

University Prep Board Meeting – 3/22/21

Minutes

7:00 – 9:00 AM

Call to Order: Kimberlee Sia called Meeting to order

Board Attendance: Cuneyt Akay, Bev Sloan, Emily Eikelberner, Kimberlee Sia, Renae Bellew, Nicholas Martinez, Brenna Copeland, and Juan Pena

Board Absences: Tracey Lovett and Recardo Brooks

Staff Attendance: David Singer (Executive Director), Alastair Dawe (COO), and Liz Suarez (CAO)

Before engaging in the business of the meeting members of the board spent the first 15 minutes catching up with one another and staying connected.

Catch-Up Planning & Budget Implications:

Chief Academic Officer, Liz Suarez led the board through a deep dive examination of the academic catch-up efforts that U Prep is putting in place to ensure all children, especially those in the upper elementary grades, receive the supports and interventions they will need starting in fall of 2021 when they return to full in-person learning. To frame this effort within the context of key existing work within U Prep and the academic program, Ms. Suarez began by revisiting U Prep’s strategic plan along with the “Vision of Excellence” work with the diverse Task Force composed of family members and educators.

As she transitioned to the catch-up plan itself, Liz reviewed the three key approaches of the plan:

- Grade Level is Grade Level
- Rapid Acceleration
- Family & Community Partnerships

In addition, she explained U Prep’s approach to consider three somewhat unique “mini schools” within each campus (i.e. K/1st, 2nd/3rd and 4th/5th), and the connection between those mini schools and the level of investment/energy tied to each group (i.e. more going towards upper elementary given the tighter timeline for catch up).

Upon reviewing the full plan, Alastair Dawe, U Prep’s Chief Operating Officer, shared the anticipated costs for by FY21-22 and FY22-23 associated with all staffing and additional resources. This financial picture included anticipated revenue from federal and local funds such as ESSER.

The board engaged in robust discussion to ensure complete understanding of the plan, its potential benefits, the financial implications, and ways in which families/community will be informed of and connected with the efforts. Further, members of the board made recommendations on external organizations that may be able to help based on some key elements of the plan such as after school tutoring and summer programming. Overall, the board was highly supportive of the recommended approach to catch-up over an anticipated two-year window.

Changes to Teacher Compensation:

Alastair Dawe (COO) presented a recommended update to U Prep's teacher compensation structure that ensures U Prep's figures remain highly competitive with Denver Public Schools. In addition to the annual growth in salary tied to performance, the recommendation included a COLA increase. After discussion on issues such as budget implications and further understanding the local market around teacher pay, the board demonstrated strong support for the recommendation.

DPS Discussion

With the support of Executive Director, David Singer, the board engaged in open dialogue tied to recent rhetoric and decision making by the DPS Board of Education. The focus included conversation tied to issues of enrollment, charter renewal policies, and how the overall political space impacts the conditions in which U Prep operates today and into the future.

Updates:

A few updates were shared prior to the close of the meeting.

- Vaccine distribution (nearly 100% of U Prep's staff is now fully vaccinated)
- CSGF SEED Fund Efforts – U Prep is a semi-finalist and working through the interview process
- Growth efforts – Co-Design is underway with our Family Leadership Team up and running in a new community

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 AM