



# R H O D E I S L A N D MAYORAL ACADEMIES

## **Minutes of the Meeting Held on June 30, 2009**

A meeting of the Board of the Directors was held on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 at the Mayor's office in the Town of Cumberland, Rhode Island, 45 Broad Street, Cumberland, Rhode Island. The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 4:26 pm.

The following directors were present:

Daniel McKee (Chair)  
Richard Lynch  
Ramon Martinez  
Martin West  
Joe Williams

Also in attendance were Michael Magee, Daniel Waugh, John and Letitia Carter, and Sandy McCulloch.

### **Minutes of June 10, 2009**

On motion of Mr. West (seconded by Mr. Martinez), the minutes of the June 10, 2009 meeting were approved. AYE – Lynch, Martinez, West, Williams; NAY – None.

### **Finance Committee Report**

Mr. West requested Mr. Magee to present the proposed budget for 2009-2010. Mr. Magee presented a proposed budget. (Exhibit A.)

Highlights as presented by Mr. Magee:

- The budget reflects projected foundation grants totaling \$800,000
- The Walton Family Foundation could be slightly delayed if RIMA's recognition of status as a 501(c)(3) organization is delayed
- If additional funding in the amount of approximately \$100,000 is received, that would enable RIMA to engage professional policy and planning services, such as those provided by Public Impact, particularly in regard to establishing a pipeline of top-notch educators and administrators
- Between July and August, the budget reflects the transfer of Mr. Chiappetta from RIMA's payroll to Democracy Prep's, as well as the

hiring of an administrative assistant, the Director of School Support and Accountability, and the Director of Community and External Relations. Mr. Magee will circulate the resumes of the principal candidates for the two latter positions

- There is a \$200,000 expenditure allocated for the purchase and renovation of the St. Patrick's Broad Street school facility or another facility for the proposed expansion of Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup>
- The budget reflects the authorized amount of expenditure for support of the opening of Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup> Blackstone Valley, but the actual figure will probably be lower than budgeted
- The budget reflects the final payment to Bill Fisher's firm (True North Communications) as well as funding for a potential renewal of the contract. Because True North Communication's contract expires at the end of June, a new contract needs to be negotiated and presented to the Board for approval
- The Finance Committee will monitor budget progress throughout the year on a monthly basis

Mr. West (seconded by Mr. Williams) moved that the budget be approved as submitted.

Mr. Lynch: Is there any duplication of role between the staff positions and the professional service providers?

Mr Magee: It is not clear that there will not be an overlap between the Director of Communications and External Relations and a professional public relations firm; however, in the first year, there will be quite a lot for everyone to do. The Director of Community and External Relations will be creating, in some cases from scratch, a lot of RIMA's partnerships and alliances with in-state advocacy and community organizations. That person will also certainly going to be involved in RIMA's lobbying efforts with the general assembly, staging all of our events—all of that event-planning work--, and likewise working with me on our national external relationships working on creating the kind of national profile that can attract foundation funding, making sure that we are visible at 2 or 3 or 4 big conferences every year where funders are and where school operators are and also be involved in the school operator recruitment effort.

Mr. McCulloch: In an organization of only 4 people, we would expect a great deal of elbow rubbing which might be described as overlap, and this is something we would expect to resolve as we make our way month-by-month.

Mr. Magee: I agree.

Mrs. Carter: Who and when are we going to be talking about the school budgets?

Mr. Magee: Certainly I will be involved in that process in a very engaged way, but the Director of School Support and Accountability that I want to hire, that's the person I envision working with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers together with myself to build all of the policies and procedures and systems that govern the boards' and the staff's relationship with the schools. As we are building that, the Director of School Support and Accountability is also going to be the point person in terms of monitoring and evaluating school performance. I expect that person to be in that school at least weekly and to be very engaged with school leadership all in sort of an evaluation role, but also in a support role. There are going to be things that our schools, especially in their early years, that we want to assist them with to make them successful. So I think it is going to be a combination of accountability and support.

Mrs. Carter: It seems as though the school budget would look something like this—so we know how much a school costs?

Mr. Magee: Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. West: But that is not our role. That is the role of the school's board.

