



Board Meeting (via Zoom)
DRAFT Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2026
6:00PM – 8:08PM

Members Present:

Robbie Dean, Chair
Vilma Rosario, Vice Chair
Alejandra Barrera, Member
John Goodman, Member
Hanane Hakim, Member
Ana Harvey, Member
Allison Kokkoros, Member
Cesar Lopez-Morales, Secretary and Treasurer
Helen Mesfin, Member (joined at 6:03pm)
Ingrid Toledo, Member
Hector Torres, Member
Johan Uvin, Member
Larry Villegas- Pérez, Member (joined at 6:54pm)

Members Absent:

None

Staff:

Eduardo Aponte, Vice President, Finance
Elani Lawrence, Chief Academic Officer
Angela Medina, Chief Operations Officer
Libby Miller, Chief of Staff
Alexis Ortiz, General Counsel
Karla Vasconez, Director of Executive Administration
& Strategic Initiatives

Quorum: Yes

Welcome & Pre-Meeting Announcements

Board Chair Robbie Dean provided opening comments and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Dean welcomed new Board Members Ana Harvey and Hanane Hakim, who introduced themselves. Ms. Harvey noted that she was honored to join the Board in support of its incredible work to support students and adult learners. Ms. Hakim stated that she was very grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Board and contribute to the mission of Carlos Rosario, particularly as a student.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

Review of Agenda

Mr. Dean 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.

Public Comment Period by members of school community

Mr. Dean 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 special meeting held on December 4, 2025.
- Minutes of the Board's regular meeting held on December 10, 2025.

Mr. Goodman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Ms. Rosario 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.

Mission Moment

Ms. Kokkoros then introduced Samuel Ishako as the Mission Moment speaker. She noted that she heard Mr. Ishako, a former student, speak at an adult education charter school day at the D.C. City Council in early February. Ms. Kokkoros noted that it was a very effective day at the City Council, with robust conversations about charter school funding and continued support for a transportation subsidy. Mr. Ishako is a graduate of our school and Ms. Kokkoros was inspired by his story and for him to share it with the Board. Mr. Ishako stated that he was very honored to represent the School, and shared his thoughts about what the School has done for him. Mr. Ishako shared that he is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and came to the United States in 2017. He shared that he started Carlos Rosario at English Level 3, and completed his education at Carlos Rosario with English Level 8. He shared how the School supported him in finding a job and advancing at Children's Hospital and throughout his time at the University of Maryland, including through tuition scholarships. He shared that he is where he is now because of Carlos Rosario, and spoke in support of a partnership between Children's Hospital and Carlos Rosario.

Mr. Dean and Ms. Kokkoros thanked him for sharing his story, and for all his work to uplift adult learners.

CEO Report

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

- Ms. Kokkoros noted that the School's enrollment remains on track, at the amount the School was funded for at the beginning of the school year. She noted that she was proud and excited to see the innovations staff members have been doing to maintain enrollment, including eradicating barriers to entry and going deeply into the data.
- Attendance rates are on par with past years, but the School has been very attentive to enrollment and attendance. The School is looking at how to expand and diversify its

offerings, including a potential new career training program. The School is also exploring making an offering to a few K-12 schools to have a Carlos Rosario program in the evenings for their parents on-site in their facilities, among other ideas.

