

**Delaware Design-Lab High School
Minutes of the Board of Directors**

September 22, 2015

6:00 p.m.

179 Stanton Christiana Road
Newark, DE 19702

Members Present:

Matt Urban, Chair; Paul Miller, Vice Chair; Iris Leon, Secretary; Stephen Forbes, Parent Representative; Rebecca Girten; Aileen Murray, Teacher Representative

School Leaders Present:

Dr. Cristina Alvarez; CEO, Delaware Design-Lab High School
Dr. Martin Rayala; CAO, Delaware Design-Lab High School

Prospective Board Members Present:

Don France
Angela Kuchera, Parent

Invited Guests Present:

Bill Bennett, DDLHS Principal
Joe Mock, DDLHS Assistant Principal

The meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m.

There being two new Board of Directors attending their first meeting, and several additional guests, introductions were made.

Ms. Murray left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Minute Approval

The Board approved draft minutes from the August 25th meeting that were circulated for review in advance of the meeting. Ms. Girten moved to approve the minutes with no changes. Mr. Miller seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED, that the minutes from the August 25, 2015 meeting of the Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School are approved as presented in the meeting.

Board Expansion

Mr. Urban introduced Don France as a candidate for the Board of Directors and reminded the Board that they had received a copy of his resume in advance of the meeting. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Urban made a motion to appoint Don France to the Board of Directors. Ms. Girten seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School appoints Don France to the Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School for one three-year term.

Dr. Rayala noted that Ms. Murray, who was elected to the Board at the last meeting, had to leave the meeting early and reminded the Board of her qualifications as the School's Media Teacher.

Angela Kuchera arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Dr. Alvarez introduced Ms. Kuchera as a parent of a 9th grade student and candidate for Parent Representative on the Board of Directors. Ms. Kuchera stated that she had previously homeschooled her son and believed that the School's model would benefit him. She stated that she was interested in Board services as an opportunity to establish the School for the benefit of her son and others.

Ms. Leon made a motion to appoint Ms. Kuchera to the Board of Directors. Mr. Forbes seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School appoints Angela Kuchera as a parent representative on the Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School for a one-year term.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Alvarez reported on the school opening and thanked Ms. Girten for being present on the first day to greet the students. She stated that the 9th graders started on August 31st and the 10th graders started on September 1st.

Ms. Girten stated that she arrived early to hold the door open for the first bus-load of students and gave a few words at orientation.

Dr. Alvarez stated that the School had been using Innovative Schools to assist with establishing systems and acknowledged them for their assistance, expertise, and confidence in the School. She stated that Innovative Schools is working with several other charter schools and that they commended the School for how well the start-up was going.

Mr. Bennett reported on Back to School night. He stated that all teachers were present and approximately 40-50 parents attended. He stated that parents seemed positive and happy with their experience.

Enrollment

Dr. Alvarez reported that as of the date of the meeting, 245 students remained enrolled in eSchool and that there had been 32 withdrawals since the first day of school.

Dr. Alvarez reminded the Board that enrollment taken as an average of the 10 days before September 30th would be the final enrollment number that would determine the budget for the remainder of the year.

Dr. Alvarez stated that enrollment events and open houses were winding down for this year, but that the enrollment team would start for next year in October. She stated that the School Choice website opened to parents on November 4th.

Mr. Bennett noted that one reason for withdrawals was the inconsistency of the bus schedules. He stated that pick-up and drop-off times had improved since the first day but that one bus was still consistently late. He stated that busing issues seem to be a county and state-wide problem for both public and private institutions, and not isolated to the School, but that it was still an issue from the parent and student perspective. He stated that there were not enough bus drivers state-wide.

Mr. Urban asked how many students were reliant on bus service. Mr. Mock stated that approximately 90% of students were taking the bus.

Dr. Alvarez noted that when the School is more established it would be worth exploring having the School's own bus service, but that it would be expensive. Ms. Girten agreed and noted that the insurance cost would be prohibitive at this time.

Mr. Forbes stated that he could put together a package for bus fleet service with a cost estimate. He stated that it would be expensive, but that it would help to know the cost for future reference.

School Opening/Start-Up Activities

Facilities

Dr. Alvarez updated the Board on building renovations. She stated that \$65,000 worth of improvements were made including wiring, electricity, and painting. She stated that the aesthetic improvements were minimal, but that this created a blank canvas so that teachers and students could design their own space over the course of the year. She stated that this was an example of the "Pride of Place" concept.

