



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 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 5:27pm by Dr Jessica Lopez Lyman (Chair).
  - II. Welcome and Roll Call
    - A. Board members present: Dr Jessica Lopez Lyman (Chair), Mark Ahrens (Treasurer), Cmdr John Lozoya (Secretary), Diana Lopez-Diaz (Teacher), Analita Silva-Evans (Community), Carlos Mariani (Community),
    - B. Board members absent: Maria Vallejo (Parent),
    - C. Staff and guests in attendance: Norma C. Garcés (Executive Director), Raquel Arismendez (Project Manager), Dr Ramon Vasquez (UMN), Sergio Rapu (TPT), Katie Aviña (El Colegio, Executive Director), Tony Aarts (El Colegio, Board Chair), Ann Zukoski (El Colegio, Board Vice Chair), Kent Fordyce (El Colegio, Board Treasurer),
  - 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.
  - V. Public Comment Forum
    - A. No public comment was submitted to the board.
- Action Items for Board Approval
- VI. Approval of Agenda
    - A. Mark moves to approve the agenda for the March 23, 2023 board meeting. John seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
  - VII. Approval of Minutes
    - A. Diana moves to approve the minutes from the February 23, 2023 board meeting. Analita seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.
- Discussion Items
- VIII. Executive Committee Update
    - A. Board Member Candidate: Dr Ramon Vasquez

1. Jessica shares that Dr Vasquez is a new faculty member at the University of Minnesota, and used to teach in the Los Angeles United School District. Dr Vasquez shares a few words. The board briefly discusses his application to the board.
2. Mark moves to approve the nomination of Dr Ramon Vasques. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

#### B. Annual Meeting

1. Carlos and Ramon are the new candidates for election. John's term is also up for reelection.
2. Ms Norma asks that the board provide names of community members they would like to invite to the Annual Meeting.

#### C. UST Charter Contract

1. Jessica shares that the renewal was approved, and that the contract negotiation process is ongoing. She applauds Ms Norma and the team that made it happen, along with Mrs Ramona Arreguin de Rosales, the founder of Academia Cesar Chavez, who was mentoring folks through the process. In the end, the authorizer's evaluation framework will be fitting for the mission and vision of the school and show the work that happens every day here. The board will review the contract at the next meeting.

#### D. Executive Director Evaluation

1. Jessica reminds the board that they evaluate the Executive Director annually. There are three goals written into Ms Norma's contract: 1. Decolonize and indigenize the school, 2. Return the school to its mission and vision, and 3. Implement the bilingual program.
2. There will be a Google Form shared with board members to rate Ms Norma on these three goals as well and to comment on her performance in these areas. A survey will be shared with staff as well to gather their feedback, this was paused last year since it was Ms Norma's first year.
3. Board members must complete the Google Form, however the survey will be optional for staff members.

#### E. Board Self Evaluation

1. Jessica directs the board to complete the self-evaluation tool in the board packet.

### IX. Finance Committee Update

#### A. February Financial Statement

1. Mark shares that the current financial statement has no major differences from the last meeting's statement. The fund balance remains rather large, however there are emerging needs that will need to be covered. He directs the board to note the percentage of the working budget, where not much has changed from last month, or in comparison to this time last year.
2. Carlos moves to accept the February financial statement. John seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

#### B. Financial Service Provider

1. Mark states that the board has not been all that happy with BerganKDV, and has been exploring a potential new partnership.

2. Ms Norma shares that David Greenberg has been assisting with meeting candidates for a potential new Financial Service Provider. There have been two meetings, with a third scheduled for tomorrow.
3. Ms Norma and David Greenberg also met with Nick Taintor, the Director of School Services at BerganKDV, who seemed surprised to hear about the current status of the relationship.
4. Jessica notes that Academia has had findings on its audit reports since the shift at BerganKDV.
5. Ms Norma and David Greenberg will prepare a comparison chart of the candidates and present to the board.

X. Executive Director Update

A. Enrollment

1. Ms Norma shares that enrollment remains steady. The families that are leaving ACC are moving to Little Canada. Exploring expanding a bus route to Little Canada however transportation costs will increase next year.

B. NWEA Snapshot

1. Ms Norma presents a data snapshot which serves as an example of how the data is being prepared for teachers and administration to review. Now we are able to do a deep dive with each teacher on this data.

C. Ms Norma presents some photos of the recent Spring Festival event.

D. School Calendar SY24

1. Ms Norma notes that there are significantly less eLearning days on next year's calendar, mostly following a break or holiday. The families with younger students are very appreciative of the eLearning days, as the little ones sometimes experience heightened anxiety with coming back to school, and being able to see their teacher and classmates on camera helps quite a bit with curbing the anxiety.
2. Analita moves to approve the 2023-2024 School Calendar. Diana seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously.

XI. El Colegio Conversation

A. Ms Katie, Tony Aarts, Ann Zukoski, and Kent Fordyce introduce themselves once more. Ms Katie shares that they are here today to circle back from the board retreat in September where El Colegio and Academia had discussed different partnership opportunities. The two schools have had shared professional development together, applied and received grants together.

1. One example is the PELSB Teacher Retention Grant, where ACC and EC fought to receive \$15,000 in funds. Every teacher part of that grant program was retained, whereas grant recipients who received \$400,000 in funds were only able to retain about four of their teachers on average. With these successes, El Colegio wants to look at strengthening the relationship between the two schools.

B. El Colegio has always been a small-setting model which has been successful: all graduating seniors go onto postsecondary institutions, and 100% of students say they feel safe in the space. However, there are financial implications to the model. Part of EC's strategic plan was to explore either expanding downward to offer Middle School, or the possibility of merging

with another school. Ms Katie asks if this is a conversation that Academia's board is interested in exploring.

- C. Tony asks how this opportunity could galvanize something that spreads through the community for youth and families and build it to be something that is sustainable and continues to grow.
- D. The board (of Academia Cesar Chavez) discusses the conversation of a potential merge with El Colegio.
- E. The Academia Cesar Chavez Board of Directors is officially interested in exploring a merge with El Colegio High School, and discusses next steps to continue the conversation.

XII. Announcements

- A. Statewide campaign for Ethnic Studies K-12 standards, and Unidos MN is a core leader in it. There are various bills currently being considered.
- B. The new deputy chief for the Saint Paul Police Department, Pamela Barragan, will be officially promoted on April 27, 2023 at 1pm at the SPPD Western District.
- C. Ms Norma and Ms Katie will be going to Nogales, Arizona over Spring Break to visit our sister school, Mexicayotl Academy.

XIII. The next board meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2023 at 5pm.

XIV. Meeting Adjournment

- A. Mark moves to adjourn the meeting. Analita seconds the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

**Board Secretary:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_