



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 23, 2023

- I. Call to Order
 - A. The regular meeting of the Academia Cesar Chavez Board of Directors was held at 1801 Lacrosse Ave, Saint Paul MN, 55119
 - B. The meeting was called to order at 5:08pm by Mark Ahrens (Treasurer, Acting Chair).
- II. Welcome and Roll Call
 - A. Board members present: Mark Ahrens (Treasurer), Cmdr John Lozoya (Secretary), Maria Vallejo (Parent), Diana Lopez-Diaz (Teacher), Analita Silva-Evans (Community), Carlos Mariani (Community),
 - B. Board members absent: Dr Jessica Lopez Lyman (Chair),
 - C. Staff and guests in attendance: Norma C. Garcés (Executive Director), Raquel Arismendez (Project Manager), Terry Moffat (UST), Ramon Vasquez (UMN), David Greenberg, Sergio Rapu (TPT) and the following ACC staff members:
 1. Jay Lopez, Lucinda Costilla de Morales, Anaceli Coyoc, Yesenia Bazan, Allison Malikowski, Vanessa San Jose, Carl Phillips, Sarah Johnston, Carol Navarrete, Therese Privette, Graciela Hammeken, Gina Ballina,
- III. Recite ACC Mission Statement
 - A. *Academia Cesar Chavez is dedicated to providing a quality dual-language education that prepares critically thinking, socially competent, values driven, and culturally aware bilingual and bi-literate learners by advocating Latino cultural values in an environment of familia and community.*
- IV. Grounding and Check-in
 - A. All those present each check in with a personal anecdote.
 - B. Carlos Mariani shares about the driver's license for all bill, which is moving through the legislature. He applauds all of the work that has been done to make this happen.
- V. Public Comment Forum
 - A. Ms Anaceli Coyoc
 1. *Coming into the school with some experience. I have been proctoring the tests for kindergartners this week, and had a hard time due to the masks. I had to project so the students could hear me. I also work with the middle school students, who are very bashful and I had to keep asking them to repeat themselves.*
 2. *As a teacher, from the language perspective, I see masks as a dilemma. There are students with special needs who are impacted by the masks and do not always do well because of it. If students are wearing masks at school and don't wear them out in other places, I don't know if it is beneficial to wear them at school. That is my two cents.*

Action Items for Board Approval

- VI. Approval of Agenda
 - A. Maria moves to approve the agenda for the February 23, 2023 board meeting. Carlos seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
- VII. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Analita moves to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2023 board meeting. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
- VIII. Executive Committee Update
 - A. Jessica Lopez Lyman is not in attendance. Mark shares that the committee has discussed the board self-evaluation. ACC uses the MACS Self-Evaluation template as its self-evaluation assessment. The board self-evaluation is tabled until the next board meeting.
- IX. Finance Committee Update
 - A. Mark states that the January financial statement was provided at 4pm today. Per the information on page 3, Mark notes that the statement is projecting a small surplus by the end of the fiscal year. We currently have an extremely healthy fund balance, and the school has needs we are going to address with that fund balance. There are also approximately thirty years left on the bonds, which have certain requirements and goals which we are currently meeting.
 - 1. Mark explains that the state does not pay all revenue owed to the school by June 30, they wait to see how the books work out, and this holdback amount of typically 10% usually arrives by October.
 - 2. Mark walks through the charts on pages 4 and 5, and then speaks on the numbers on pages 6 and 7. We spend a lot on staffing, the building, and transportation, which are all necessary expenditures. Some line items indicate we have spent 100% or slightly more than what was budgeted, such as in staff development, which indicates that we ought to budget more for this area.
 - B. David Greenberg shares that he has been providing support to the board, Ms Norma, and the team in order to deepen financial understanding. As a former school leader and former authorizer liaison, there is a need for more Financial Service Provider options in Minnesota. As the board has been interested in exploring other FSPs, David has researched a potential candidate from out of state.
 - 1. Charter School Business Managers is based out of New York, and they work in about 11 states currently. Their belief is that money is a tool to build what is right for students, and they provide services to ensure schools have systems in place where everyone understands what they are spending money on and why. CSBM has a lot of positive references, David spoke with their business development officer and they are interested in having a conversation with ACC leadership.
 - 2. CSBM provides a whole range of services from bookkeeping to CFO support, developing systems that are more durable to turnover, strategic support in planning how to utilize resources, and planning a stronger program for students at the financial level. Their services may cost more in the first two years, however as we receive bids and proposals from FSPs we can weigh whether their services are worth it or not. There are one or two other vendors worth receiving a proposal from as well as CSBM.