Dr. Rayala stated that, given the mission of the School, the opportunity for teachers and students to have the autonomy to design their own space was an important instructional tool. He stated that through project based learning, students would become mindful of how one's environment impacts learning and the quality of life. He stated that the Board should expect to see prototypes over the coming months and that the School will become transformed through design.

Mr. Forbes asked if the School would allow students in future years to also have some autonomy over their learning environment. Dr. Rayala stated that the process is iterative and structured so that every class will have the opportunity to make their unique mark on the School.

Human Resources – Staffing, Faculty

Dr. Alvarez stated that the technology education/engineering teacher intended to resign. She stated that he was a first-year teacher enrolled in an Alternative Routes to Certification program.

She stated that he lacked confidence and has expressed concern about his own performance and capacity to do the job. She stated that he started strong in the classroom but that his performance was steadily declining. She stated that his intention was to stay in the role until a replacement was found. Discussion ensued.

Dr. Alvarez stated that he had potential and that she would prefer that he stay. She stated that the leadership team would coach him and hope to keep him, but that a sub might be brought in to assist the teacher in the meantime.

Mr. Mock stated that the School was looking for a full-time paraprofessional for special education and potentially another special education teacher, depending on the budget after September 30th. He stated that the School had approximately 55 students with IEPs, which represented 22% of the student body. He stated that he had been interviewing paraprofessionals but that the low salary was a barrier.

Food Service

Dr. Alvarez stated that the nutrition program was operating and that Havena Hollins, the School Secretary, was the coordinator since she was previously the nutrition manager at another charter school.

Dr. Alvarez stated that the Department of Education performed a food service inspection on Sept. 22nd. She stated that they would furnish a written report but that the verbal feedback was positive.

Dr. Alvarez stated that a point of service machine was needed. She stated that the machine would also have to be compatible with software that would capture data needed for federal reporting.

Dr. Alvarez stated that the School had contracted with the Colonial School District to prepare and deliver food. She stated that they will tailor the menu to student preferences after the first 30 days.

IT – Technology Infrastructure

Dr. Alvarez stated that the building was fully wired, but that there were some challenges with access to wireless internet. She stated that a new vendor was hired to finish the job. She stated that wiring printing capabilities for teachers was operational, which was very helpful.

Dr. Alvarez stated that the School still had not procured teacher/student computers. She stated that based on the budget and how it is distributed across the year, the School was unable to make the \$40,000 purchase before School opening. She stated that the computers had been ordered, with delivery expected in three weeks.

Dr. Alvarez stated that she spent several weeks trying to secure financing for computers but could not because the School is new and does not have a financial history.

Mr. Mock noted that several computers had been donated but that they could not support the programs needed for curriculum.

Dr. Rayala noted that, even without the computers, students are still on track with respect to curriculum because there is learning and planning that needs to take place before technology is required.

Financial

Dr. Alvarez stated that she is expecting a proposal from Innovative Schools to prepare the School's monthly financial reports. She stated that the financial monitoring process would be to receive the monthly financial reports, have a Finance Committee review them, have the Citizen's Budget Oversight Committee (CBOC) review at their monthly meeting, and then have the Board representative on the CBOC report back to the Board at the Board's monthly meeting.

Dr. Alvarez stated the Department of Education had recently hired someone to oversee all CBOCs and that he intended to attend all CBOC meetings.

Dr. Alvarez stated that the CBOC had been formed and referred the Board to the membership list circulated at the meeting. She stated that a Board representative was still needed and that the first meeting needed to take place by September 30th. She stated that Innovative Schools was preparing financial reports for July and August.

Discussion about the CBOC ensued.

Mr. France agreed to serve as the Board representative on the CBOC.

The first CBOC meeting was scheduled for September 30th at 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Rayala stated that the School was submitting an application for a federal SEA grant, due on October 6th.

Curriculum

Dr. Rayala stated that the staff were enrolled in a 7 week course on design thinking provided by IDEO.

Dr. Alvarez stated that students would be taking an NWEA assessment once the School had computers. She stated that students were currently placed in classrooms based on the guidance counselor's review of student records, but that this was not a diagnostic process. She stated that the NWEA assessment would be a useful tool and that parents could refer to it as a way to track their child's progress.

Other Business

Ms. Girten stated that she had been working with DANA to schedule a time for the Board to receive training required by the DOE. She stated that DANA was having trouble finding times that worked for their trainers and that late October would be the earliest possible timeframe.

Ms. Girten asked the Board what dates would work for most members. Discussion ensued. Ms. Girten agreed to furnish several dates to DANA for consideration.

There being no further business, Mr. Miller motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Girten seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



Iris Leon
Secretary