Mrs. Carter: So the school's board is going to do the budget of the school—

Mr. Magee: That's right.

Mrs. Carter: and we don't have to approve it. Is that right?

Mr. Magee: I don't believe so. RIDE and the Office of the Auditor General at the state level have a very important role to play there, too.

Mr. Lunch: Would this board have a copy of the budget that is adopted by the school?

Mr. West: Because we can attend any of their meetings.

Mr. Magee: That's right. That will be a totally transparent process. We will have access to all of their documentation. And I would expect we would want that board to be—to have some reporting relationship to this board.

Mr. Lynch: Because we have the charter.

Mr. Magee: Whether by a bi-annual report. My sense is that that is how often it should be. Twice a year the school board would actually have to come and report to us. And that would include budget, student outcomes, school climate surveys, a good 20-minute/half-an-hour presentation about what is going on in the school and what kind of results they are getting—stuff relative to our performance agreement.

Mr. Lynch: I would think we would want it more than that—twice a year.

Mr. Martinez: Well, there has to be a mayor who is chair of that board.

Mr. Magee: Yes.

Mr. Lynch: Is that built in the by-laws that they have that reporting responsibility?

Mr. McKee: As I said at the last meeting, we are starting to gather some names, so that we can appoint those trustees, although I guess we are still a little bit up in the air about what that means, but we are starting to gather some names as to who is going to serve on that board of trustees or whatever we are going to call it.

Mr. West: But to answer Dick's question, it's not built into the by-laws as to this specific reporting relationship. The thing that is built into the by-laws is that they are essentially an agent of us, that we can attend their meetings, and that we have full access to their records.

Mr. Lynch: I think it should come before this board.

Mr. West: Of course. And that is going to be built into whatever contract we establish, but we have to establish those procedures.

Mr. Magee: As we have always known, there is a little bit of a cart before the horse situation here with our first school. But what we are going to do is get ahead of the cart as fast as we can.

Mrs. Carter: When does school open?

Mr. Magee: The last week of August. They are actually opening before the traditional public schools. One thing I will say about this is, I think it is for the board to decide how much of that load—the evaluation and monitoring load—you want RIMA staff to shoulder and how much the board itself wants to be involved in.

Mr. McKee: Well, initially, I agree with Sandy. We have 76 students, and we should be very engaged right from the very first day. I think this board should be involved. There is no other school, and we are going to get measured. You think the microscope is out on this go-around last year or this year?

The only question I have is whether you have layered in some lobbying. Is that in your staff number?

Mr. Magee: It is not at the moment. I think in the PR/lobbying line item there is probably room for some of that, but I also think it is important to note that I don't see this as the ideal year-long budget.

Mr. McKee: So this is a skeleton to work off of?

Mr. West: Yes, this budget is revenue-neutral in terms of current commitments.

Mr Magee: That's right. We wanted to create a budget that was workable with the commitments that we already have in hand.

Mr. McKee: Well, once this board establishes the priorities for the next legislative session, we may have to revisit this budget.

Mr. Magee: I would expect new revenue. As new revenue comes in, I would expect to be making recommendations as to how to increase the expenditures here somewhat.

Any other questions here at this point?

- Mr. Martinez: The school is not on the same calendar as the traditional public schools?
- Mr. Magee: They have a slightly longer school year. It is twelve days longer than a typical public school.
- Mr. Martinez: But how are we covering the extra days with buses?
- Mr. Magee: That may be an extra expense for them. That's right. That something they will have to figure out. It's really just an allocation issue. Charter schools relative to other states are actually running pretty well here. The system is screwy, but, per pupil, it is actually fairly kind. So these are things the Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup> folks have got to figure out. They have got a good solid per-pupil number. I don't want to get into a situation that you see in the south where charter schools are raising a significant amount of money privately for their per-pupil number. I think that in terms of our overall mission even if it is a great school, you don't want them adding an extra \$5,000 per-pupil to their budget and then claiming victory. It seems to me that that is not in our best interest.
- Mr. Williams: In regard to the PR budget, considering that we are in a very political environment, any time you run a school every day you run the risk of something bad happening, no matter how good the school is. I think it is a bargain what we have on here. I think we have got to have it.
- Mr. West: Well, that's the other thing. It is just like insurance.
- Mr. Magee: One of the things I will broach with Bill Fisher is whether they can agree to providing some of the public relations services that the school itself is going to have to have.
- Mr. McKee: I agree with Joe on that.
- Mr. Magee: I would just add two other factors there. It might be that as an organization we need a partner for political action rather than keeping that all in-house. So Joe and I for instance have talked about working to develop in Rhode Island a state chapter of Democrats for Education Reform, which they have just done in Colorado which could take on a lot of the political lobbying work that we took on this year. Likewise,

