Board Meeting (via Zoom)
DRAFT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2025
4:00PM - 6:16PM

Members Present:
Hector Torres, Chair
Robbie Dean, Vice-Chair & Treasurer
Allison R. Kokkoros, Member
Ana Mejia, Secretary
Alejandra Barrera, Member
John Goodman, Member
Cesar Lopez-Morales, Member (joined at 4:18pm)
Vilma Rosario, Member
Ingrid Toledo, Member
Johan Uvin, Member (left after the closed session)
Larry Villegas-Pérez, Member

Members Absent:
Giovanni Delfino, Member
Helen Mesfin, Member

Staff:
Eduardo Aponte, Vice President, Finance
Elani Lawrence, Chief Academic Officer
John Marchese, Vice President, Advancement
Angela Medina, Chief Operations Officer
Libby Miller, Chief of Staff
Robert M. Skelton, General Counsel
Karla Vasconez, Director of Executive Administration
& Strategic Initiatives

Quorum: Yes

Welcome & Pre-Meeting Announcements
Board Chair Hector Torres provided opening comments and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 4:01pm.

Review of Agenda
Mr. Torres asked if there were any proposed changes to the agenda previously sent to the Board. Board members did not propose any changes to the agenda.

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Public Comment Period by members of school community
Mr. Torres confirmed that no members of the public had signed up to give comments during the Public Comment Period.

Consent Agenda Approval
The following items were brought forward for approval as part of the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of the Board's regular meeting held on October 17, 2025.

Mr. Uvin moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Mr. Goodman seconded the motion. Following the invitation for discussion on the motion, a roll call vote was conducted, and the Consent Agenda item was approved unanimously.

Mr. Torres then acknowledged and thanked the board members whose terms expire on December 31, 2025. He stated that Giovanni Delfino graciously agreed to chair the Finance and Development Committee when he was first elected. Even though Finance was not his background, he ably led the Committee for two years. He then recognized Ana Mejia, who was elected as our student board member, and is leaving the Board to focus on her college degree and noted that she always brought the voice of the students to our deliberations and served as secretary to the board. Mr. Torres then remarked that the School was forever grateful to Johan Uvin, who led the School through the development of two strategic plans, and helped the School focus on student achievement and student support services. Mr. Torres then noted that he would also be stepping down, and that it has been an honor to serve the School and the community.

Mission Moment
Ms. Kokkoros then introduced Udean Mars Williams, Assistant Principal at the Sonia Gutierrez campus as the Mission Moment speaker. Ms. Mars Williams is from Saint Vincent in the Grenadines, and said that she has an education and psychology background, and that these disciplines have the power to change lives. She appreciates the dedication and strengths of the faculty and staff that serve the students every day. Ms. Mars Williams recounted several stories of students who struggled with their studies but eventually were successful and completed their programs. The students inspire her and she enjoys helping remove the barriers in their paths. Mr. Torres, Mr. Dean, Mr. Uvin and Ms. Rosario thanked her for her inspiring words.

CEO Report
CEO Allison Kokkoros referred to materials shared in advance and noted the following highlights in her report:

- Thanks to a suggestion from Ms. Bradford, Chief Schools Officer, and with the assistance of faculty and staff, the School provided free hot meals to all students during the week prior to Thanksgiving.
- The School slightly exceeded its budgeted enrollment of 2000. The enrollment auditors noted that the School was the most prepared and responsive of the schools that the auditors worked with.
- She noted that the School successfully administered the grant it received from DC Health Link to provide nurses aide training over the summer, Due to the School's success, DC

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Health Link asked the School to apply for additional grant funding for the program, and DC Health Link has since awarded the School more grant money than the School requested.

