

## University Prep Annual Board Retreat (11/16/23 – 11/17/23)

### *Minutes*

**Board Attendance:** Cuneyt Akay, Emily Eikelberner, Nicholas Martinez, Brenna Copeland, Jean De La Mata, Veronica Luckett, Recardo Brooks and Bev Sloan

**Board Absence:** Juan Pena

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

**Additional Attendance:** Amy Slothower (Cause Effect Advisory Services) and Brian Eschbacher (Eschbacher Consulting LLC)

The annual board retreat took place over a two-day window, beginning formally at 5:00 PM on 11/16/23 and closing at 3:00 PM on 11/17/23

**State of the Network:** To kick off the retreat, Executive Director, David Singer, walked the board through a deck zooming in on Lead and Lag measure performance YTD. The overview included comparative analysis against previous school years and a clear understanding of where the organization stands at the near mid-point in its 13<sup>th</sup> year in operation.

**Relationship Building:** Over the course of a happy hour and shared meal, board members had a chance to not only engage in organic and joyful conversation, but also share a bit about their personal journey to ultimately joining the board and a wide-range of personal and professional experiences that ultimately drew them to be a part of the U Prep organization.

**Talent & Compensation:** There were two key focus areas/questions covered during this opening session of day 2 including one “big question” that the board was examining.

- **Key Focus 1:** In surveying our new to U Prep talent, what have we learned about our approach to talent recruitment/retention moving forward?
- **Key Focus 2:** How do we ensure our approach to compensation keeps us competitive?
- **Big Question:** Based on what we’ve learned from this years’ new-to-U Prep talent and what we’ve researched in the larger public education ecosystem, **what do we need to do moving forward to be as successful and stable as possible in the area of talent?**

U Prep’s COO shared a wide-range of data-driven information from both surveys and in-person one-on-one meetings with new to U Prep staff. He also gave a ‘lay of the land’ with regards to teacher compensation across the Denver metro landscape and what’s transpired in the short time since spring of ’22 when U Prep transformed its compensation approach. Ultimately, the board agreed that it would be worthwhile to revisit compensation early in the new year, ensuring an attractive package for talent (both existing and future recruits) while ensuring the network operates within reasonably projected parameters tied to future, anticipated public revenues.

**Enrollment, \$’s and our Future:** For this topic/content, U Prep invited Brian Eschbacher to share an updated analysis of city-wide and regional enrollment trends to ensure the U Prep board has a full picture on current and future enrollment realities tied to the geographies that U Prep’s schools work within. While Brian provided a quantitative analysis that painted a full picture of enrollment trends, including key demographic breakdowns, Amy provided a review of the long-term enrollment study she performed on behalf of the network (working with alum families, current families, current staff and potential future families to get a robust picture of what people think and feel about enrollment, demographics composition, U Prep programming, etc.). The board engaged in meaningful and robust conversation with the facilitators and with each other, gaining an understanding of the perspectives

held by a range of key stakeholders, and clearer direction around how to best ensure fully enrolled schools heading into the future.

**The World of PreK and U Prep's Expansion:** The first portion of this section of the retreat provided a deep dive into how PreK funding streams work alongside of key expenses. Given U Prep has operated K – 5 campuses since 2011, it was important to dive into UPK and CCCAP funding streams and also the notion of staffing ratios tied to obtaining and maintaining ECE licensures. With Al Dawe, COO, providing a breakdown of PreK budgeting 101, the board built its muscle in understanding core aspects of the budget they'll ultimately be approving in the spring when U Prep is getting ready to launch its 3<sup>rd</sup> campus and its first-ever PreK program. Ms. Veronica Lockett, Board member and Preschool Director of King Baptist Early Learning was able to provide meaningful additional expertise to the discussion. During the second portion of this section, the board further discussed key aspects of its potential deal with the Suncor Boys & Girls Club where the network is planning to launch its new school, beginning with a PreK program. As part of this discussion, the board reviewed core elements of the draft license agreement and also discussed the approach to facility renovation, ultimately providing further clarity and direction to senior leadership team members.

**Strategic Planning Going Forward:** David Singer, Executive Director, provided the board with a review of key take aways from the conversations that took place over the course of the retreat and how those discussions support strategic planning efforts moving forward. He also shared how U Prep was working with an external consultant, Andrew Bray, to keep the original two goals from the plan approved in Aug. 2019 while updating and revising strategic priorities to bring those goals to life. As he shared, the key focus questions for strategic planning efforts are as follows:

- How are we moving our strategic planning efforts forward so we have clarity on our direction over the next 5 years? Where are we going? How will we get there?

Singer named that he would be working alongside of key team members and with input from the board to draft the plan for approval by spring '24.

**Closing:** The board closed its retreat by sharing one take away they were all holding on to as the organization moves forward. The retreat officially wrapped at 2:50 PM on 11/17/23.