- Ms. Kokkorros noted that the School is dialing up its advocacy and going to many hearings, including the Advocacy Day co-created with peer charter schools. The School is also excited about partnering with the Charter Alliance to raise understanding and awareness of charter school communities, and why charter schools make a difference.
- The School is moving forward with its strategic plan work on codifying its model. Ms. Kokkorros shared that, in partnership with the Charter Alliance, the School hosted a cohort of about 20 school representatives, interested in learning about the School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) model.
- With respect to academic performance, Ms. Kokkorros stated that she is monitoring performance and meeting regularly with staff, and was pleased to note that the School is doing very well compared to this time last year in some areas, particularly ESL and CASAS testing. The School is seeing great learning gains in English, and monitoring closely and deepening its interventions in its GED programs. She noted that the School is held accountable for both the GED official exam pass rate and rate at which learners pass a subject test. Those are areas that needed some attention and clarification on what the School is accountable for. Staff are working very closely with the GED teams and administrators who are doing good work, but the School is continuing to monitor very closely.
- Ms. Lawrence then provided the following academic performance report for the midpoint of the school year:
 - The School is very proud of progress in its ESL and GED programs. The School's performance on the majority of charter goals has been very strong this year. The School's GED attainment goal is being closely monitored.
 - Ms. Lawrence noted that there have been challenges with the citizenship assessment, including getting an appointment and the change in the assessment, so the School has not yet met the minimum N size for that measure to be counted currently.
 - She shared strategies on the Road to Level 1 in ASPIRE, including a chart showing the School's progress toward meeting its targets. Ms. Lawrence explained the metrics, and looked at "glows and grows," noting that the ESL progress measure in particular is close to its target. The School's Computer Basics program target has already been exceeded. The School has not yet met the floor for the target this school year for its GED or Citizenship programs.
 - Ms. Lawrence did a deep dive on the GED program, and noted that she is working closely with staff to take a close look on how the School is supporting students to be successful on these high stakes exams, including additional tutoring support, conducting bimonthly review meetings, and establishing incentives for students. There are also challenges in the GED business rules that have unintended consequences where schools have students completing GED assessments in the summer that are not included in the GED outcomes the schools are reporting on. The School is also working closely with counselors on how to continue to support its students.
- Mr. Dean thanked Ms. Lawrence, and reiterated for Board Members that it was paramount to have conversations about the School's academic progress and the data behind it,

including the School's strong gains and efforts to improve GED programs. He asked where the School was on conversations about AI support that could help with assessment and preparation.

- Ms. Lawrence noted that the School has a team currently working in a collaborative cohort with Bellwether on AI, including potential use cases for the School.
- Mr. Dean thought it would be a good conversation for the Committee on Academic Oversight—there are many platforms out there, and it's about choosing the right one.
- Mr. Goodman thought developing an AI model would be very time consuming, but wondered if there was something off-the-shelf that could be employed.
- Mr. Torres stated that there are certain programs already in language learning that may have some applications. He also noted in response to the presentations that having someone to testify on the part of School in advocacy is very important, and it could be useful to include employers that hire the School's graduates, who could speak about the impact of the School's students on their businesses, including employers that hire the School's nurses and students in technical programs.
- Ms. Rosario agreed that it would be impressive to hear from employers. She stated that Ms. Lawrence had done a great job in trying to get everyone to a certain level, and that the School needs to keep pushing.
- Mr. Torres noted that he went to a hospital where 14 of 17 nurses were graduates of the School.
- Ms. Mesfin asked what hospital systems hire our students, and Ms. Kokkoros shared that a number of facilities do, including Washington Hospital Center, which invests in their people very well and is a great partner for the School. Employees there can be promoted fairly quickly from nurse aide on up.
- Ms. Kokkoros noted that there is a *Washington Hispanic* article coming out in March related to the School's CTE programs. She also noted that there is a round-up campaign right now at Giant Foods, which will contribute a significant donation to five organizations, including the School.
- She noted for Board Members that the School's Achieving the Dream event will be held on Thursday, May 7, recognizing Mr. Torres and Jay Haddock for their legacy of decades of support for the School.
- Mr. Dean congratulated Mr. Torres and Mr. Haddock on their well-deserved award.

The Board then took a short break.

Finance and Development Committee

Mr. Goodman noted that he was pleased that both new Board Members have joined the Finance and Development Committee.

Financial Report

Mr. Goodman, together with Mr. Aponte, presented the financial report.

- Mr. Goodman noted that at midyear, the School's financial position remains quite strong and stable. The School has already exceeded its FY26 fundraising goals, and the Committee is on track with its annual committee goals.
- Mr. Aponte noted that, with respect to the School's midyear finances:
 - The School continues to have a very positive story to tell about its financial health.

