

University Prep Board Meeting – 9/27/21

Minutes

7:12 – 8:31 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, Juan Pena, and Recardo Brooks

Board Absences: Tracey Lovett

Staff Attendance: David Singer (Executive Director), Alastair Dawe (COO), Liz Suarez (CAO), and Brie Berry (Manger of Fund Development & Corporate Partnerships)

Before engaging in the business of the meeting members of the board spent the first 10 - 15 minutes catching up with one another and staying connected.

Minutes Approval: Brenna motioned to approve our August 2021 minutes, Kimberlee seconded the motion and the board approved the minutes.

Academic Achievement Committee Report & Discussion

The Academic Achievement Committee, chaired by Brenna Copeland, shared a summary memo in advance of the meeting in addition to a dashboard for the full board to review. The memo outlined trends in data as well as key context regarding the unique nature of state assessment data from 2020-21.

- Not all 3rd- 5th graders took the CMAS assessment. 3rd and 5th took ELA and 4th took Math. Not all eligible 3rd-5th graders took CMAS at all; Roughly 70% at Arapahoe and 85% at Steele. These participation rates are much lower than normal (typically 98%+).

During the meeting, board members had an opportunity to hear directly from Liz Suarez, U Prep's Chief Academic Officer (CAO), with a specific focus on the root cause challenges that resulted in areas of underperformance. These included, and were not limited to:

- 50% of children engaging in remote instruction over the course of the year (as well as the challenges of running a fully hybrid school model – half virtual/synchronous and half live/in-person with health-safety guardrails in place)
- Overall insufficient volume of instruction (lost time due to a shortened instructional day to meet altered transportation schedules with the district)
- Attendance challenges both for online and in-person scholars
- Lost staff members at the leadership and teacher levels along with new staff members coming online at a time when onboarding and normal learning/engagement looks different (challenge with fully acclimating the organizational culture and expectations)

Discussion transitioned from analysis of the data and root cause issues resulting in performance challenges to adjustments and efforts being made in the year ahead. Beyond a review of the catch-up plan detailed and approved in the spring, the conversation focused on key efforts including:

- Improving adult culture and the overall adult experience (work in motion with P54 as an external facilitator/support)
- Moving beyond a hyper-focus on literacy and ensuring math instruction gets what it needs as well
 - Minutes in the daily schedule, dedicated intervention windows, high quality Deans of Mathematics in place and secured at both campuses and after school, targeted tutoring

Lastly, the board identified the reality that catching scholars up academically coming out of the spring of 2020 and the 2020-21 school year would be a multi-year effort and require benchmarks along the way to illustrate positive movement. Along those lines, the Academic Achievement Committee recommended having an external review (likely from an org such as School Works) to come in the late winter/early spring to provide a pulse check on instructional practices before waiting to receive end of year data in the summer of 2022. And, they encouraged strong progress monitoring for the staff (and the board) leveraging existing interim assessment data.

Fund Development Report:

The Fund Development Committee with support from staff liaison, Briea Berry, reviewed the fund raising goals for the year (330K base and 500K stretch) along with where the school year is starting in terms of committed funds and expected funds.

Update on Adams 14 Charter Application Submission:

The Executive Director, David Singer, shared a brief update on what's happening with A14 citing multiple articles about the state orders in place and current relationship status with the external managers of the district. In addition, he shared where things were in the charter approval process following submission of the application (including due diligence window and timeline for next steps).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 AM