



**Minutes from the LION Board of Trustees Strategic Priorities Session on Saturday, October 15, 2022, at 670 West End Avenue, #16B, New York, NY 10025**

**Trustees Present:**

Herb Fixler  
Ruth Jarmul  
Nick Ober  
David Schatsky  
Tony Stoupas  
Herb Kaplan  
Susan Engel  
Thomas Sturtevant  
Susan Fine  
Deborah Dumont

**Also Present:**

Celia Sosa, Executive Director  
Keveney McCrillis, Executive Assistant to the Senior Leadership Team  
Jim Ford, Consultant

Herb Fixler, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

Jim Ford stated the goals and outcomes for the day. The most important was to reach a consensus on Strategic Priorities for School Year 2022-23 (and the upcoming charter term).

Celia Sosa briefly reviewed our founding as a character-based school and previous strategic priorities.

Celia Sosa reviewed the SWOT analysis completed by the Senior Leadership Team.

The board explored the graduate school partnerships currently in place to attract new teachers. Celia Sosa suggested beyond these that we need to have our director of talent and acquisition get the right people to apply and interview. The board suggested we need to review our compensation structure, review and market our benefits program.

A board member asked school leadership to outline our top goal. Celia Sosa stated she needs to be focused on the academic program. The board expressed support for this and asked how they could help. Again it was recommended that we increase our ability to attract and retain good teachers.

The board suggested having someone work with school leadership to track students' and teachers' performance.

A board member brought up how our curriculum plays a part in this. The curriculum was discussed.

A board member brought up how we brand the school in the short and long term. Branding was discussed.

A board member brought up our longstanding facilities concerns at 730 Bryant. Facilities were discussed.

A board member brought up documenting our story and sharing our story. That was seen as a long-term project we couldn't focus on now.

Celia Sosa brought up the need to cut the budget because ESSER/ARP funding is expiring. A board member asked how this would work with our plan to attract talent.

Celia Sosa committed to coming back to the board with a recommendation/proposal for areas we may need additional funding, and the board agreed to consider it and figure out the accounting/financials needed.

Celia Sosa shared out what the Senior Leadership Team will be doing in upcoming meetings.

A board member shared a concern that our PD doesn't have continuity and should be broken down by month and goal.

Jim Ford commented that we don't have a board dashboard and suggested should develop one to streamline communication. The board agreed we are too reliant on individual knowledge and need to develop a manual.

The board's chairman reviewed the role the board plays and should be playing, specifically regarding communication with leadership at LION.

There was a 15-minute break.

Jim Ford shared that we accomplished one of our goals - a consensus on some strategic priorities. They are as follows: focusing on K-8 academic programs, branding and marketing specifically as it relates to attracting and retaining talent, and institutionalizing policy and practice.

Jim Ford suggested bringing in two types of consultant support, one on data and one to build the longer-term plan to ensure the two are aligned.

The meeting then shifted to a discussion about governance.

Herb Fixler announced he will be stepping down as chair at the end of this year before the end of his term. He suggested the board should decide soon who will step in so he can work with them to provide a smooth succession.

A board member asked if Herb had an idea for a process. Herb Fixler suggested an indication of interest should come first and he's happy to play any role but open to questions or thoughts.

A board member suggested our committees need more structure.

A board member brought up that the focus of the marketing committee was on donors; perhaps that should shift to also discuss teacher retention. Celia Sosa strongly agreed, as it's a new need given the candidate pool.

Herb Fixler proposed that the executive committee become a rotating committee. Jim Ford suggested this is something we think about with the transition in board leadership, so we are training new people and retaining institutional knowledge simultaneously.

A board member brought up our recurring challenge of attracting new and diverse board members. Herb Fixler shared that we asked Board Assist to help and were given feedback. Jim Ford suggested that we could define commitment in other than monetary terms.

A suggestion was made by a board member that we focus on targeting local leaders. All agreed that was a good place to look for new board members, and our marketing material should go to the local organizations to improve those relationships.

Celia Sosa committed to providing a draft plan that is a living document focused on K-8 performance by the November board meeting. A board member asked for an action plan to be developed listing things the board agree to. Keveney McCrillis agreed to provide that by the November meeting.

Jim Ford suggested that we continue with our practice of having a board retreat in January, during which they could complete a SWOT analysis. It was asked if Jim Ford would come back to facilitate that, and he said he could make himself available.

A motion to adjourn was made at 1:00 PM by Board Chair Herb Fixler, it was seconded by Tony Stoupas, and approved by a unanimous vote.