

Paul Cuffee School

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

September 16, 2010

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Cuffee School was held on September 16, 2010 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Present: Su Almeida, Kathleen Alvarez, David Burnham, Russell Carey, John Cariati, Hon. William C. Clifton, Sr., Allyn Copp, Joan Cannady Countryman, Stefano Crema, Dorothy L. Fields, Philip Gould, Keith S. Mathews, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Esq., Leanne Yinusa Nyahkoon, Dorothy Patrick, Carolyn Pemberton, Sarah Reis, Ana-Cecilia Rosado, Earl Smith III, Babak Taleghani.

Excused: None.

Paul Cuffee Staff Present: Michelle Bush, Jonathan Conklin, Becky Coustan, Nina Giannotti, Julia Karahalidis, Michael Obel-Omia, Nell Sears, Suzanne Mills Shaw.

Guests: Bob Kelley.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. with a moment of silence. President Joop Nagtegaal began by welcoming everyone to

the September meeting of the Board of Trustees. He commented on the results of the recent primary elections, Rhode Island's selection in the national Race to the Top competition, as well as the many positive things happening in the school.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 17, 2010 annual meeting of the Board were approved, with one error noted and corrected, unanimously. The motion to approve was made by Babak Taleghani and seconded by Carolyn Pemberton.

Head of School September Report

Mr. Obel-Omia began his report by thanking Nell Sears for the work she had done over the summer with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) on metrics and assessment for charter schools, a topic on which she would be reporting later in the meeting. He noted that one of his initial goals as Head of School was meeting people in the community and spreading word of Paul Cuffee School. Individuals he has met with include Howard Sutton of the Providence Journal (which will be publishing an op-ed by Michael later in the week) and Commissioner Deborah Gist, who will be a guest at the Board retreat this fall, and he has upcoming visits by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and Providence Superintendent Tom Brady. He then asked Julia Karahalis to reporting on creating a culture of philanthropy at the

school. Julia reviewed ongoing efforts to integrate philanthropy into every aspect of school life, and noted in particular the critical importance of 100% participation in annual giving among members of the Board. There were questions for Michael and Julia and discussion among the Board.

Mission Metrics and Changes at RIDE

Nell reported on the charter school performance review process the committee she served on at RIDE over the summer had developed. The purpose of the committee was to create a charter management process to govern the evaluation, re-authorization, and, if necessary, closure of charter schools in Rhode Island. Previously there had not been an adequate process nor clear standards for assessment. The committee envisions “performance charters” with the Rhode Island charter schools. These will include RIDE required and mission specific metrics, annual review, and a focus on student achievement. The school will need to engage in developing mission-specific metrics for Paul Cuffee. There were questions and comments from members of the Board. Joop thanked Nell for her work on this project and her report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. He reviewed the revenues and expenses from last fiscal year, and noted that it was a break-even year. He reviewed the 2010-2011 operating budget and moved on behalf of the Finance Committee that it be approved. Dorothy Patrick seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Babak reviewed an issue regarding the school's letter of credit with Citizens Bank which provides credit enhancement for the \$2,670,000 outstanding publicly issued bonds and expires on October 3, 2010 and the two options available to the school: (1) renew the letter of credit or (2) place the bonds directly in the Citizens Bank portfolio (the direct write option). Babak moved, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that the School proceed with the direct write option, formally known as the Tax-Exempt Bank Qualified Bond Private Placement. John Cariati seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Babak moved, on behalf of the Finance Committee, that up to \$60,000 be transferred from the Capital Replacement portion of the Board Designated Reserve to operating funds for work performed on the east wall of the Lower School building. Dave Burnham seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Plant & Property Committee

Russell Carey delivered the report of the Plant and Property Committee. He updated the Board regarding the acquisition of the Living Room property, the demolition of the structure, the plan to use the space as parking for the current year, and the ongoing planning process with the landscape architect for the long-term use of the additional land. He reported that the Committee had discussed the inadequacies of the Middle School facility and that the Committee had encouraged the administration to investigate available options for the Middle School program which might be better suited to the school's needs. Work will be done during the course of the year to complete the School's Stage II housing aid application to RIDE. Finally, the Committee will be working this year on long-term planning, with the continuing goal of uniting the three schools in one central location.

Nominating Committee

Joan Countryman delivered the report of the Nominating Committee. She referred to the Committee's written report and noted the availability of board development workshops which members of the Board may attend at the Rhode Island Foundation. She reviewed the recent work of the Committee with regard to membership, and then moved on behalf of the Committee that Keith Mathews be appointed a regular Trustee. Ana Cecilia seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously, with Keith abstaining. Joan then moved that Carolyn Pemberton be appointed Vice President of the Board. Judge Clifton seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously, with

Carolyn abstaining.

New Business

Carolyn reported, on behalf of the Human Resources Committee, that work was underway to develop a Head of School performance evaluation process. A draft was distributed with a request for comments. It is anticipated that it will be presented to the Board for approval at the November meeting.

Adjournment

Ana Cecilia moved to adjourn. Babak seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell C. Carey, Clerk