDV submit a contract proposal for one fiscal year.
2. Mark states that the three-year contract proposal offered less services and went up in price every year of the contract. Even in the one-year contract proposal, it appears very broad. It comes across as a template used for all of their schools. Mark notes that he has a lot of complaints about BKDV, yet does not feel the board has much of a choice. It appears to be the only option, yet he would like to see some changes.
3. Jessica states that the school never had an audit like this current one when Judith Darling was CFO. She has had to step in herself multiple times to elicit a response from BKDV. The school currently spends over \$100k on BKDV's contract. She

encourages Ms Norma to share any further issues with the board if they should arise.

- C. Mark moves to accept the December 2022 financial statement and approve the BerganKDV contract for FY23. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

XI. Executive Director Update

- A. Ms Norma shares that she has never worked with a group of people so committed to learn, and that she is grateful for the opportunity for this work in humanizing the school and the institution of ACC.

- B. SPED Contract: Communication Creations, LLC

- 1. Maria moves to approve the contract with Communication Creations LLC. Analita seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

- C. PTO Accrual

- 1. Ms Norma requests a board resolution to amend the PTO policy in the employee handbook. Raquel shares there is a math error in the current language which causes hourly staff to accrue PTO at a lesser rate than salaried staff.
 - 2. Jessica shares that this is a labor justice issue, that worker's rights are part of the namesake of the school.
 - 3. Diana moves to amend the PTO accrual rate for hourly staff to be prorated based on actual hours worked in the pay period. John seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

- D. FY24 Budget

- 1. Ms Norma states that she and David Greenberg have been meeting to design a more programmatic budget for next school year, which includes teasing out the Elementary program and Middle School program.
 - 2. They have also been discussing staff development spending. For example, supporting bringing teachers from other countries who are highly qualified in their home countries yet cannot obtain anything other than a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license in Minnesota.

- E. Student Attrition

- 1. Ms Norma shares that families are leaving the Eastside neighborhood due to gentrification. There are many families moving to areas such as Little Canada.
 - 2. Jessica states that ACC started expanding bus routes further out years ago. This is the focus of her current research. She is collaborating with Madeline Cauhas from El Colegio's board of directors to create a study which examines housing sales, rent rates, and other trends to more deeply examine these effects.
 - 3. Ms Norma points out that there are families in our community who are ready to buy a house in the Eastside yet may not know how to begin that process.
 - a) Jessica suggests inviting our local representatives to have a conversation with them as these are higher level issues for our families that we need to advocate for addressing.
 - 4. Mark states that that the original vision of ACC was to be a family resource, and this would be a perfect opportunity for families to come to this very room (the Ramona

Center) to learn more about housing and possibly meet with a realtor who could come and talk.

a) Maria suggests also financial literacy, renter's rights, info on predatory lending, etc.

F. Teacher Recruitment

1. Ms Norma shares that she is working with someone to advocate at PELSB for better understanding transcripts from other countries when reviewing for licensure, such as the *Escuela Normal Superior* being the gold standard attainment in many countries for highly-trained teachers.

a) We have to do something radically different for ACC to stay competitive. We are looking at San Diego State's College of Education model, where schools are paying teacher candidates' tuition while they work in the district, as an example.

b) To stay relevant in the charter world we have to be innovative. For example, exploring a model where a classroom teacher only teaches in the morning or in the afternoon so that they can spend the other half of the day writing curriculum, lesson planning, collaborating with their colleagues, or attending training. We are also looking at more creative ways when it comes to our specialists, such as two daily sections of physical education.

2. Molly shares that UST would love to have teachers come, as they have a collaborative urban teacher residency for charters called Work & Learn. The scholarships might only be for SPED licensure but might also be for GenEd licensure as well. ACC has the tuition remission clause in its current charter contract, which is 33% off on tuition up to 12 credits per year. Quite a few of UST charters do that.

a) Ms Norma asks if UST could host an info session at ACC for staff. Molly will share the program flyer and the point-of-contact for the program.

G. Annual Meeting preparations

1. Maria and John volunteer to serve on the annual meeting committee.

XII. Announcements

A. Spring Celebration on March 21, 2023

1. A big celebration in Latin America where the kids dress as baby animals and parade around the school, welcoming the spring.

B. UnidosUS Changemakers Summit 2023 in Washington DC, from February 13-15, 2023

1. Ms Norma is attending

C. National School Leaders of Color Convening in Washington DC, from February 26-28, 2023

1. Ms Norma is attending

XIII. Next board meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2023 at 5pm.

XIV. Meeting Adjournment

A. Mark moves to adjourn the meeting. John seconds the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:07pm.

Board Secretary: _____ **Date:** _____