Democracy Prep Baton Rouge

Minutes

Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday October 1st, 2019 at 6:00 PM

Location
4055 Prescott Rd. Baton Rouge, LA 70805

Directors Present
E. Martin, A. D’Aquinn, M. Walters, T. Allen

Directors Absent
C. Lamond, E. Campbell, J. Richey

Guests Present
C. Raymond, K. Daniels, K. Anker, L. Jones Easton, M. Gieg, A. Ntem

I. Opening Items

1. Record Attendance and Guests
   1. The Board shared their excitement to have Ms. Allen on the Board.

2. Call the Meeting to Order

   Eddrick Martin, Board Chairperson for Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, called the meeting of the Board of Directors of Democracy Prep Baton Rouge to order on
C. Approve Minutes

Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 3rd, 2019 Board Meeting.

The board VOTED unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Public Comments:

a. Mr. Martin opened the discussion regarding the agenda for the November 15th Board retreat. He noted that some of the agenda items include governance best practices, charter renewal standards and Ms. D’Aquin proposed adding financial training as well to the agenda. Collin Raymond, Senior Financial Manager with Charter School Business Management (CSBM), confirmed that there should be a balance sheet, a profit and loss statement, and potentially a budget vs. actuals sheet by this time or available by the December board meeting. Additionally, Michelle Gieg, Executive Director of Democracy Prep Baton Rouge (DPBR), stated that she can ask New Schools of Baton Rouge to provide a state of the ecosystem session highlighting a city-wide perspective with general charter school data and trends. Ms. Gieg also stated she will inquire about the Recovery School District’s availability in discussing the renewal process. Lastly, Mr. Martin highlighted the addition for a state-of-the-network session as well to ensure comprehension and alignment of Democracy Prep goals across the board.

II. Finance Committee Update

A. Updated Financials

Mr. Raymond went through the budget v. actuals and balance sheet statements. The first Applicable Federal Rate (AFR) draft has been filed for September 30th. CSBM plans to review copies of the AFR draft and ensure that DPBR is in compliance with Louisiana Department of Education 70% funding requirement. Mr. Raymond highlighted a significant amount of the Charter Management Office (CMO) fees have been forgiven based on the Management Agreement between the CMO and the DPBR Board. Thus, the balance sheet for the month of June 30th, 2019 demonstrates an amount of $300,000 as payment for all debts or monies owed by DPBR to DPPS. For the budget vs. actuals sheet, there now shows a positive financial position at the fiscal close. One thing that was added was the remaining balance for the Fourth Sector Solutions, financial consultant,
for fiscal year 2019. Additionally, Mr. Raymond noted that Fourth Sector Solutions assisted with the AFR and will submit a final draft as well assist with speaking with the Department of Education regarding the variances. Ms. Gieg clarified that any finance consultant work will be paid by DPPS under the management fee that DPBR pays to the CMO. Regarding the audit, Mr. Raymond stated that the initial round of reporting has been sent to the auditor and the goal is to have everything wrapped up by the end of the month; he emphasized the importance of a fresh start to DPBR finances.

II. School Update

A. School Update

Academics

Ms. Gieg shared the first interim English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessment data with the Board. She notes that the interim assessment data, which occurs every 8-9 weeks, indicates scholar’s readiness for the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program exam (LEAP). For ELA, 22% of 3rd graders, who are now 4th graders, earned mastery towards the end of the 18-19 school year, thus demonstrates meeting the state’s expectations. In the current interim LEAP assessment, which demonstrates metrics for the 19-20 SY, 15% of scholars are on track to earn mastery. Ms. Gieg noted that ELA has an experienced instructional coach who has improved the intellectual preparation for their cohort, whereas for math, there are more novice leaders which results in scholars performing better in ELA than in math. Additionally, Ms. Gieg notes that in the 1st quarter, the focus is on pacing and curriculum alignment. The focus for the 2nd quarter is to consider strong internalization of the lessons and to note the correlation between intellectual prep and what is happening in the classroom. Ms. Gieg stated that there is an evident correlation between strong intellectual prep and interim assessments. Thus, Ms. Gieg states she hopes to use this data in guiding her analysis in comparison to the highest performing charter schools in New Orleans who are also taking the same assessments in math and ELA. Lastly, Ms. Gieg highlighted the tutoring group is focused on a standard progression, and that she has noticed consistency in teacher coaching has been a key lever in seeing general results and curriculum and leadership growth. Ms. Allen inquired about the percentage of scholars at DPBR who identify with having special needs. Ms. Gieg notes that 11% of scholars are identified as having an IEP and or an ELL, however that number increases to 17% when adding in scholars who have a 504 plan.

