

**Paul Cuffee School
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
September 17, 2009**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Cuffee School was held on September 17, 2009 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Present: Kathleen Alvarez, Luz Avila, Elizabeth Colon, Michelle Cortes-Harkins, David Burnham, Russell Carey, Joan Canady Countryman, Stefano Crema, Philip Gould, Barrett Hazeltine, Keith Mathews, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Leanne Nyahkoon, Dorothy Patrick, Carolyn Pemberton, Babak Taleghani.

Excused: Su Almeida, William Clifton, Sr., Maria Monteiro, Sarah Reis, Ana Cecilia Rosado.

Paul Cuffee Staff Present: David Bourns, Michelle Bush, Jonathan Conklin, Nina Giannotti, Julia Karahalidis, Tina McDonough, Suzie Shaw.

Guests: Crystal Gantz, PCS Parent Association Co-Chair

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. President Joop Nagtegaal began by welcoming new board members Leanne Nyahkon and Dorothy Patrick, guests Crystal Gantz and Tina McDonough, and asking all present to introduce themselves.

Joop noted the recent announcement from David Bourns of his intention to retire at the end of the current academic year. He remarked that he accepted David's plan to retire with sadness and regret but also great appreciation for all that he has done for Paul Cuffee School. David has taken the School from its very beginning to the fabulous place it is today. Joop's comments were echoed by sustained applause and thanks from the Board.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 18, 2009 meeting of the Board were approved unanimously. The motion to approve was made by Liz Colon and seconded by Stefano Crema.

Head of School September Report

David Bourns referred to his written report and reviewed several highlights. He noted the goals the leadership of the School has established for the year and welcomed comments and suggestions from the Board. He also reviewed the demographics of the student body, which continues to be reflective of the diversity of the Providence Public Schools population. Joop noted in particular the success of the Annual Fund in a difficult economic environment and applauded the work of Julia and her staff and the volunteers and donors to the School. David commented on the publication of the affirmative action plan and thanked Carolyn Pemberton for

her work in bringing that important project to completion. David and Joop also thanked Carolyn and Jon Conklin for their hard work on the Human Resources Manual (now available on-line on the School's website) and Jon for his diligence in constructing a new State-mandated chart of accounts and a new financial software system.

Head of School Search Process

Joop began the discussion by circulating a proposed process for the Head of School search and emphasized that it is a draft open for discussion and review. Joop led discussion of what the search committee composition might look like. There was broad support for parent involvement, as well as representation of lower and middle school teachers, and members of the Board of Trustees. It was noted that the composition of the search committee should be reflective of the diversity of the School community. There was discussion of the options for staffing the search process, as well as the pros and cons of utilizing a search firm. Nina and David will check with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) to determine if there are any rules and regulations which would affect the search, and will ask the League of Charter Schools and other charters in the area if they have had any recent search experience which would be particularly relevant.

It was agreed that the Executive Committee would take responsibility for forming the search committee as well as investigating search firm possibilities and the options for staff support. The search committee will develop a search process and plan which the Executive Committee will approve, and the hope is to successfully complete the search by the end of January. The search for a head for the Paul Cuffee High School will follow slightly, in order to enable the new Head of School to participate in that hiring decision.

Upcoming Advancement Programs

Julia Karahalis reviewed the upcoming activities and programs related to Advancement of Paul Cuffee School. She thanked members of the Board for their participation in the Annual Fund and noted the critical importance of 100% Board participation to the success of the Fund and appeals to Foundations and Corporations. The goal for this year's Annual Fund is \$110,000. Julia circulated information about the Fidelity Board Development Series sponsored by the Rhode Island Foundation and invited members of the Board to take advantage of those programs. She also circulated a calendar of upcoming events.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Plant & Property Committee

Russell Carey delivered the report of the Plant and Property Committee. He reported that Dan Moos, a parent and member of the Finance Committee, has been retained by the School to work on the Capital Improvement Plan, which is one of the three priorities for the Committee this year. The other priorities are (1) locating a high school site for the 2010 opening and (2) creating a new green parking lot and play area for the Lower School with the acquisition of the Living Room property. The Capital Improvement Plan is an element of the overall master plan

which must be submitted to and approved by RIDE in order for the School to be eligible to receive State housing aid (reimbursement for up to 30% of costs of purchase, demolition, and construction of facilities).

Of the three priorities, finding the high school site is the most urgent. The School is still waiting to hear from the City regarding the potential availability of West Broadway Elementary School. The Committee believes that there needs to be a back-up plan, in case the West Broadway School is not available. The Committee is working on developing other options in order to ensure a successful outcome.

The School is still working on acquiring the Living Room property but the Committee is working on planning for this additional space. The Lower School needs 60-70 parking spots, and teachers would like to incorporate some "green" aspects to this project. Committee member Ed Neubauer is leading efforts to involve teachers and students in thinking about what may be possible and feasible with this space, and the Committee anticipates hiring a landscape architect later in the fall.

Finally, Dan Moos briefed the Committee on the RIDE "master plan" process and the various involved stages. The Committee will be working to narrow several potential long-term plans for the school's future growth, each of which will need to be the subject of feasibility studies in order to satisfy the State requirements, to a manageable scope and intends to bring those recommendations to the Board for consideration and approval at a future meeting.

Human Resources

Carolyn Pemberton delivered the report of the Human Resources Committee. She noted the completion of the affirmative action plan with respect to women and minority groups which satisfies the compliance requirements. Additional work on the plan for persons with disabilities is underway. She reviewed briefly discussions the committee had regarding qualifications for tenure and salary step increases.

Finance Committee

Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. He reviewed the budget closing last fiscal year (break-even versus a projected deficit of \$200,000) and the year ahead. The budget for 2009-2010 will be circulated for review and approval at the next meeting of the Board. He reviewed and explained the various recommendations being made to the Board of Trustees. Following brief discussion, the following motions were presented and acted upon:

Keith Mathews moved that the Board of Trustees approve the recommendation of the Committee that \$7,500 be transferred from operating funds to the Capital Expansion portion of the Designated Board Reserve. Martha Newcomb seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Carolyn Pemberton moved that the Board of Trustees approve the recommendation of the Committee that the School expend up to \$25,000 for an Architectural

Feasibility Study as prescribed in the RIDE School Construction Regulations. Dave Burnham seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Babak concluded by reviewing the current status of the potential acquisition of the Living Room property and the Citizens Bank credit rating and letter of credit situation, both of which continue to unfold.

Other Business

There was no other business brought before the Board.

Adjournment

Martha Newcomb moved to adjourn. Babak Taleghani seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell C. Carey, Clerk