

**THE MIAMI BOARDING SCHOOL, INC.  
(DBA The SEED School of Miami)**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Tuesday, September 11, 2018 | 12:00 pm**

*Participating Directors:* Melanie Damian, Dorothy Terrell, Virginia Emmons, Stuart Israelson, Jason Bloch, Robert Gordon, Aviva Budd

*Participating Staff:* Kara Locke, Giovanna Maldonado, Tiffany Graver-Smith, Galia Pennekamp

*Participating Contractors:* Sean Regan, George Cabrera

**Call to Order & Welcome**

A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 12:04. The Chair, Melanie Damian, welcomed members to the first quarterly Board meeting of the 2018-2019 academic school year.

**Governance Items**

The following dates are proposed changes to the FY19 Board meeting calendar to meet Charter Tools requirements: October 31, 2018, January 16, 2019, April 24, 2019, and June 19, 2019. The board agreed to these new dates.

**Adoption of Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2018 Board meeting (a copy of the proposed minutes was provided in the meeting materials) was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

**Chair Person's Report**

Tiffany Graver-Smith provides the Directors with the Board requirements for the 2018-2019 academic year. SEED Miami is actively recruiting prospective Board members. Prospective Board members are asked to tour SEED Miami and meet with the Governance Committee Chair, Virginia Emmons, and the Head of School, Dr. Kara Locke. Upon their continued interest in serving on the Board, Mrs. Emmons will recommend their membership to the Board for a vote by the current Directors at the next quarterly meeting. Miami-Dade County Public Schools requires SEED Miami Board members to complete certain governance certain governance

requirements including: 4-hour online training and/or a 2-hour refresher course every 3 years for current Board members, background and fingerprint screening prior to their onboarding as an “official” Board member. Board members must also meet SEED Miami’s “give or get” fundraising requirement of \$10,000.

Board Chair, Melanie Damian, encourages the Board to assist with recruiting new Board members to help support SEED Miami’s annual giving and capital campaign goals. Ms. Damian announces the removal of SEED Miami Board member, Andrew Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan was unable to complete his fingerprint requirements within 30 days of his Board nomination from the October 12, 2017 Board meeting. Ms. Damian accepts Mr. Kaplan’s resignation and agrees to revoke him back on to the Board in October pending completion of his clearance responsibilities.

### **Site Report**

The SEED Foundation’s Campus Development Manager, Sean Regan, provides the Board with an update on SEED Miami’s permanent campus. The SEED School of Miami recently met with M-DCPS to discuss our facilities, permanent campus construction, and our current contract. The meeting was scheduled to address the fact that contrary to their contractual obligation, M-DCPS did not adhere to the terms of their agreement with SEED Miami to turn over the remaining classrooms to SEED on June 30, 2018. Instead, Westview MS will continue to utilize four classrooms in the north wing of the school for the 1819 school year. M-DCPS officials committed to SEED that the remainder of the classrooms would be given to SEED for the onset of the 2019-2020 school year and that to guarantee this, they were invested money into a 4-classroom ESE annex for Westview’s program.

Regarding the dormitories, foundation work at Westview needs to be completed in order for installation to commence. The project has already been delayed one year and the dorms are sitting in storage until such time as the district has completed the necessary groundwork. If M-DCPS pushes forward and fully adheres to their commitment, Mr. Regan expressed that a June deadline should be feasible.

In the meantime, staff are making the temporary dormitory at Hotel Roma work for now, but it is very expensive to stay there (\$87K/month). Additionally, it will not be able to accommodate all SEED students moving into the 2019-2020 academic school year, so it is imperative that the dormitory installation schedule be met.

The Board expressed concerns with the timeline given our history with MDCPS. SEED Miami is exploring various options as a result of MDCPS failed agreements and verbal promises. SEED is accruing expenses on a monthly basis as a result of these delays (\$87k).

Mr. Regan shared that the District replaced the general contractor involved with the FIU bridge collapse. He is waiting for an updated bid schedule from M-DCPS and will send out the names of proposed contractors out for bid to BOD. Per Jason Bloch, he believes it is a statute that we can find our own contractor if we have no bids.

## **Operational, Financial and Strategic Updates**

### *Program Update*

Dr. Locke, SEED Miami's Head of School, requested the Board to approve a motion for ESE Professor, Christopher Roblesz while he works on his math certification. A motion to approve the Out of Field Waiver for Professor Roblesz Board meeting was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Dr. Locke provided the Board of Directors with a programmatic update. The programmatic report was broken up into two parts: 2017-2018 performance data and demographic data for the 2018-2019 school year.