Enrollment
Ms. Gieg shared that enrollment during the week of September 23rd showed a retention of 549 scholars. She notes that DPBR’s enrollment is still above their budget given the budget is built for 535 scholars. Ms. Gieg also stated that Ashley Livingston’s, school leader for Democracy Prep Baton Rouge, goal is to attrit less than 10% of the scholars throughout 19-20 school year.

**Suspension**

Ms. Gieg stated a major goal for the school year is to cut the suspension rate in half based on the prior year’s rate. She highlights that DPBR is currently at a 4.5% suspension rate which is an improvement from the previous year. She also states that the school is focusing on documented behavior intervention plans as well as a strong progress monitoring plan for scholars who have earned five or more days of out-of-school suspension. Additionally, Ms. Gieg highlighted that there is a usual drop in suspension rates after the 1st quarter, so it is expected that there will be a drop-in suspension rates in the month of October as well. This way, the focus can shift in planning effective interventions for scholars who have habitual suspensions.

**III. Network Update**

**A. Network Update**

Linda Jones Easton, Executive Vice President, shared that the bilingual program that was initiated last year, 18-19 school year at Democracy Prep Stewart Campus in San Antonio has been expanded to Freedom Prep’s elementary, middle and high school this year, has shown to currently be doing well. Thus, Democracy Prep is looking to expand the bilingual program to other regions as well as this will have a positive impact on enrollment.

Ms. Easton also noted that the First Lady of South Korea, Kim Jung-sook, visited one of our high schools, Democracy Prep Charter High, and was impressed with Democracy Prep’s Korean program.  She highlights that the Korean program has helped Democracy Prep scholars stand out in college applications and become well-rounded global citizens.

Ms. Easton also added that Democracy Prep has been working on a strategic plan with Attuned Education Partners, and they will not only reach out to Ms. Gieg to get her feedback, but to the DPBR Board members as well by January or February of 2020 in fortifying their plans.
Lastly, Ms. Easton highlights that DPBR had its first school review for the 2019-2020 school year, and that Democracy Prep’s Superintendent, Steve Popper, noted this year’s DPBR Fall school review is the best he has seen DPBR in regards to academics and school-wide growths.

V. Governance and Material Items

A. Memorandum of Understanding

When discussing his visit to Democracy Prep’s central office, Badger Park, Mr. Martin discussed the fundraising goals for DPBR. He stated that in fiscal year 2020, DPBR would be expected to raise $225,000 in additional revenue from fundraising, or additional state and federal competitive grants, which DPBR has currently raised $113,000 towards that goal. He also noted that DPBR is expected to further commit to raise $570,000 each year beginning in fiscal year 2021. The DPBR Board raised some questions and concerns regarding the execution of this new commitment. Thus, the Board and Ms. Gieg suggested waiting to discuss possible amendments and gaining better insight when most of the Board members are present and when they obtain more information from the CEO, Natasha Trivers, during the Board retreat in November. No action was taken on this item.

B. Management Agreement for FY 20

Mr. Martin shared his meeting with the DPPS Board and the discussion on the negotiated management agreement terms. He noted that the new proposed terms of DPPS reducing all amounts owed by DPBR for Management Fees or for other advances to $300,000 as payment for all debts or monies owed by DPBR to DPPS is a feasible goal. He also shares that one of the takeaways from the meeting was thinking through an evaluation tool that effectively measures the performance of the executive director, which, Mr. Martin shared, is also aligned with the DPBR Board’s goal and mission.

Motion to approve the Management Agreement for FY 20.

The board VOTED unanimously to approve the 2019-2021 Management Agreement.

VI. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 7:59pm.

Respectfully Submitted, E. Martin