3. Another option is EdOps, who provide a lot of support to schools in operations and finance, yet they are not currently operating in Minnesota. They are currently exploring an expansion into Minnesota.
- C. Mark shares that BerganKDV was our business manager for many years, however some key people have left the organization.
- D. Carlos moves to accept the January financial statement. Maria seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

Discussion Items

- X. Executive Director Update
- A. UST Charter Renewal Application
1. Ms Norma shares that the charter renewal application was submitted to the University of St Thomas. Ramona Arreguin de Rosales, the founder of Academia Cesar Chavez, provided a thorough review of the application and ensured that we stayed on mission. The application itself was very comprehensive, including a lot of the most recent research such as Dr Kathy Escamilla's work.
 2. Terry Moffat shares that the next step will occur on March 3, which is UST's deadline of providing a letter about a new contract, along with a final evaluation for SY23 featuring some corrections. In the coming weeks after, Terry and Molly will meet in person with ACC to discuss what contract goals could look like. There are a lot of changes from the previous contract, so the goals should reflect what is important to ACC and the work taking place. There will be at least one or two meetings to review goals, and then the contract will be ready by the May board meeting for approval.
- B. Enrollment Update
1. Ms Norma briefly reviews the current enrollment figures with the board.
- C. Licensed Faculty Demographics
1. Ms Norma states that in the elementary school, 100% of our teachers are women, 90% are bilingual, and the 10% who are monolingual teach predominantly in their home language. ACC is actually doing much better in comparison to other programs in regards to this. For non-licensed staff, 92% identify as a person of color.
 2. Ms Norma shares that we need more advocacy for teachers who are highly qualified to teach in their home country, yet do not technically qualify for licensure in Minnesota according to some narrow definitions.
 3. Carlos shares that this is very atypical, as the last rate of teachers of color he recalls is 4% across the state, and movement on those numbers has been fairly nonexistent. A lot of social science and pedagogical research tells us that a diverse faculty is a positive for students. We lose our BIPOC teachers at a higher rate even before this massive burnout, there has always been a constant turnover of teachers of color.
 4. Ms Norma states that we are pushing the pipeline: enrolling our Educational Partners into licensure programs, helping staff get back in school. This is an imperative as there are so few teachers.
- D. Academics
1. Ms Norma shares that Elementary is getting more attention right now. We had to make compromises due to the staffing shortage. As part of the hiring process, we are asking

candidates for Educational Partner if their career aspirations are in education.

Currently, about nine staff had their education truncated, so we are getting them into the teacher pipeline at either UST or Metro State.

2. We are continuing to produce our own curriculum to ensure it reflects the population we are serving, as there still is no premade curriculum that does so.
3. Ms Lopez shares that teachers meet biweekly with the instructional coaches, and have time during Learning Team meetings to plan units together. For example, Kindergarten created a unit based on Latin American countries and their various cultures. We focused on the countries that our students' families come from, such as Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico. Since it's Kindergarten, we are focused on more concrete aspects such as the food and festivities. The students have been enjoying it because they can identify on a map where their families come from, and they are having a lot of fun with it.

E. Safety

1. Ms Norma shares that due to the incident at Harding High School, ACC entered into the Secure phase at that time per the K12 Standard Response Protocol. Since parents were calling ACC scared about the incident, ACC moved into Secure. This means that ensuring all doors are locked, and all outdoor activities are brought inside (like recess), and visitors were not allowed to enter or leave until staff ensured everything was okay.
2. Staff are receiving more training in this model from the I Love U Guys foundation, created by a family whose daughter was a victim of a school shooting. Next week will be the quarterly Safety Committee meeting, composed of parents and staff.

F. UnidosUS Changemakers Summit in Washington, DC

1. Ms Norma attended the summit, where she met with the US Secretary of Education, the Commissioner of the FTC, and the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, who are all Latino! They spoke about how Spanglish is spoken in the Oval Office now, with about five Spanish speakers in the cabinet. It was overall a very good summit.

