

# MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF EWING MARION KAUFFMAN SCHOOL, INC

1.10.2023

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Ewing Marion Kauffman School, Inc., a Missouri nonprofit corporation exempt from federal taxation under Internal Revenue Code § 501(c)(3), was held at its headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri on December 11, 2023, and by Zoom such that all could hear and be heard and see and be seen, pursuant to public notice provided at least 24 hours in advance, including confirmation that the accurate Zoom link was part of the public notice.

The following directors participated: Jerry Williams, chair; Kelly Barnes, Vickie Harris, Brett Hembree, and Juan Rangel.

Also participating from the School were Hannah Lofthus, President/CEO; Kristin Bechard, Treasurer; John Tyler, Secretary and General Counsel.

No members from the community were present.

Mr. Williams chaired the meeting. Mr. Tyler served as secretary. Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 8:34 am, welcomed those in attendance, and previewed the agenda.

After discussion and upon motion duly made (Rangel) and seconded (Hembree), the board unanimously approved the minutes from its meetings of November 8, 2023 and December 11, 2023.

Mr. Williams offered comments as board chair, including his enthusiasm for the School's opportunities for 2024 and recruiting for new potential board members, especially someone with expertise in finance, accounting, and/or audit.

## Leadership Report

Ms. Hannah provided her leadership report, including highlighting "School wins" including the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in the fall; and alumni homecoming last weekend that featured about 48 alumni who interacted with current juniors and seniors on various topics. She summarized schedules and topics for upcoming board meetings, including that the February meeting will be on January 31, there will be no meeting in March, and topics for the April and May board meetings to be led by Katie Pasniewski in light of Ms. Lofthus planned maternity leave. Discussion occurred throughout.

Ms. Lofthus updated the board on planning for covering her maternity leave using a two-person plan with Ms. Pasniewski being the point person for the board. Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace, President/CEO of the Kauffman Foundation, will be touring the facility in February for the first time. Ms. Lofthus participated in meetings with the Foundation's strategic planning consultant. Discussion occurred throughout, including about how personnel changes at the Foundation with Dr. Burns-Wallace's arrival and Mr. North's departure affect relationships with the School, which seem to continue to be very positive for the present and future as discussions continue about arriving at a grant amount.

Ms. Lofthus provided information about College Access and Success Department, including a general overview of the Department's purpose in supporting post-secondary pathways that result in employment in their desired field, whether through college or otherwise. She introduced the six-person team and their various responsibilities. She highlighted areas of strength, including comparators being Pembroke, Barstow, and other college access priority institutions locally and nationally; high acceptance (97% v. 82% charter management organizations (CMO)) and matriculation (74% v. 63% CMO) rates; strong diversity in programs; high rate of selection for prestigious awards; and high persistence rates – all relative to the benchmarks. The Kauffman

School is the only member of the CMO group without a K-4 program. Discussion occurred throughout, including differentiating among acceptance, matriculation, and persistence categories.

She highlighted some of the achievements of alumni, including cosmetology, Metropolitan Community College, Brown, Yale, Harvard, and the dual enrollment program. Discussion followed, including about the Bluford Health Leadership Institute to increase the pipeline of BIPOC students getting into the healthcare fields and other programs for students to have exposure to various fields (15), although these programs do not necessarily lead to jobs after high school. Discussion continued, including about how board members and their organizations can be involved.

Ms. Lofthus presented information about students who have been finalists for Questbridge scholarships and the schools to which they are matched with 29% of applicants being matched compared with 10% of applicants nationally. Discussion followed.

She summarized persistence and graduation rates and lessons learned over time to increase persistence rates, which are all higher than the comparator CMO graduation rates of 25% at 32% and 43% for the classes of 2022 and 2024 (college graduation years).

Areas of improvement for the Department's work include improving the quality of personal statements and post-secondary application materials, improving matching with schools that have experience graduating BIPOC students at high rates which are less likely to be non-tier one schools. Those graduation rates are the best predictor of student success, even over and above having a full scholarship to a school with low BIPOC graduation rates.

Another area of improvement is scholarship application submissions, which is essential because financial impediments often are a reason for lack of persistence. This is another area in which a balance needs to be struck between supporting students and their efforts versus being over-involved in doing and/or forcing those efforts. Greater independence has been shown to contribute to better and higher degrees of persistence. Discussion followed, including about how personal statements can be used to advance admissions in light of the Supreme Court's decision in the Harvard/North Carolina cases. The Department works closely with college recruiters about how best to approach these topics. This work is also tied into learning in early grades on writing skills, which are substantially behind when they join the School.

Ms. Lofthus summarized data on persistence in post-secondary programs compared to goals, including for staying for a second year. Reasons for not meeting goals include financial need, student independence and failure to get help and/or follow through (perhaps because of too much support at the School). A second reason is the need to develop better socio-emotional skills, about which Ms. Lofthus summarized steps to be taken. A third gap is "purpose, passion, and plan" or the absence of a long-term goal that is often critical for intrinsic motivation, along with steps the School can take to help students align purpose, passion, and planning.

Discussion followed, including great appreciation for the information, presentation, and discussion.

Katie Pasniewski, Chief Operating Officer, joined the meeting.

## Finance Report

Ms. Pasniewski presented the finance report, including a summary of the discussions and recommendations from the Finance Committee meeting.

After discussion and upon the recommendation from the Finance Committee, the board unanimously approved the finance report and check registry.

Ms. Pasniewski highlighted the discussion about a cash management strategy and resolution, including a summary of the resolution by Mr. Tyler and the Committee's recommendation of the substance of the resolution.

After discussion and upon motion duly made (Rangel) and seconded (Hembree), the board unanimously approved the resolution attached as Exhibit A.

#### Governance Report

Ms. Pasniewski described the Governance Committee's discussion of the MCPSC compliance requirement.

After discussion and upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the board unanimously acknowledged and approved the policy from the Missouri Charter Public School Commission attached as Exhibit B and summarized on page 34 of the materials distributed in advance of the current board meeting.

Ms. Pasniewski described the Governance Committee's discussion of the changes to the grading policy and the rationale therefore.

After discussion and upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the board unanimously approved changes to the grading policy as summarized on page 34 of the materials distributed in advance of the current board meeting and more specifically included on pages 9-21 of the materials distributed as part of the Governance Committee meeting on January 8, 2024 and incorporated herein by reference.

Ms. Pasniewski described the Governance Committee's discussion of delegating responsibilities during Mr. Lofthus' maternity leave, including the need to designate a person to carry out the CEO's duties and to be granted the CEO's authority levels in order to perform those duties, the experience during Ms. Lofthus' sabbatical, Ms. Pasniewski's success in performing that role during the sabbatical, and the recommendation that she again be so designated.

After discussion and upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the board unanimously approved authorizing Katie Pasniewski, the School's COO, to carry out the responsibilities of the CEO and assume the authorities and obligations of the CEO, beginning on the date on which Ms. Loftus starts her maternity leave and terminating on the date on which Ms. Lofthus maternity leave ends, including that Ms. Pasniewski will provide written notice to the board regarding the beginning and ending dates of Ms. Lofthus' maternity leave with as much advance notice is reasonable under the circumstances.

#### Community Forum

There was no community forum because no community members were present.

Mr. Rangel encouraged board members to send him, as chair of the Governance Committee, any and all recommendations for potential board members – being mindful of the Missouri law requirement that charter board members reside in Missouri.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:57 am.

John Tyler, Secretary