

August Board Meeting, August 28, 2023

<p>Board Members Present: Herb Fixler Tony Stoupas Ruth Jarmul Tom Sturtevant Nicholas Ober Susan Fine Deborah Dumont</p> <p>Board members not in attendance: Herb Kaplan Susan Engel David Schatsky</p>	<p>Others in Attendance: Celia Sosa, Executive Director Lex Zain, CAO Stephen Trowbridge, Former CFO/COO Sherrie Henry, COO Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing Keveney McCrillis, Executive Assistant to the Senior Leadership Team Barasha Hiloidhari, Director of Data and Assessments Dan Marcus - Member of the public</p>
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Tony Stoupas, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. There was a quorum, so Tony Stoupas called for a motion to approve the July minutes. Nick Ober seconded the motion. The July minutes were approved unanimously.

Tony then led a discussion about the calendar of meetings for the 2023-2024 school year, shared before the board meeting via email. He stated that the Strategic Planning session would not be offsite, but it would take the place of our normal meeting and be extended. Coming up, there are some changes to the rolling calendar. We received a memo indicating we wouldn't receive state testing results until the fall, later than normal, so Celia Sosa, Executive Director, recommends removing the proficiency scores from next month and adding the review of bylaws that month.

On October 23rd, the nominating committee will discuss, amongst other things, prioritizing board diversity. Herb Fixler, chair of that committee, will come to the meeting with talking points. Tony pointed out that there is an assumption that the finance, education, facilities, and development committees meet monthly, and that is a standing date. Chairs will work with Keveney McCrillis, Executive Assistant to the Senior Leadership Team, to schedule those.

The board retreat will be on January, 27th. This will be in lieu of the Monday meeting. Lex Zain, Chief Academic Officer, indicated that the most updated student performance data would not be available until the beginning of February. There was a suggestion that the retreat moves away from data and focuses more on self-reflection.

There is a student/staff/family events calendar shared before the meeting that highlights opportunities throughout the next 12 months. Tony Stoupas charged board members to each attend one event highlighting the school's culture.



Celia Sosa, Executive Director, then shared that as a part of the NYSED desk review, we were asked to develop policies on a number of issues. The next step, after board approval, is to add these to our handbook and website and then report back to NYSED. Board member Deborah Dumont wanted to highlight that we could possibly include more information about how we inquire about student housing. Celia noted that this is modeled after a policy NYSED recommended we use, but we would then include summary language in the handbooks.

Tony Stoupas motioned for a vote on the Students in Temporary Housing policy; it was seconded by Deborah Dumont and unanimously approved. The next policy discussed was the Student Transitioning from Residential Facilities Policy. There were no questions on this policy which was sent out before the meeting. Tony Stoupas motioned for a vote on that policy. Deborah Dumont seconded, and it was unanimously approved. The Parent and Family Engagement Policy was the next policy reviewed. Celia discussed that she met with families this month and reviewed the policy, and asked for feedback. Families made a suggestion for quarterly meetings. Celia included that in the policy and will hold these quarterly meetings. This policy needs to be reviewed yearly by families and amended if needed. Tony Stoupas motioned for a vote on the policy. Thomas Sturtevant seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Celia then led a discussion of the District Wide Safety Plan, which was shared before the meeting. There was a question about tabletop drills. Celia discussed the number of and types of drills LION runs each year. There was a question about the gun safety policies and protocols. Celia discussed the scanning that happens at 730 Bryant Ave from 6th to 8th graders but not at our 830 Hunts Point High School location. Celia shared that we installed mesh coating on the windows at the high school recently to increase safety. There was a question regarding students' confidentially reporting dangers at the school and the red flag law. Celia shared that we do log this information in PowerSchool and counseling notes. Tony Stoupas made a motion to vote on the approval of this safety plan. Nick Ober seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Celia then introduced Barasha Hiloidhari, who joined the meeting at 6:40 pm via Zoom. She shared an overview of the Board Dashboard. Each board member will receive a log in this week from which they can access the dashboard and board website. There will also be office hours for the next four Mondays, during which board members can receive help logging in or accessing information on either of these sites. Barasha walked the board members through the dashboard and the data it contains. Deborah Dumont and Thomas Sturtevant offered their assistance to any board member interested in diving deeper into the data as they have now, in the Education Committee, looked at the data and dashboard several times. Tony Stoupas highlighted the thoughtfulness of this dashboard. He discussed the evolving nature of data and how we need to engage with it. He asked the board to invest time in looking at the data as it pertains to our board responsibilities; some of this will be done in committees and some in board meetings, but everyone has a responsibility to be aware of the data. Ruth Jarmul asked about there only being one year of data in the dashboard and suggested that we include trends over time. Nick Ober asked how far back we could go in terms of backfilling the data. He also wanted to see targets as part of the data set to understand how close we are to our goals. Lex Zain discussed that we didn't administer exams during COVID but that we would include all forward-facing data when we have it. Keveney



McCrillis then shared an overview of the board website and how board members would access the information it contains.

Stephen Trowbridge, CFO/COO, reported on the financial report shared before the meeting. He stated that LION ended the year well financially. Stephen gave some reasons behind how we met our budget despite overspending in some categories. Ruth Jarmul asked a question about our bank and investment firms. Stephen then discussed that the auditing process had begun and that he had forwarded a letter to the finance committee about the audit. The board will review the audit and seek approval from the board during the October meeting. Celia and Tony expressed gratitude for Stephen's work with LION and assistance with the transition for the new COO, Sherrie Henry.

Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing, presented the development report, which was shared via email before the meeting. She added that LION was awarded another grant, even since sending out this report, which will go towards printers in the HS. She shared that Summer Boost had served 210 1st - 9th grade students with a 92% overall attendance rate. Ruth Jarmul and Celia Sosa reported that last year this program assisted in holding off the summer slide for our students as reflected in NWEA scores, and we hope the same will hold true this year. Maya then made a plug for LION's Literacy and Libations fundraiser on September 13th. She reminded the board of her maternity leave and stated that at the next board meeting, she would share more about the plans for her team during that time.

Tony Stoupas asked if there were any committee updates. Ruth Jarmul shared that there was guidance for board members and fundraising put together by Herbert Kaplan, which was shared before the meeting. Board members should read this and reference it when thinking about fundraising. She also mentioned that they are still in touch with a potential contributor to a future LION endowment fund. Herb Fixler discussed that we need to decide as a board if we are going to create a supporting organization and/or an endowment fund. Tony Stoupas asked if both the endowment and supporting organization needed to happen simultaneously or one first. Herb Fixler explained the background regarding why we are considering each other and clarified that an endowment and a supporting organization can happen separately or together. Susan Fine asked about the annual cost for things like financial auditing. Herb Fixler asked Stephen to reach out to find that information. Tony said that for the next meeting, there should be a recommendation with pros and cons. Keveney will put that on the agenda for the September meeting. Susan Fine gave the facilities update saying that the quotes we received for the Herb Fixler Family Engagement Center were reduced, and we are waiting on another quote. Susan will lead a tour of the high school with the bidders this month. The Education Committee update was given earlier in the meeting alongside the dashboard presentation. Herb Fixler said that the Nominating Committee didn't meet but reminded us that we should discuss and consider reducing the give-or-get to attract more board members. Tony asked Herb to put that into his recommendation for the next board meeting.

Tony Stoupas opened the meeting for public comment. There were none.



Tony Stoupas motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 pm. The motion was seconded by Herb Fixler and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned.

Notes prepared by Keveney McCrillis.