- In general community pressures have stabilized, although there may be changes following the upcoming local elections for mayor and the DC Council.
- The DC Council recently held a hearing on adult education in which School leadership, faculty, and learners participated. The DC Council showed great faith in the value of adult education charter schools.
- According to the DC Chief Financial Officer, DC finances will be tighter in the next few years, and the new mayor and council members will have to make some tough decisions. Ms. Miller then provided preliminary results of the Staff Health and Culture Survey, which was previously called the Staff Climate Survey. She noted that 80% of staff completed the survey, and that 85% of the participants had favorable responses. The School showed growth in nearly all areas. Ms. Kokkoros stated that the full report from the survey will be shared with the board once it is completed. Ms. Toledo noted that the 80% participation rate was very high for this type of survey.
- Ms. Lawrence then provided the following academic performance report for the midpoint of the Fall semester:
    - Audited enrollment is at 2006 students.
    - Attendance is at 61.62% as of 12/2. External factors in the beginning of the semester affected attendance rates, but the school implemented many strategies to offset those factors. The School will continue to look for additional resources and learning opportunities to enhance student persistence. She noted that although attendance is no longer a charter goal, attendance affects student performance.
    - The School implemented mid-semester CASAS pretesting. 97% of eligible students took the Reading pretest, and 94% took the Listening pretest, against a goal of 90% participation. 41% of the students showed gains, which is very positive at the midpoint of the semester. The CASAS test window for the end of the semester is 12/1-12/19.
    - Continuing strategies include:
        - The mid-semester testing.
        - Faculty training on Tableau.
        - Focusing on CASAS Listening skills.
        - Providing faculty professional development on Kagan strategies.
        - Deep data dives by the Assessment Department.
        - Tutors using a revamped goal-setting process with students.
    - Mr. Torres asked how the attendance rate compared to previous years. Ms. Lawrence noted the rate is the same, but attendance was lower earlier in the semester, which is contrary to past trends. However, the overall rate has remained consistent. Mr. Torres then noted that other schools are having attendance issues due to fear in the community. Ms. Barrera asked if there were other factors affecting attendance, and Ms. Lawrence responded that security concerns, medical difficulties and work schedule changes are additional factors, as in previous years.
    - Mr. Uvin asked whether the School would achieve the 70% CASAS goal, and Ms. Lawrence noted that, even though testing is not yet complete, they are already seeing scores in the high 60's. Mr. Torres asked about the tutors' role in assisting students. Ms. Lawrence noted that tutoring is a referral process, and that the School

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offers a variety of student supports to maintain learning, even with attendance challenges. Mr. Torres then asked if the School needs more tutors, and Ms. Lawrence noted that the School added tutors this semester and will continue to monitor the situation.

- Ms. Medina then noted that the Student Information System project was proceeding. The contract has been signed with Salesforce, and that the contract with the developer was nearly finished. Mr. Torres noted that the contract process is the easiest portion of the work, and that implementation was key. He also appreciated the regular updates.

Financial Report

Mr. Dean, accompanied by Mr. Aponte, presented the financial report. Mr. Dean noted that:

- For fiscal year 2025-26, revenue is exceeding the forecast, expenses are tracking to the budget, and the School is cash flow positive.
- The School has already achieved 96% of its fiscal year fundraising goal.

Mr. Aponte noted that, for the three months ending September 30:

- Revenue was ahead by $1.4 million due to higher funding from OSSE educator compensation payments, growth in the investment portfolio, and slightly higher enrollment versus budget
- Expenses are higher due to higher OSSE educator compensation payments received, offset partially by savings from salary expenses due to position vacancies. These savings are somewhat offset by additional contractor expenses.
- The School has an estimated 159 days cash in hand.
- Long term and strategic reserves were fully funded in FY25.
- Capital expenses, including funding sources and spending to date, are in a separate schedule in the financial report.
- Mr. Torres stated that he appreciates the report format and information. Mr. Dean liked the tie to the strategic plan. Ms. Toledo was very pleased with it and that it was aligned to strategic goals. Mr. Villegas-Pérez requested clarification about outreach expenses. Mr. Aponte stated it was the additional marketing expenses and resources to support our enrollment for this year, and that he expects it to be one-time expenses. Mr. Torres noted expenses for outreach to the diplomatic community, and that he and Ms. Kokkoros had recently attended a diplomatic event in which the School was spotlighted and that they were able to network with that community.

Finance and Development Committee

Mr. Goodman noted the following:

- The Committee reviewed the audit, the School's financial performance, and ongoing projects. The auditors gave a clean, unqualified opinion.
- The Committee intends to recompete the audit services, which is considered best practice.
- Fundraising is going well, and planning is well under way for the Achieving the Dream event, which is scheduled for May 7.
- Mr. Goodman requested that the board members provide their annual contribution to the School, emphasizing that the amount of the contribution is an individual decision and that full board participation is important.

The Board then took a short break.

