Democracy Prep Baton Rouge

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 6, 2019 at 6:30 PM

Location
4055 Prescott Rd. Baton Rouge, LA 70805

Directors Present
C. Lamond, E. Campbell, E. Martin, J. Richey, M. Walters

Directors Absent
A. d’Aquin

Guests Present
C. Raymond, G. Chassee, K. Daniels, K. Anker, L. Jones Easton, M. Gieg, N. Trivers

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

E. Martin called a meeting of the board of directors of Democracy Prep Baton Rouge to order on Tuesday Aug 6, 2019 @ 6:32 PM at 4055 Prescott Rd. Baton Rouge, LA 70805.

C. Approve Minutes

E. Campbell made a motion to approve minutes from the Board Meeting on 06-04-19. C. Lamond seconded the motion.

The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.
Linda Easton and Michelle Gieg should be labeled as present for the June 4, 2019 meeting.

D. Public Comments: None
II. School Update

A. School Update

Ms. Michelle Gieg, Executive Director of Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, talked about overall results from last school year. STEP data, a reading growth assessment, showed that Grades 4 & 5 showed remarkable growth. Looking to LEAP2025, the annual state test, the analysis of data shows that the longer a scholar stays enrolled here at DPBR, the higher their level of achievement. To try and close the first-year-enrolled gap, DPBR will be encouraging an extended morning stay for tutoring. Families have had a good response to the plan for extra time with teachers.

Ms. Gieg shared a document showing the breakdown of mastery and advanced averages throughout the school. In response to LEAP results, DPBR has fully aligned the curriculum to tier one curriculum, as rated by the Louisiana Department of Education, and brought in tier one-rated vendors to teach support curriculum implementation. Ms. Gieg commented on how these results might affect the charter renewal that is pending this Fall. At this time, Ms. Gieg is optimistic that the growth achieved in percent of scholars earning Mastery and Advanced in ELA and MATH (4% in each subject, respectively), plus the school’s growth index, should yield a school performance score that allows for renewal eligibility.

Ms. Gieg also comment on the need to bring down the suspension rate. In response, a new suspension practice will include a warning policy. DPBR is working with a state consultant with the Louisiana Department of Education to help develop practices that can work better for both the scholars and staff.

Ms. Gieg added that this year as Executive Director, she will have three core priorities:
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Reduction of Suspension Rate
- Ensure the Principal and Leadership Efficacy

Ms. Gieg told the board she will update the board on the progress of her 3 priorities each meeting. She also added that Ms. Livingston enters this year with three priorities of her own:
- Ensuring Strong Scholar Enrollment and Family Communication Efficacy
- Time Management and Academic Pacing
- Teacher Use of Data

Ms. Camille Lamond, Democracy Prep Baton Rouge Board Member, asked how we support scholars who have excessive absences. Ms. Gieg explained that the front office will send a letter home at 3 absences and ask the family how the school can help. At 5 absences, the school asks for a family meeting. Once a scholar reaches 10 absences, the family can be reported to the truancy office at the school’s discretion. Ms. Gieg continued by clarifying that DPBR treats each case individually and seeks to support every family getting scholars to school every day.

B. Enrollment Update

DPBR budget is built for 535 scholars, but the school has set an enrollment goal for the 19-20 school year at 540 scholars. The first day of school, 337 scholars were present; today 404. After East Baton Rouge Parish Schools begin on Thursday, the school should see an increase in attendance giving DPBR a better idea of where it stands on enrollment. Mr. Kent Anker, Senior Vice President of Democracy Prep Public Schools, asked Ms. Gieg how many are returners. Ms. Gieg approximated 60% of enrollment.