Angus Davis has a 501(c)(4) which is structured to do political lobbying, called Best for Kids. RIMA could develop a partnership with a (c)(4) organization like that. I guess my only point is that there are certain options there for how we would want to structure political lobbying that might not be housed right in the RIMA budget.

Mr. Williams: I have some questions in regard to the overall insurance line. I spent part of my day talking about bidding out insurance for both municipal and school departments, and it opened up a number of questions in terms of our liability in working with the kids. You know our school system spent \$160,000 on insurance which is fire, liability and all that. So my question is, where does that coverage come from?

Mr. Magee: Charter schools work essentially like districts in Rhode Island. The school would purchase its own school insurance. That's my understanding.

Mr. West: The League of Charter Schools. To the extent there is any collective bargaining that would be with the League of Charters.

Mr. Magee: My opinion of RIMA's role in all this is to have a very strong system for accountability and support, but to leave the school-level decision-making to the school leaders and their board and evaluate what they report to us on the decisions that they have made.

Mr. McKee: We need to make sure that coverage is in place. Probably the first order of business. We are dealing with young kids, and to Joe's point, we have a lot of exposure here and potentially even on the silliest of items.

Mr. Magee: And that is the reason why I think it is very important now for RIMA to build staff capacity. I don't want anyone to sneeze in that school without us knowing about it, frankly. That's my plan. The person I have in mind to be the Director of School Support and Accountability is highly capable, and there won't be anything we don't know about that school.

Mr. West: RIMA's role in that would be providing the school with information—how to acquire insurance, perhaps providing them with a menu of options, maybe once we have some scale, figuring out whether it makes sense to join forces to get a better deal, but the individual schools are paying for

that out of their own budgets. This is more insurance for us here.

Mr. McKee: And that would be part of the agreement we are going to have? There's got to be provisions in their in case there is a gap.

Mr. West: Yeah. In order to be a RIMA school, you have to be carrying insurance, and we will provide you with this menu or we will approve an alternative.

Mr. McCulloch: Going back to Letitia's question. The school budget: that has to be prepared by Democracy Builders.

Mr. West: That's right.

Mr. McCulloch: Notwithstanding that you have a new board coming on. They do not know anything about this. So they will present a budget. Do we get a look at that budget?

Mr. Magee: Yes. They have a draft budget in front of the Office of Auditor General.

Mr. McCulloch: They do? Okay.

Mr. Magee: Yes.

Mr. McCulloch: And in that budget would be included such items as this insurance coverage?

Mr. Magee: That's exactly right. As well as their benefits items.

Mr. McKee: We should get copies of that.

Mrs. Carter: Who has been hiring the teachers?

Mr. Magee: They have not yet hired any teachers, but they have offered positions to some teachers that are now in contract negotiations. So my understanding is that they are in contract negotiations with 4 of the 8 teachers that they need and that they are very, very happy with the quality of the teachers that are available to them.

Mrs. Carter: So is there going to be some kind of a sum that the Democracy people write in for salaries?

Mr. Magee: Absolutely. That is just part of their school budget. So, unlike other charter schools and traditional public schools, they have very broad flexibility on contracts and staff both in terms of base salary and bonus structures, retirement packages and benefits, etc. Seth Andrew and Jeremy now have a pretty sophisticated and interesting performance-based pay structure to include in their contracts.

Mr. McKee: We have a motion on the table because we will be talking more about Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup> in the next session there. Are there any other questions or discussion on accepting the Finance Committee's recommendations?

