

University Prep Board Retreat – 11/21/24 – 11/22/24

Minutes

Board Attendance (11/21/24): Cuneyt Akay, Nicholas Hernandez, Jean De La Mata, Recardo Brooks, David Braemer and Bev Sloan

Board Attendance (11/22/24): Cuneyt Akay, Nicholas Hernandez, Jean De La Mata, Recardo Brooks, David Braemer, Bev Sloan, and Brenna Copeland (*joined remotely*)

Board Absence(s): Emily Eikelberner (11/21 and 11/22), Brenna Copeland (11/21), David Braemer (11/22)

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

External Consultants: Sudhanshu Malani (*CO Schools Fund*), Andrew Bray (*Strategic Planning Consultant*), Josh Devon (*Afton Partners*)

The retreat opened at 3:25 PM on Thursday, November 21st

Over the course of a two-day retreat at Lone Rock in Bailey, CO, the U Prep Board of Trustees focused on two ‘big questions’ through a series of sessions. The session titles and core elements of the materials reviewed and discussions had are summarized below.

- What does U Prep look like in the next 3 – 5 years?
- How do we define success and how do we get there?

What is Success?:

Board members took time to hear the perspective of all individuals serving on the board along with senior leadership, revisiting what success means for the organization. The session provided a chance to revisit what it means for U Prep scholars to be “winning” in alignment with the mission and vision of the organization and to consider other key metrics or outcomes – qualitative and quantitative – that would demonstrate a healthy and successful network.

State of the Network:

David Singer, Executive Director, refreshed the board on the networks’ goals (Lead and Lag Measures), and provided a detailed updated on performance against those goals through November 2024. Singer’s presentation included an analysis of outcomes in comparison to historical data sets and in relation to the bar the organization has set. Further, there was a review of key financial metrics in addition to examining academic achievement. All was intentionally shared to set the stage for looking forward for the remainder of the retreat.

Grounding in our Current Strategic Plan:

The Board was refreshed on the current strategic plan with a focus on the 5-year goals established in the plan alongside of the strategic priorities to get there. Per the discussion on “what is success?” board members made suggestions as to where there could be slight shifts in prioritization of the strategic priorities and where any revisions may make sense.

The Financial Model, Challenges & Key Decision Making:

With support of external consultants and partners, the U Prep board engaged in a deep dive on the current and future financial model of the network. This analysis and discussion involved understanding the ideal school models for U Prep’s Denver campus along with understanding the new Commerce City campus and its finances as it grows to scale. Within the Commerce City campus analysis was an explicit

component focused on private facility acquisition, associated costs, and impact on overall network finances. The board further discussed key assumptions baked into the financial models and pathways for moving forward to ensure a healthy and resilient financial picture for years to come.

Enrollment & Achievement:

Grounded in data, the board had a chance to further examine the impacts of scholar retention (and attrition) on achievement. Senior leadership highlighted the significant performance gaps between scholars who remain at U Prep year-over-year and those who join later in their elementary career. The conversation centered around ensuring ongoing enrollment health and supporting the network in efforts to further stabilize its student population.

Revisiting our Strategic Plan & Closing:

The retreat closed with a recap of key take aways from all of the sessions and core focus areas for Senior Leaders to carry forward into upcoming board meetings. The Executive Director acknowledged the challenges ahead, while the full board and Senior Leaders all agreed there were pathways forward to address those challenges and ensure the health and sustainability of the network, remaining steadfast in its focus on its mission.

The retreat was formally closed at 12:15 PM on Friday, November 22nd