III. Network Update
A. Network Update
Mrs. Trivers, Chief Executive Officer of Democracy Prep Public Schools, showed the board her presentation that has been presented at leadership meetings and to principals in the network. She shared that the priorities for DPPS this year are:

PRIORITY # 1- Ensure the financial health of our organization
PRIORITY # 2- Telling our story/ Redefining who we are in 2019
PRIORITY # 3- Student recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and retention
PRIORITY # 4- Improve academic proficiency rates at every grade level throughout our Network
PRIORITY # 5- Protect a core component of our DNA: Autonomy within a strong framework
PRIORITY # 6- Develop a strong Strategic Plan (of which growth is a part)

Ms. Linda Easton Jones, Senior Vice President of Democracy Prep Public Schools, added that around the network, people in the company are very excited about the priorities. Ms. Gieg mirrored Ms. Easton’s comments adding that these are the same goals DPBR finds itself striving for. Mrs. Emily Campbell, Board Member of Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, noted that there is strong congruence with school, network, and Board priorities.

IV. Finance Committee Update

A. Finance Committee Update

Mr. Collin Raymond, Senior Financial Manager of Charter School Business Management, reported that we are building a healthy financial future for the network and for DPBR. Mr. Raymond stated that he has been working closely with Ms. Gieg and Mr. Harsch, Director of Operations and General Non-Sense at Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, on building good policies and procedures around the accounts payable process.

Ms. Karen Daniels, President and Chief Operating Officer of Charter School Business Management, joined the meeting and added that from now on CSBM will be providing Budget versus Actuals to share with the board. Ms. Daniels said this will most likely start in October.

Ms. Gieg added that the school is getting much better actuals and in a speedier way. DPBR has been working with CSBM to use a bill paying vendor to help DPBR see in real time what is coming in and what is going out fiscally. This will allow the school to build better relationships with vendors.

V. Governance and Material Items

A. Discussion of Management Agreement

Mr. Eddrick Martin, Board Chair for Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, told the board he requested of DPPS that the management fee calculation in the Management Agreement exclude private donations or grants and that the Agreement be clear that if it was terminated any forgiven debts would not be due.

Mr. Anker added that any outstanding debts on either side would not become due should the relationship end for any reason.

Mr. Martin called for a vote to operate under last years approved Management Agreement until a new one is voted on.

Ms. Lamond motioned.
Ms. Campbell seconded the motion.
Vote to operate under old CMO agreement until a new one is VOTED on passes unanimously.
B. Approval of Personnel & Student Handbooks

Mr. Anker told the board that regarding the personnel handbook, Baker Donnelson, the board’s counsel, has reviewed the handbook and has been approved with a few changes. He mentioned that some of the portions that have been added onto are the sections regarding contacting students outside of school as well as staff training for harassment in the workplace. He added there were other smaller cosmetic changes.

Mr. Anker commented on the student handbook changes. There was some older language that DPPS has cut out to reflect current operations inside DPPS schools. Ms. Gieg commented that, as a school, the biggest updates were to uniform policies. The conduct policy has also been updated to reflect current procedures.

M. Walters made a motion to adopt both the 19-20 Personnel and Student Handbooks. E. Campbell seconded the motion.

The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Bylaws Amendment

Mr. Anker said that DPBR received a letter stating that our quorum as stated in the bylaws is non-compliant.

Mr. Anker suggested that the board adopt the following in order to abide by current laws:

WHEREAS, Democracy Prep Baton Rouge has been informed by the Louisiana Department of Education of the need to amend Section 2.08 of the By-laws entitled Quorum and Manner of Acting to provide that a majority of the Board of Directors is a quorum for the transaction of business; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors agrees that this amendment must be made;

THEREFORE, it is RESOLVED that:

1) The Board of Directors waives the 30-day notice period required under the By-laws for an amendment to the By-laws; and

2) Section 2.08 of the By-laws shall be repealed and replaced in its entirety to read: “At all meetings of the Board of Directors, a majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business”; and

3) The By-laws shall be restated to reflect this change and filed with all the required regulatory authorities.

E. Campbell made a motion to accept the bylaw amendment as proposed.

M. Walters seconded the motion.

The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, E. Martin