

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

September 13, 2023 at 6PM
Logan Square Campus
3255 W. Altgeld Street, Chicago IL 60647

Board Members Attending In-Person: Ronit Barrett, Jessica Cardoni, Dee Dee Chesley, Angela Igbineweka-Obaseki, Meghan Kiesel, Lauren Long, Alex Maturi, Liam O’Kane, Kim White.

Board Members Attending via Microsoft Teams: Adnan Assad, Jeff Kemerley, Dave Rodin.

Guests Attending: Carlos Pineiro, Candace Williams

Board Members Absent: Rolando Acosto, Stacey Blasko, Roberto Interiano, Kenny Langston, Dan Lynch, Steve Raquet, Homero Tristian

Christopher House Staff Attending: Arturo Abrego, Julie Dakers, Tihela Feit, Becky Seibel, Libby Shortenhaus, Karen Ross-Williams, Traci Stanley, Sarah Collentine, Bernadette Loyola

Quorum Met.

Minutes Recorder: Tihela Feit

Proceedings: Meeting called to order at 6:02PM

Welcome, Presented by Dee Dee Chesley

Dee Dee Chesley called the meeting to order and welcomed Board members as well guests attending the Board meeting. She wished those celebrating the Jewish New Year a *Shana Tovah* and a happy start to Hispanic Heritage Month – both beginning on Friday, September 15.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no one present to make public comment.

Minutes and Consent Agenda, Presented by Dee Dee Chesley

Motion was made at 6:07PM by Ronit Barrett and seconded by Alex Maturi, and carried unanimously to approve the March 31,2023, May 24, 2023, June 21, 2023, and August 7, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes.

Julie Dakers shared an overview of the Paid Parental Policy. This benefit would be available to all Christopher House employees who have a year 1+ tenure at Christopher House and have applied for and are eligible for Family Medical Leave Act.

Motion was made at 6:09 to approve Consent Agenda by Meghan Kiesel and seconded by Alex Maturi, and unanimously carried to approve the September 13, 2023 Consent Agenda.

Officer & Board Member Elections, Presented by Dee Dee Chesley

Dee Dee thanked those who have served as Officers and Members of the Board of Directors who will not be renewing their roles. Dee Dee thanked Dan Lynch for his over 10 years of service to Christopher House as a member of the Board of Directors; he will not be renewing his term.

Dee Dee also thanked Dave Rodin for his service as Secretary and Stephen Raquet for his service as Treasurer; both will remain on as Board members but will not be renewing their Officer roles.

Motion was made at 6:12PM by Liam O’Kane and seconded by Meghan Kiesel, and unanimously carried to approve the Officers of Christopher House’s Board of Directors:

- Dee Dee Chesley as President
- Jeff Kemerley as Vice President
- Adnan Assad as Treasurer
- Ronit Barrett as Secretary

Motion was made at 6:12PM by Ronit Barrett and seconded by Meghan Kiesel, and unanimously carried to approve three-year terms for the following members of Christopher House’s Board of Directors:

- Homero Tristan
- Roberto Interiano
- Liam O’Kane

Scholar & Family Achievement, Presented by Libby Shortenhaus & School Leaders: Sarah Collentine & Bernadette Loyola (Early Childhood), Arturo Abrego (Elementary School)

Libby Shortenhaus, CEO shared an overview of the start of the year recognizing that across programs we are still rebuilding after COVID-19. Libby invited the Board to engage in authentic conversation and welcomed Sarah Collentine, Associate Director of Early Childhood, Bernadette Loyola, Associate Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Dr. Arturo Abrego, Principal of Christopher House Elementary School as presenters.

Sarah Collentine and Bernadette Loyola shared updates on our Infant & Pre-School, which includes children ages 0 – 5 years old. Key data story questions posed were: **1)** How are children doing in 0-3 and 3-5? and **2)** Are Pre-schoolers “ready” for kindergarten. In relation to the current state of post-Covid an additional reflection was on what factors are impacting the daily experience of early childhood scholars and teachers.

Bernadette invited some reflection on what were some of the things that made you successful in your Early Learning journey, what was supported, who and how were you supported, and what were subliminal messages you received during your educational experience?

We thank Kim White, Angela Igbineveka-Obaseki, and Dee Dee Chesley for sharing their personal experiences and stories.

Sarah shared that while the Early Childhood team is proud of the data story from 2022-23, there were also daily obstacles that our teachers, staff, and Site Leadership faced to support each child to achieve their full potential. Overarching themes included **1)** daily staffing challenges and consistency of qualified staff in each classroom as well as staff turnover; **2)** higher number of Diverse Learners; **3)** specifically in our preschool classroom the challenge for teachers to provide consistent, high-quality small group and individual instruction.

Of note, last year Diverse learners, which is defined as children with diagnosed/undiagnosed developmental/behavioral needs that impact their academics, was a significant population of the scholars our Early Childhood program: around 17% in our 0-3 classrooms and between 24-27% in our preschool classrooms were diverse learners.

Despite these challenges, our scholars made significant growth from fall 2022 to spring 2023 with more than 80% of children making a half step or more across developmental domains as measured by Teaching Strategies GOLD, a national assessment.

Specifically, around kindergarten readiness, Sarah shared that from fall 2022 to spring 2023 only 23% of preschoolers transitioning to kindergarten were developmentally ready for kindergarten. It is important to note that 18 scholars / or 29% of all scholars were diverse learners. However, from spring 2023 to summer 2023, 52% of preschoolers were “kindergarten ready” after completing our Summer Bridge program.

