



**THE MIAMI BOARDING SCHOOL, INC.
(d/b/a The SEED School of Miami)**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 12 PM

Location: The SEED School of Miami
Building 1, Suite 208, Florida Memorial University, Miami Gardens, FL

Participating Directors: Pat Gannon, Judge Porth, Judge Lederman, Virginia Emmons, Melanie Damian, Michelle Mason (phone), Robert Gordon

Participating Staff: Lesley Poole (phone), Kara Locke, Fran Allegra, Jasmine Morgan, Chyla Graham

Call to Order & Welcome

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 12:09 PM.

Items of Order

Review of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2014 Board meeting (a copy of the minutes were provided in the Board materials) was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Ms. Allegra reminded Board members of the charter requirements: Conflict of Interest Disclosure and MDCPS Background Screening.

Board appointments

Ms. Allegra explained to the Board that there will be an interim meeting of the governance committee regarding the names of four individuals to appoint to the Board. Ms. Damian asked about the process for the governor to appoint members to the Board. Ms. Poole explained that we will gather the names to recommend and present the names to his office.

Ms. Damian recommended that the Governance Committee meet in the interim to discuss Board appointments and asked if anyone else was interested in being on the committee. Judge Porth volunteered to be on the committee.

School/Program Updates

Head of School, Kara Locke, called the Board's attention to the Programmatic Board Report included in the board packet and provided the following summary:

2nd Quarter FTE

SEED Miami reported 61 students for the February FTE (Full Time Equivalent) survey.

Florida Standard Assessment

Florida Standard Assessment (FSA) testing is new this year. SEED Miami must administer the FSA in the same manner as other MDCPS schools. The reading and math exams will be computer based. IT Director Wladimir Augustin is assuring that all test can run on the SEED Miami network simultaneously.

Ms. Emmons asked how the testing will affect the school grade. Ms. Locke responded as follows: The testing is a critical way to measure growth of the school but also AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). The State has discussed to what degree test scores will count towards the school's grade because there is no current grading scale as this is the inaugural year for the test. The school grade is not expected until November which is unfair timing to fix any issues. SEED Miami is currently classified as an alternative school and therefore the grade calculation is different from a traditional school. SEED Miami will continue to classify itself as an alternative school in the middle school years to have time to close the academic gaps. The school is considering reclassification so that the classification does not stigmatize students' college admissions applications.

Student/Staff Recruitment

Students must submit applications by March 30th to enter the April lottery; applications received after March 30th are added to the waitlist.

Open houses for prospective students have had a large turnout including three students from Big Brothers Big Sisters. Thirty-Six home visits have been completed for prospective students. Four students on the list for next year's class are the sibling of a current student. Mr. Gordon asked how the school was being marketed to the community. Ms. Locke responded that she will forward marketing materials to the Board and also mentioned recent advertisement on NBC 6 and in the Miami Times.

Open house for prospective staff was held last Saturday. Although the turnout was impressive a majority of the attendees were applying for student life or RA positions and only a handful of attendees were interested in applying for teaching positions. SEED Miami is currently looking for teachers in math and science and has historically had more difficulty hiring for these positions. The preference is also to hire teachers who hold a secondary certification. The Board could provide a one-year waiver for teachers who are in the process of getting this credential, but the preference is to hire teachers who have this certification. July 7th is the first day of staff training for new hires. Returning staff will return the first week of August. Mr. Gordon inquired whether Ms. Locke has spoken to Teach for America (TFA). Ms. Locke responded that the TFA alumni coordinator has been a great resource and that some TFA alumni came to the career fair held last week.

Summer Program w/ Breakthrough; Big Brothers/Sisters; Robotics

Mr. Gordon asked for an update on conversations between SEED Miami and Breakthrough. Ms. Allegra responded that the school is planning to give Breakthrough a tour of the school. Ms. Damion responded that Breakthrough has been looking at a new model for a summer only program that could work with the SEED program. The proposed program would be 6 weeks; SEED Miami would have to fundraise for the program and split the costs 50/50 with Breakthrough. Ms. Damion explained that the typical program for Breakthrough is to provide high performing at-risk youth with intense academic training at private schools during the summer and the goal of getting the student into a private school. The pilot program for SEED would provide intense academic training without recruiting the students to a private school.

SEED Miami is finalizing a plan to have 16 Big Brothers/Sisters partner with students. The school would like to have current FMU students be a part of the program and received commitments for mentors to start this Sunday by providing one hour per week of mentoring support, check-ins and structured time with a mentor.

SEED Miami students are looking forward to the robotics competition is in May. All students can attend the competition for free and be a part of the program if they present a student ID. Mr. Gordon noted that SEED Miami has been the fastest at understanding the program and moving forward, whereas other school partnerships take a while to move forward with the program.

Charter School Amendments

The Charter Contract must be amended for two reasons: (1) to add the additional Washington Square classroom space and (2) to use a student information system other than Pinnacle. The Washington Square classroom space consists of 11 large classrooms that used to be part of Everest College. The lease for the classroom space has been signed.