G. Events

1. Driver's License for All: Academia has started to open up more again to the community, with a Driver's License for All meeting occurring in the Ramona Center last week. There will be another event this Saturday at ACC, which will be a Q&A session about Driver's License for All.
2. Mexica New Year: An event open to the community and all staff are encouraged to attend as well.
3. Middle School Basketball: Our team won two games in a row in their small league! The students are very committed to the team.
4. Parent Meetings: Mr Carl has been joining the monthly parent meetings during the Middle School sessions. The last two meetings for Elementary families have had record attendance numbers.
5. With all of these events, we are proud to share that our engagement is picking up!

H. Mariachi

1. We are looking at ways to invest more in our mariachi program. We are planning a trip to take the Mariachi group to Milwaukee, which has a program where they could

become music teachers. We are also looking at starting our Elementary students in Mariachi, we also teach cello and violin at the elementary level.

I. Enrollment Capacity

1. Ms Norma shares that there are some particular numbers that need to be revised for the higher grades. Unfortunately, MDE will not authorize three classrooms of Voluntary PreK for next year. The third PreK classroom we currently have receives no funding from the state, and costs the school around \$100k. If we have a waiting list and can prove that we can maintain that enrollment, MDE is still unlikely to move forward. This means that we will have to recruit more Kindergarten students, as we will not have enough PreK classrooms to feed into the following Kindergarten cohort.
2. Carlos notes that this is odd since so much of our population is so young. There is a huge need for more early childhood.
3. Maria moves to approve the proposed capacity revision. Diana seconds the motion. Motion carries unanimously.

J. Mask Mandate

1. As mentioned in prior meetings, Ms Norma wanted to bring this to board attention. As of last week, everyone has been wearing masks. It has been difficult to maintain masking as most families have stated that they do not wear masks in public outside of school. Ms Norma met with parents, and some of them felt very strongly about not wearing masks, the overwhelming majority feel it is time to let it go. ACC gives out about one hundred masks a day to students. Masks could be optional, and if parents send their children to school with a mask then staff will ensure that the students wear it per the parental instructions.
2. Ms Lopez shares that it may be good to have masks be optional, especially in the lower grades students are often confused in phonics when learning letter sounds. Sometimes a teacher might think a student is not listening, but really it is because they cannot hear the teacher with the mask on. Ms Lopez agrees with the proposal.
3. Maria states that it is good to hear from teachers about how the masks affect teaching. She agrees with the proposal of having masks be optional, as ACC has done a really good job with monitoring for symptoms, frequent testing, and other strategies that have kept cases low. As other mitigation strategies continue, Maria states that she is comfortable with masks being optional.
4. Ms Norma states that ACC will continue to monitor for symptoms, especially if a significant number of students are getting sick, and will move a class to eLearning if necessary. About 95% of the Middle School students are vaccinated, however in Elementary the numbers are different. MDH is encouraging schools to monitor vaccination status for COVID as well as other diseases such as mumps and chickenpox, as they are seeing outbreaks of these infections occurring in other schools in the state. ACC will continue to utilize eLearning when necessary and track vaccination status.
5. Motion: Effective immediately, masks are not required on ACC property, however masks will always be optional at the individual's discretion. In the event of an outbreak of illness, the classroom may be moved to eLearning for the time necessary as directed by the Executive Director.

a) John moves to approve the resolution. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

K. Bylaws Review

1. Mark shares that the bylaws should be reviewed far more often than we have in the past. We wrote the original in 2000, modified on occasion. He notes two things: if there is anything unfamiliar in the bylaws, or if something seems unclear or perhaps interesting or curious, please make a note of it and bring it to the next board meeting.
2. Mark directs the board to read and review the bylaws before the next board meeting, as the bylaws describe how the board was envisioned.

XI. Announcements

1. No announcements.
2. Mark cleared out the driveway today!
3. Ramon Vasquez introduces himself as a potential board member.
4. Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 19, 2023, between 12pm-3pm

XII. Next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 5pm.

XIII. Meeting Adjournment

A. Maria moves to adjourn the meeting. Analita seconds the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.

Board Secretary: _____ **Date:** _____