

February Board Meeting Minutes, February 26, 2024

<p>Board Members Present: Deborah Dumont Nicholas Ober Julie Medler David Schatsky Tony Stoupas Daniel Marcus Ruth Jarmul Susan Fine Herb Fixler</p>	<p>Others LION asked to be in Attendance: Celia Sosa, CEO Sherrie Henry, COO Keveney McCrillis, Executive Assistant to the Senior Leadership Team Maya Severns, Director of Marketing and Development</p> <p>Board members attending virtually: Thomas Sturtevant</p>
--	--

Tony Stoupas, board chairman, called for a motion to begin the meeting at 6:03 PM. The motion was seconded by David Schatsky and unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas then motioned to dispense the reading of the minutes and approve the December meeting minutes, which were shared before the meeting via email. David Schatsky seconded the motion. The December meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Tony Stoupas then opened a discussion about the board retreat that was held in January. He reviewed the identified priorities and asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none. The board was aligned on these priorities.

Chief Executive Officer Celia Sosa then delivered her CEO report, which was shared via email before the meeting. She expects to receive a full academic report this week but has reviewed the mid-year academic performance of our students. There will be further discussion with the education committee and chair, Deborah Dumont. She named a shift in the middle school where instructional leaders were now also co-teaching classes. Celia indicated that an intent-to-return survey was administered to the staff and that stay interviews were being launched. This data will be shared further with the HR committee and chair, Nicholas Ober. LION will also be launching a pay scale that has been developed and ensure competitiveness with the DOE. Celia reviewed NY state’s workplace violence prevention law with the board and the staff’s response to the rollout of communication around this new law.

Herb Fixler joined the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Celia Sosa continued to share that we are at the tail end of an audit of our use of Education Stabilization Funds. We expect to complete this in the next few weeks. A board member asked if the DOE received a pay increase in January and whether our staff would be concerned that they wouldn’t get a pay increase in January. Celia responded that although we have this salary scale, it is a starting point, and we maintain an ability to negotiate with high-performing staff members.



Celia highlighted some of the great things happening in our classrooms and the parent events we recently had. She shared that our current applications have us on target to meet or exceed our enrollment goals for the 2024-2025 school year. A board member asked about the Charter Advocacy Day our families attended and how it would affect LION if the legislation we were advocating for was passed. Celia and Sherrie answered. A board member requested that we get a copy of the legislation to find out if we qualify under it and, if not, what we would need to do if it were to pass. Then, look at who sits on that committee or is sponsoring it. A board member suggested that we look at the competition in the neighborhood to see how other charter schools are marketing themselves to students and families. They asked how concerned we are with families going elsewhere because we are not marketing ourselves similarly. Celia answered. A board member asked what the current rental reimbursement rate per student was at other charter schools. Celia committed to finding that number and sharing it with the board. There was also a discussion about how NY State has lifted the cap for charter schools.

Chief Operating Officer Sherrie Henry shared December and January's financials and her financial report, which were emailed before the meeting. She stated that we are tracking to end the year in a surplus. There was a board question about how our budget and billing processes have changed. Sherrie explained how we project our budget using per-pupil funding. She then reviewed the cash injections we received in December and January. Sherrie shared the finance committee has been working hard to rethink LION's investment strategy. The last update was that LION's 401 K audit has launched and will continue through August.

Maya Severns, Director of Development and Marketing, discussed her development and marketing report, which was shared via email before the meeting. She shared that we are planning to apply to the Bloomberg Summer Boost grant again, and there is a plan to increase the number of students we plan to enroll in summer programming and enhance the experience for all students. Maya shared that after attending a webinar, she was made aware of the ways in which donors have been giving since 2017, and there are plans to adjust LION's fundraising plan accordingly. The number of donors for the Endowment for LION Charter School fund and amounts were shared. There was a question about repeat donors for the following year. Maya answered. There was a question about whether these funds were restricted. Yes, they are. They will be on the balance sheet as restricted funds and in a separate brokerage account. Maya shared that LION is engaging in some new marketing techniques and shared those as well as how we would track their impact. She also shared admissions data that shows that we are trending above the sector in applicants per seat.

Tony Stoupas asked if there were any committee meeting updates. Nick Ober said the HR committee will be meeting on Friday at 3 PM, and he will circulate that agenda tomorrow. Sherrie shared that the Herb Fixler Family Engagement Center would be selecting furniture soon. Celia Sosa also shared that we received word the 730 Bryant building would be closed over the summer. We have reached out to inquire about our alternative site placement. Our operations crew will be allowed to remain on-site to paint, etc. There has yet to be an update on the request for a Building Utilization Plan or Shared Space Survey for 730 Bryant Ave. There is a facilities meeting on Friday.



The Nominating Committee meeting will take place in early March, and Keveney will help organize it. The topics covered will be board expansion and diversification.

The board gave positive feedback about the structure and content of this board meeting. The timing was efficient. However, there was still a question about where the board could help with the topics brought to this meeting. There was a suggestion that before each report, we state the objective (oversight/informing, feedback, or assistance with something).

Tony Stoupas motioned to enter an executive session. This motion was seconded by Herb Fixler and unanimously approved. The board entered an executive session at 7:04 PM and returned from it at 7:36 PM

Tony Stoupas then opened the meeting for public comment. There were no public comments.

Tony Stoupas moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM. Nick Ober seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Notes prepared by Keveney McCrillis.