Mr. Gordon inquired whether a software solution other than Pinnacle had been selected. Ms. Locke responded that SEED DC and SEED MD use Power School, however there are issues with Power School that have not been ironed out. Ms. Locke announced that SEED Miami is looking to use Kickboard because of its ability to warehouse data; the software is cloud based and would allow data analyst at the Foundation to access data.

A motion to approve the amendments to the Charter Agreement was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Operational, Financial and Strategic Updates

Ms. Allegra introduced SEED Miami's new Director of Finance, Chyla Graham. Ms. Graham introduced herself and reported that she is currently working on preparing the RFP for the audit as the school's audit report is due September 1st. Ms. Allegra explained that they will be seeking the board's feedback on which accountants/accounting firms to approach for quotes. Ms. Damian responded that Educate Tomorrow has used Octavio Verdeja a local accountant who is also on the board of Beacon Prep. Ms. Allegra responded that the school is also seeking the Foundation's opinion and that the Foundation may prefer an accountant/accounting firm with national presence because of the current fundraising campaign. Ms. Allegra explained that the school will likely finish under budget for this first year due to a few positions that were not filled. Ms. Allegra also noted that she is in the process of completing next year's budget for the

board's review; however, there are certain inputs yet to be received such as a quote for food service. Ms. Allegra noted that Ms. Locke will move forward with personnel items. Ms. Damian suggested adding Jaret Davis and Aviva Budd to the finance committee.

The tight timeframe for turning an audit by September 1 was discussed. Ms. Allegra explained that the year ends June 30th and Ms. Graham will close the books on July 20th, which does not leave a lot of time to prepare and finalize an audit. Ms. Gordon explained that Ms. Graham's experience will help expedite the process as timing typically depends on the quality of the information received.

Ms. Allegra suggested having a special meeting before September 1st. Ms. Damian suggested skipping the June board meeting and having a special meeting in May or August. Ms. Allegra pointed out that in early May we may know the result of the legislative session.

Board Member Update

Ms. Damian introduced new board member Judge Porth. Judge Porth introduced himself and offered to visit Rep. Fresen next week during a circuit judges conference. Ms. Damian asked if Judge Porth had any recommendations for lobbying help. Judge Porth recommended Ellyn Bogdanoff, a former legislator who advocates for children's issues.

Site Update

Permanent Site

Ms. Damian reported that only minor points remain to be negotiated with the Kendell lease and that the lease must be approved by the County Commissioner. Ms. Allegra explained that she is attempting to get on the County Commissioner's agenda April 21st and will also meet with the chairman in light of a new process he has implemented. Judge Lederman asked whether there was an opposition to the lease. Ms. Allegra responded 'no' and that her concern is making sure the lease does not get stuck in administrative procedures. Judge Lederman asked whether there are any zoning issues. Ms. Allegra responded 'no' and that the property is already deed restricted for education purposes. Ms. Damian informed the board that there would be one last effort to negotiate with FMU, but that there is little hope that they will agree as FMU hopes to increase enrollment and therefore have a need for the space SEED is occupying.

Ms. Emmons asked whether anyone talked to St. Thomas University as it is her understanding that they have an empty dorm and a provost who is very supportive of SEED. Ms. Allegra responded that she spoke with the archdiocese and understands that the archdiocese controls decisions about land use; Ms. Poole and Ms. Allegra had a meeting with the archdiocese last summer. It was recommended that SEED speak with Father O'Neil and Raj Vinnakota sent a proposal within a letter.

Mr. Gordon asked whether Kendall Cottages was undesirable. Ms. Allegra responded 'no', but that they were thinking of properties that would be the most cost efficient. The financial benefit is lost if the school has to build on FMU. SEED has been excited about Kendall for a long time, but community leaders believe that SEED and FMU are a great fit. Judge Porth asked whether SEED/FMU relationships like the Big Brothers Big Sisters program would continue after SEED moved to Kendall. Ms. Locke responded that FMU is excited about the Big Brothers partnership because it allows the students without off campus transportation to engage with the program. Mr. Gannon also added that Educate Tomorrow will have connections in the Kendall area and

that there is also a magnet engineering school that would be a good partner. Ms. Allegra noted that a relationship with the magnet school is beneficial because the construction at Kendall will be in phases and the ability to use a gym or auditorium nearby is valuable.

Year 2 Site

Ms. Allegra noted that construction should start in July so that by next summer there is a place to house and provide classrooms for 180 students. The [SEED Foundation] building committee (Chair Melanie Damian is a member) is leading the capital campaign and is currently focused on ensuring that there is enough money for architects and that the lease is resolved of any zoning issues. The campaign has a goal of \$14 million.

Ms. Emmons asked whether Ms. Locke needed help with securing community partners. Ms. Locke responded that the best way to invite potential partners to the school is to have them attend a POE tour the third Wednesday of every month. Ms. Locke also responded that she would work with Tiffany Graver-Smith on sending a list to board members regarding current and future needs. Ms. Locke mentioned that corporate sponsorship of school celebrations is welcomed. For example, the school is having a celebration for honor roll students at the Little Haiti Cultural Center.

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Minutes drafted by Jasmine-Simone Morgan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Damian', is written over a horizontal line.

Melanie Damian, Esquire
Chair, The SEED School of Miami Board of Directors