With regard to the 17-18 performance data, FSA gains are measured in accordance with the FLDOE Goal #5 citing 50% of SEED Miami students will make learning gains (as defined by the Florida Department of Education) on the 2018 FSA mathematics and reading exams. During the 2017-2018 Florida Standards Assessment test of FSA, students made obvious gains in reading and writing. The report provided to the Board demonstrates the majority of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders either made Learning Gains or increased their Reading scale scores between the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school year. The chart also illustrated that 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade math are areas of focus heading into the 2018-2019 school year.

The Civics End-of-Course Assessment or EOC, was given to all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. This assessment is designed to measure a student's level of success. Historically students have performed very well and we have seen steady growth over the past 4 years. The percentage of students who scored level 3 or higher in 2018 (65%) compared to 2017 (59%) and 2016 (57%). The passing rate on the EOC for M-DCPS was only marginally higher than the pass rate for SEED Miami students.

An area of growth for SEED Miami is demonstrated on page 19-20 of the programmatic report, Science. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science End-Of-Course Exam or EOC is designed to measure a student's level of success with the statewide Science standards. 27% of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students scored a Level 3 (Satisfactory), Level 4 (Proficient), or Level 5 (Mastery) on the EOC. Although SEED's combined Level 3-5 rates are lower (27%) than the M-DCPS average (44%), our percentage of students scoring a Level 3 (23%) is the same as the District average. This illustrates the need to push further acceleration of our science program to increase the number of students in the Level 4 and 5 ranges.

In order for SEED Miami to go from "good to great", we began Advanced Placement courses at the high school level. Additionally, SEED's High School Directors are looking for additional afterschool activities like the Mock Trial through the University of Miami Street Law team, which originated through a partnership from a recent tour of SEED Miami.

The ACT Aspire Summative Assessment is an annual standards-based assessment linked to ACT College Readiness Benchmarks and aligned with the Common Core Standards. SEED Miami students tested in four subject areas, English, Reading, Math, Writing, and Science. Across the

network, and as a national trend, our performance illustrates the math achievement scores require the most attention for improvement moving forward. SEED Miami has outperformed the other SEED schools in the areas of writing and grammar standards. SEED Miami attributes our success in this area to the deliberate instruction of writing during the middle school years.

Moving forward, SEED Miami will no longer administer the ACT Aspire Summative Assessment. Instead, SEED Miami will administer the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment. The assessment differentiates by learner by adjusting to each student's responses creating a personalized assessment experience that accurately measure performance.

SEED Miami uses the Readers/Writers Workshop balanced literacy curriculum and the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) leveled reading assessment. 45% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently reading at or above grade level. Only 16% of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were reading at or above grade level when the school year began. Sixth grade students increased close to 2 grade levels in reading throughout the 2017-2018 school year.

54% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are currently reading at or above grade level. Only 26% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were reading at or above grade level when the school year began. Seventh grade students increased an average of 1.18 grade levels in reading throughout the 2017-2018 school year.

Lastly, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students increased an average of 0.94 grade levels in reading. Only 53% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were reading at or above grade level at the start of the school year. 83% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are currently reading at or above grade level.

SEED Miami's staff retention rate for the 2018-2019 year is 93%. 16 out of 16 Student Life Counselors, 8 of 8 Overnight Resident Advisors, and 15 out of 19 Professors granted a return offer to SEED this school year. The SEED networks retention rate is 85% and SEED Miami exceeded that goal. In an effort to provide a pipeline of leadership growth opportunities, SEED Miami added 5 intermediary programmatic leadership roles for the 2018 school year.

Lastly, the 2017-2018 student persistence data demonstrates the number of students SEED Miami has retained and lost. 89% of students re-enrolled in June 2018. Of the 206 students enrolled in June 2018, 183 re-enrolled for the 2018-2019 school year. This statistic is the lowest percentage compared to year's past which was approximately 95%. The number of students who withdrew between June 2018 and August 2018 cited it was due to a "Lack of interest in Boarding Environment" increased from previous school years. This is mainly attributed to a dissatisfaction with the temporary dormitory site and lack of a permanent dormitory facility.

Many of the oldest students who withdrew from SEED cited their frustrations with progress on dormitory construction and programmatic challenges associated with dual campuses as reasons for their departures. SEED Miami's Director of Admissions, Eric Lewis, will circulate to the Board their Admission's criteria. Dr. Locke encourages the Board to share within their professional network.

The 2017-2018 6<sup>th</sup> grade student demographics demonstrates the geographic distribution amongst SEED Miami scholars. 6 students represent Broward County and 59 represent Miami-Dade County.