Board members had thoughtful questions regarding diverse learnings, kindergarten readiness measurements and adjustments since the pandemic. Libby shared that there is an inequity in early childhood funding as there is no distinction between children’s needs, which is different than how CPS budgets for elementary scholars.

Dr. Arturo Abrego shared that now in his second year as Principal, he is focused on reorganizing, systems and processes, and providing resources to his teachers to support scholars and scholar achievement. He overviewed student achievement in areas of math and reading and culture and climate from academic year 2023.

Math and Reading assessments are via the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), which is a nationally normed standardized achievement adaptive achievement test. Scores are reflective of scholars in grades 3 – 8th. Student scores were slightly lower in the spring of 2023 compared to last year: 22% of scholars are at the expected NWEA level in math; 33% of scholars are at the expected NWEA level in reading. 49% of scholars met or exceeded their NWEA growth projection in math; and 48% met or exceeded their NWEA growth projection in reading. Art noted that a 50% or more growth projection is necessary for those below level.

Diving into the NWEA data, 4th and 5th grade scholars struggled the most in both math and reading. Art shared NWEA national information that noted that Christopher House scholars are on-par with national data collected by NWEA and noted that BIPOC students continue to hurt more than their

white or Asian American peers. And overall, NWEA national data shows that scholars continue to score below their pre-COVID peers, without significant grade or subject showing substantial catch-up.

Art shared that in response to teacher feedback and scholar achievement he is implementing a new literacy curriculum K-5th grade this year and will assess Middle School curriculum 6 – 8th grade this year as well as math curriculum.

Art shared too his three-year goal of 60% of K-8th grade scholars scoring proficient or better in reading and math, a 20% increase year-over-year from FY24 until FY26.

Art also shared Christopher House Elementary School's 5Essentials Survey which includes survey results from scholars, parents, and teachers across 5 domains: 1) Effective Leaders; 2) Collaborative Teachers; 3) Supportive Environment; 4) Involved Families; 5) Ambitious Instruction.

Finance Committee, Presented by Adnan Assad

Adnan Assad presented the year-end 2023 financials. Overall, there were no surprises and Christopher House was favorable to budget in private philanthropy and other revenue, unfavorable in Government Funding due to childcare and the Charter School being unfavorable and under revenue budget, both due to enrollment. Expenses were unfavorable to the budget resulting in a \$1M deficit overall. Adnan did note that much of the deficit is made up of non-cash loss, most notable \$865K in depreciation.

Adnan also presented the first month of the FY24 financials, which are trending well and within budget projections. Adnan also gave an update on our banking relationship with Old National Bank.

DBEI Task Force, Presented by Alex Maturi

Alex Maturi shared updates on how the group is doing honest evaluation on the goals and commitments for DBEI for Christopher House and shared that Christopher House Board of Directors will be working with Single Story, Inc. this coming year through a 4-part series. Alex invited more people to join for diverse voices and perspectives at the table.

External Affairs, Presented by Jeff Kemerley

Jeff shared that fundraising is off to a good start, with early wins across each revenue category. Jeff shared that what ways that Board members can be supportive of fundraising in the next quarter includes reviewing individual solicitation lists, inviting friends to participate in Family-to-Family and End of Year giving campaigns like Giving Tuesday.

Strategy Committee, Presented by Kim White & Traci Stanley

Kim White shared an overview of the Strategic Planning process, which was a year and a half process that will be reviewed and voted on for approval this evening.

Traci Stanley shared the process, which engaged our community, including Leadership and Management Teams and for the first time a Steering Committee that included staff and parents. Ultimately, we collected 500 feedback surveys and held 15 planning meetings to get input from various stakeholders.

The Strategy Plan FY24 – FY26 focuses on three key areas: **1)** High Student Achievement for all Scholars; **2)** Best Place to Work; and **3)** Investing in Equity.

Traci also shared that the leadership team is focused on 1) higher student achievement; 2) increasing pay equity across our schools; and 3) increasing staff and parent collaboration and cohesion through our DBEI initiatives. Investing in equity is a foundational element through the whole plan because we cannot do any of the plan if we don't have strong enrollment and a budget that meets compliance requirements. The leadership team has also thoughtfully developed 3-year strategic measures designed to drive toward higher student outcomes; annual goals have also been developed to hold themselves accountable and cascaded to their teams.

Traci also noted the pivots and responses to Christopher House's revenue reductions last year reflected in the proposed plan. We have added revenue generating initiatives to the plan to help eliminate Christopher House's remaining deficit and reworked the plan to account for less resources and staff capacity.

Motion was made at 7:27PM by Kim White and seconded by Dee Dee Chesley, and unanimously carried to approve the FY24 – FY 26 Strategic Plan.

Libby presented a new Board Committee Structure in response to the new Strategic Plan. The recommendations are to add an Education Council and dissolve the Strategy Committee and Board Development Committee. Strategy work will be taken on by the Executive Committee and Board Development will be folded into the External Affairs Committee. Updates to the bylaws to reflect these changes will be presented for a vote at the November Board meeting. Board members indicate the importance of clearly identifying new roles and responsibilities for committees taking on new initiatives to ensure success.

Motion was made at 7:35PM by Lauren Long and seconded by Alex Maturi to adjourn to close session.

Motion was made at 8:00PM by Dee Dee Chesley and seconded by Alex Maturi to return to Open Session.

Open session resumed at 8:01PM.

Motion was made at 8:01 by Meghan Kisel and seconded by Ronit Barrett to elect Carlos Pineiro and Candance Williams to the Board of Directors.

Motion made at 8:02PM by Alex Maturi and seconded by Lauren Long to close the Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.