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Academic Oversight and Strategic Planning Committee

Mr. Uvin noted the following:

- The Committee met on November 12 and discussed the topics below:
    - How to maximize the value of the AIR study to external audiences, especially the DC Charter School Board, and the DC Council. The staff is developing a brief for review.
    - The strategic value of measuring performance.
    - The upcoming Middle States accreditation renewal, the deadline for which may be extended to January 2028 due to the effects of COVID.
    - The School Charter renewal, which will occur in SY27-28, and which includes successful re-accreditation.
    - The mid-semester academic performance, including attendance, which is critical to persistence.
    - CASAS data available so far.
- The Committee also reviewed the progress under the Strategic Plan. Mr. Uvin noted:
    - The Climate Survey was rebranded as the Health and Culture Survey, which is consistent with the language of the Strategic Plan.
    - The Committee explored the concept of net promoter score, which could help in internal improvements and external positioning.
    - At its February meeting, the Committee will deeply review the Health and Culture Survey results, as well as the academic performance for the fall semester.
- Mr. Uvin then thanked the staff for their help, and noted that 3-4 years ago, the board assessment showed that many board members did not know about the School's academic performance, and that he is very happy to be in a better place now. Mr. Dean agreed, and thanked Ms. Miller for her efforts, and Mr. Uvin also thanked Ms. Lawrence.
- Mr. Torres then commented that it was important for the board members to participate in DC Public Charter School Board events and trainings.

Governance and Nominating Committee

Ms. Rosario noted the following:

- Each year, the Governance and Nominating Committee conducts the board self-assessment. This is the first year the Committee is using the new assessment form. Mr. Goodman, who took the lead in developing the form, then noted that the new form was easier to interpret, and asked the board members to inform the Committee if they felt the self-assessment missed any areas. Overall the responses were very positive. One area noted two negative responses – that the board meets frequently enough to fulfill its fiduciary obligations. There were no comments in the open-ended question addressing this concern. Mr. Goodman noted that the Committee will be reaching out to all board members for additional feedback on this issue and that board members are encouraged to reach out to the CEO or the board chair if they feel they are not getting the information they need.

- Ms. Rosario then spoke about the board member candidates recommended by the Committee, Ana Harvey and Hanane Hakim. She noted that several board members know Ms. Harvey from her work as chair of Community Capital Corporation, so Ms.

Harvey has a long connection with the School. Ms. Harvey is also very active in the community and is well regarded by DC leadership.

- Ms. Hakim is the Committee's choice for the student board member. Ms. Hakim has attended the School for two semesters and has been active in student government. She also has teaching and international management experience.
- Ms. Rosario also noted that the Committee is also very aware of its duty to recommend board members who reflect the richness and diversity of our community, and the Committee will continue its efforts to recruit those candidates.

Closed Session

Mr. Torres noted the next item on the agenda is slated for closed session, citing the DC Code provision for doing so:

- Discussion in closed session pursuant to DC Code § 2-575(b)(10) – personnel matters and DC Code § 2-2-575(b)(11) – trade secrets and commercial or financial information.
    - Discussion about the board member candidates
    - Discussion about officer and committee assignments for 2026
    - Any questions about financial performance

Ms. Toledo made a motion to approve entering the closed session for the stated purposes. Mr. Uvin seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted to approve entering the closed session as proposed. The Board voted unanimously to enter closed session. Following the vote, the Board entered closed session.

Following the closed session, the Board returned to the open meeting at about 6:10pm.

Open Session

Mr. Torres thanked everyone for a robust discussion during the closed session. The Board discussed the proposed board members, and the officer and committee assignments for 2026.

Mr. Torres then requested that Ms. Rosario offer a motion to approve the resolution appointing Ana Harvey and Hanane Hakim as Board members for three year terms effective January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028. Ms. Rosario made the motion, and Mr. Dean seconded the motion. All board members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Torres then requested that Ms. Rosario offer a motion to elect the officers for 2025. Those officers are Robbie Dean, Board Chair, Vilma Rosario, Vice Chair, and Cesar Lopez-Morales, Secretary and Treasurer. Ms. Rosario made the motion, and Mr. Goodman seconded the motion. All board members present voted in favor of the motion.

New Business

There was no new business.

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Adjourn
Mr. Torres adjourned the meeting at 6:16pm.

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Respectfully submitted by Ana Mejia, Board Secretary

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