#### *HR Report*

Ms. Maldonado explains to the Board, going into the 2018-2019 academic year, SEED has experienced the highest number of vacancies to date. SEED Miami's HR Generalist position became vacant early in the summer 2018 due to family matters which has impacted staff recruitment. However, in general, the state of Florida is experiencing a high volume of teacher shortages. Teachers interested in working at SEED Miami must be certified and SEED has candidates in the pipeline. SEED Miami plans to re-evaluate teacher salaries to remain competitive with similar charter schools. We currently pay approximately 5% more than the school district; however, it is less than our competitor charter schools.

#### *Finance Report*

Ms. Damian shared with the board that the school would be seeking a full-time Director of Finance to start by November 01, 2018. Over the past school year, SEED Miami has contracted these responsibilities to a consulting group (Cabrera Consulting Group, Inc.). The board chair, and school leadership agreed that having an on-site, full-time Director of Finance is a more appropriate model to manage SEED's financial operations. Ms. Maldonado will circulate to the Board a job description to share within their networks. The board had further discussion regarding the transition of financial management services from this consulting group to on-site personnel. A call has been scheduled for Friday, September 14 at 2:30 via teleconference with Verdeja, De Armas & Trujillo, LLP for an audit summary.

Mr. Cabrera provides the Board with an explanation detailing the Summary Balance Sheet provided to the Board. Despite cash flow concerns associated with Hurricane Irma, SEED Miami closed the year appropriately. The hurricane and our transition created a lot of heavy, unexpected financial burdens on SEED Miami. Cash flow continues to be an ongoing concern for SEED Miami as we head into the new fiscal year with SEED's overlapping occupancy expenses.

Ms. Maldonado explains to the Board SEED Miami was awarded \$154,000 for Title I. SEED Miami is requesting the Board to approve the funds to be applied to Teacher Salaries, supplemental instructional materials, printing and 1% for Parental Involvement.

A motion to approve the Title I Budget was made, abstained by SEED Board member, Jason Bloch, because he has not reviewed the Title I budget, seconded and passed.

#### *Development Update*

Galia Pennekamp, Director of Development: Capital Campaign, explains her strategy involving a multi-pronged effort including individual, corporations, foundations, and events to meet SEED Miami's capital campaign goal of \$18.1 million. SEED needs to raise \$3.1 million by December

2018. Ms. Pennekamp describes her law firm strategy and passes out her strategic plan to the Board. Ms. Pennekamp encourages the Board for support with new introductions to SEED, invitations to tour, and more awareness in the community.

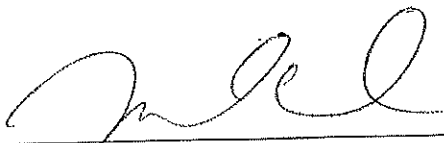
Mrs. Graver-Smith, Director of Development: Annual Giving, provided a development update for SEED's annual giving goal. SEED's annual giving fundraising goal this fiscal year is \$1.4 million. After scheduled pledge payments, SEED needs to raise \$450,000 in new gifts. However, Mrs. Graver-Smith requests the board to continue their focus on the \$1.4 million dollars in the event of any unexpected funding shortfalls. With the money SEED Miami will raise this year, they have hired a new music teacher with the expansion of our music education offerings. SEED scholars will each have access to a personal laptop each day, and we have added a much needed 4th mental health counselor. Additional support would provide the funds necessary to hire a college counselor who is critical to our college completion model. Mrs. Graver-Smith requests the Board's help with the Development teams fundraising efforts through a variety of strategic efforts such as:

- The third Wednesday of every month at 10:00, the development team hosts a tour to showcase the school and meet with students and staff. Mrs. Graver-Smith encourages the Board to invite their networks to visit SEED Miami.
- This October, SEED Miami is hosting their 5th Annual Dream Ceremony. For those who don't know about this ceremony, our newest class of 6th graders will share their dreams for the future and receive pins from community leaders, officially welcoming them into SEED.
- Give Miami Day is on November 15th. Last year SEED Miami raised just over 22,000 during this 24-hour online giving event. The Miami Foundation will maximize each gift by making a bonus gift for every donation between \$25-\$10,000. Mrs. Graver-Smith reminds the Board this is an option to make the Board commitments through.

Lastly, Mrs. Graver-Smith asked the Board to meet one on one with Mrs. Pennekamp and herself, to strategize on this year's fundraising efforts.

Meeting adjourned 2:24

Minutes drafted by Tiffany Graver-Smith



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