

## MINUTES

Excel Academy Charter School Board of Trustees  
June 9, 2015

Excel Academy – East Boston, 58 Moore Street, East Boston, MA 02128

Board Members Attending In Person: Chris DeLorey (Chair), Tom Ellis (Treasurer), John Casais (Clerk), Mark Taber, Steve Mugford, Matt Ottmer, Ben Howe

Members of the Public Present: Megan Preiner; Caitlin Reimers Brumme (by phone through 7:50 pm)

Staff Present: Owen Stearns, CEO; Shane Dunn, Managing Director of Strategic Growth and Development; Andrew Solomon, Managing Director of Finance and Operations; Rebecca Korb, Director of Talent; Liam Brenner, Interim CFO/consultant

Board Members Not Present: Ben Howe, Juan Rivera (Vice-Chair), Lauren Kushman, Steve Mugford, Minnie Joung, Susan Passoni

Chris DeLorey, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm and presided over the meeting. Shane Dunn kept the minutes of the meeting. Chris DeLorey ascertained that sufficient Trustees were present at the meeting, and that, accordingly, a quorum existed.

### 1. STUDENT SPEAKER

One 8<sup>th</sup> grade student from Excel Academy – East Boston delivered her 8<sup>th</sup> grade student speech.

### 2. NEW BOARD MEMBER

Caitlin Reimers Brumme, Director at Social Finance and a member of Excel Academy's Director's Council, was introduced as a potential new candidate for the Governing Board and joined by phone. Prior to the meeting, Caitlin submitted a statement of interest and qualifications. At the meeting she presented her background via phone.

After presenting, Caitlin hung up and the board voted on her candidacy.

### 3. TALENT UPDATE

Rebecca Korb, Excel's Director of Talent, gave a robust overview of the process and strategy of talent recruitment and retention at Excel. She presented a number of slides showing the breakdown of staff openings, interested applicants, and demographics of applicants over the past few years. She and Owen said we are expecting around 20 percent staff attrition across the network this year, a little higher than previous years but still less than the norm across high performing urban charter schools.

Rebecca reviewed with the board why the number of applicants has declined over the past couple of years. The primary driver appears to be Boston Public Schools' new policy (influenced by charter practices) to start its hiring period much sooner, which may impact the number of applicants applying to work at charter schools.

Board members asked questions related to compensation of new and returning staff and the comparison to Boston Public Schools, as well as if we're competitive with other charter schools. Owen mentioned we created specific salary bands a few years ago and should adjust our salary scales again in the near term. The board also asked questions around whether our teachers need certain certifications to teach at our schools.

Matt Ottmer asked a specific question on whether we have been able to create a system or model that gives us data on predicting success before hiring. Rebecca said there are some patterns identifying productive, successful hires, but we do not yet have a predictive model.

After her presentation, Rebecca Korb left the meeting.

#### **4. FINANCE UPDATE**

Liam Brenner, Excel's interim CFO/consultant, provided the board with an updated budget and long-term financial snapshot. He and Andrew highlighted that there were some positive developments since the April board meeting affecting our short- and long-term budgets, including a firm understanding of increased tuition reimbursement, higher than expected expense reductions across the network, and increased projected fundraising revenue. On the High School budget front, total facilities costs so far have been lower than expected while programmatic costs are higher than originally budgeted.

The board spent some time asking about our SPED student population, knowing the increase in SPED students is starting to strain our budget and longer term planning. Chris DeLorey mentioned that while we should be proud to be serving more and more SPED students each year, at some point there is a tipping point and it could fundamentally alter our mission and model.

Liam also reiterated how our updated budget documents now include a line item at the bottom showing months of cash on hand to cover operating costs.

#### **5. FUNDRAISING UPDATE**

Shane updated the board on our collective fundraising success. Over \$3.3M had been raised up to that point, with more expected through the end of the year due to the Celebration of Excellence.

Shane then reviewed the strategy and plans for the upcoming Celebration of Excellence event on June 17 with Governor Charlie Baker, including appropriate in-room fundraising goals and procedures.

#### **6. FY16 BOARD MEETING DATES**

Shane Dunn proposed dates for fiscal year 2016 board meetings.

- Monday, September 14, 2015, 7:30-9:00 am (Excel Academy Charter High School, 7 Elkins Street, South Boston, MA)
- Tuesday, October 27, 2015, 6:30-8:30 pm (Excel Academy – East Boston, 58 Moore Street, East Boston, MA)
- Tuesday, December 8, 2015, 7:30-9:00 am (Location TBD)
- Tuesday, January 26, 2016, 7:30-9:00 am (Excel Academy Charter High School, 7 Elkins Street, South Boston, MA)
- Thursday April 14, 2016, All-Day Retreat and Annual Meeting (Location TBD)
- Tuesday, June 7, 2016, 6:30-8:30 pm (Excel Academy – Orient Heights)

#### **7. SLATE OF VOTES**

##### Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the April 16, 2015 Annual Meeting were approved unanimously.

MOTION BY TOM ELLIS, SECOND BY JOHN CASAIS. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

##### Caitlin Reimers Brumme as new voting board member

The Board unanimously approved Caitlin Reimers Brumme as voting board member, pending Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approval.

MOTION BY CHRIS DELOREY. SECOND BY TOM ELLIS. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

Renewed board terms

New three-year terms for Chris DeLorey and Juan Rivera were unanimously approved. Mark Taber, also up for a renewal, chose to resign following the meeting.

MOTION BY TOM ELLIS. SECOND BY MATT OTTMER. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

FY16 Budget

The FY16 budget was unanimously approved.

MOTION BY JOHN CASAIS. SECOND BY BEN HOWE. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

FY16 Board Meeting Dates

MOTION BY MATT OTTMER. SECOND BY BEN HOWE. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

- 1) April 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes
- 2) Caitlin Reimers Brumme Statement of Interest
- 3) FY16 Budget and 5-Year Budget Model Documents
- 4) Fundraising Update Document/Celebration of Excellence Registration List
- 5) Proposed FY16 Board Meeting Dates

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Chris DeLorey, Chair