Okay, not hearing any, let's just take a vote on that.

AYE: Lynch, Martinez, West, Williams. NAY: None.

### **Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup>**

Mr. Magee reported. The job fair drew 111 teachers for the 8 positions, which was an exciting result. Mister Magee participated as one of the teacher interviewers. The interview process was intense, lasting from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon. Mr. Magee stated that he was very impressed with the Democracy Builders team and their expertise in school operations and in running the flawless teacher job fair, which they were able to do without, as far as Mr. Magee was able to determine, annoying any teachers despite the fact that they had to stay there 4 hours. Democracy Builders carefully described and discussed the requirements and needs they would expect teachers to supply. There were a dozen strong candidates and about 5 who were absolute gems. The overall quality of the teachers attending the fair highlighted the need for teacher improvement, which is something RIMA needs to be a part of. We need programs, and we need some of our colleges and universities to step up with training programs that will be very different from the ones they currently have in place. Some early discussions with Ken Wong at Brown are hopeful. One alternative that has been discussed is the development of a leadership track within the Masters in Urban Education Policy program so that a certain number of the people coming into that program every year would actually be getting trained as school leaders.

The conduct of the application acceptance lottery was discussed. The design of the lottery was complicated by the requirement to include students from different cities and towns, a mix of urban and suburban students, and making sure that the school will serve students who now desperately need a new public school option. The emphasis on educating disadvantaged students is also consistent with Democracy Builder's mission, which is one of the reasons RIMA decided to partner with them for the first Mayoral Academy<sup>SM</sup>. Reconciling the mission, the legal issues, and the image issues was

challenging, but resulted in a lottery format that first categorizes each applicant by town or city of residence. Each community will have assigned 19 positions to be filled. Because Lincoln produced only 8 applicants, all of them will automatically be admitted. The 11 unfilled Lincoln positions will be allocated to the remaining communities as equally as may be, with the two extra positions being assigned to the communities by lot. Within each community (other than Lincoln), the applicants eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) will be placed in the drum first, and half of the positions for that community will be filled exclusively from FRPL applicants. After half the positions have been filled, the remaining applicants will be added to the drum and the remaining positions will be drawn. The applications break down as follows, after 3-1/2 weeks of outreach with 6 people canvassing on the ground:

	Cumberland	Central Falls	Lincoln	Pawtucket	Total
FRPL	12	21	1	26	60
Other	<u>46</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>71</u>
Total	58	24	8	41	132

Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup> is moving adequately in terms of teacher hiring, curriculum, etc.

We still need to get members for the board of Democracy Prep<sup>SM</sup>.

The need to thank members of the General Assembly who supported the Mayoral Academies<sup>SM</sup> was discussed.

**Election of Treasurer**

Deferred.

**Board meeting schedule**

After discussion, the Chair declared that the next three meetings would be:

- July 15, 2009
- August 5, 2009
- August 19, 2009

all at 4 pm at 160 Westminster Street, Providence, RI, Suite 400.

**Insurance**

Mr. Magee reported that he had not received quotes from either broker, and he stated that he would redouble his efforts to obtain quotes.

### **Intellectual property**

Mr. Williams (seconded by Mr. West) moved to approve the expenditure of funds to obtain intellectual property protections. AYE: Lynch, Martinez, West, Williams. NAY: None.

### **Visit to Washington, D.C.**

The Chair advised that he would be visiting Washington along with other dignitaries to meet with Secretary Duncan and his staff and to meet with NACSA on Friday 17 July 2009.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Lynch (seconded by Mr. Williams) moved to adjourn, AYE: Lynch, Martinez, West, Williams. NAY: None.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 5:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Daniel Waugh, Secretary

“Mayoral Academy” is a service mark of Rhode Island Mayoral Academies.

### **Exhibit**

A – Proposed budget

Note: If the Exhibit is not attached, it may be obtained from the Secretary:

Daniel C. Waugh, Secretary  
Rhode Island Mayoral Academies

c/o Moses & Afonso, Ltd.  
160 Westminster Street, Suite 400  
Providence, RI 02903  
Vox = 401-453-3600  
Fax = 401-453-3604  
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