- From a forecast perspective, the School's net income was projected at a surplus of \$1.9 million dollars this year, which is \$500,000 higher than budget, mainly driven by \$1.7 million dollars of higher revenue over \$1.2 million dollars of higher expenses.
- Mr. Aponte shared that revenue overages were driven by Federal/State grants not budgeted, higher OSSE educator funding than predicted in the budget, and a continuing increase in the School's investment portfolio.
- From the expense side, there were some minor savings on the staff side. Mr. Aponte noted that overages are due to the assumed pass-through of higher educator funding and the inclusion of the shared success bonus in the forecast, though no decision has been made at this point.
- Regarding the School's cash position, the School is essentially on budget. The expectation is that the School's expense forecast will come down some, though Mr. Aponte expected the School to be spending a little bit more through capital expenses. But on a cash basis, Mr. Aponte believed the School will be within budget range or better.
- From a cash-on-hand perspective, the School has 144 days of cash-on-hand at the time of this forecast, which is above PCSB expectation to have at least 60 days.
- The School is in the second stage of its budget process now, moving quickly into the budget development process. Mr. Aponte has scheduled budget working sessions with all budget managers. Finance will then be consolidating what they have received and reporting out to the executive leadership team and running scenarios so that the School can adjust its forecast quickly to be prepared for the budget presentation to the Finance Committee in late May.
- Mr. Aponte noted that the School has good momentum on its planning of investments and longer-term planning, and thanked Mr. Torres for his encouragement. There is an updated schedule in the appendix of the document shared with the Board.
- Mr. Torres and Mr. Goodman thanked Mr. Aponte, and noted the difference he is making to the financial management of the School.
- With respect to development, Mr. Goodman noted that with funds raised exceeding the School's goal, it is increasing its stretch goal to \$1.5 million for the year to keep momentum going into the Achieving the Dream event.
- Mr. Goodman stated in summary that the School remains on a very strong financial footing, and supported Mr. Aponte's comment about strategically investing in long-term priorities, and noted that this was a great place for the School to be.
- Mr. Goodman also noted that a discussion on selecting an auditor of the School would happen later in the meeting in closed session.
- Mr. Villegas-Pérez asked whether the increased educator funding was likely to happen again, and where it stemmed from.
- Mr. Aponte noted that educator funds came in \$800,000 higher. This was one-time funding for this year, and so the School likely wouldn't budget for it, as it had not heard anything further about whether OSSE will do something similar in the future.
- Ms. Barrera asked whether the School had met its fundraising target last year at this point, and whether this is a normal trend.

- Mr. Goodman stated that the target was set with goals for a variety of components of fundraising, and the School significantly exceeded its government funds.
- Ms. Kokkoros explained that the D.C. Department of Health had given a special grant to the School to do innovative work doubling the size of its nurse aide training program, including significant additional supports. The Department of Health gave the School more money than it asked for the second time around, so it could serve more people.
- Mr. Goodman stated that it's appropriate to try to raise the fundraising goal, as every leg of the School has to carry its own weight, as there will be changes from year-to-year. He reminded Board Members that it is very important that the School have 100% board participation in fundraising, and that the percentage rather than the amount is what matters.
- Mr. Villegas-Pérez asked who checks to make sure Facebook donations are being received.
- Ms. Kokkoros stated that Facebook does not tell recipients that a donation is coming to them, so that if someone is aware a donation is coming, please let the team know so they can check with Facebook.
- Mr. Dean thanked the Committee for its stable and wonderful readout, and asked Board Members to mark their calendars for the Achieving the Dream event in May.

Academic Oversight and Strategic Planning Committee

Mr. Uvin noted the following:

- The Committee met on February 4, and reviewed the School's midyear academic progress and progress related to its strategic plan. The Committee reviewed a comprehensive midyear update covering both Charter Agreement goals and ASPIRE performance framework goals.
- The Committee also discussed the accreditation process and received updates on strategic plan implementation across all priority areas.
- The Committee briefly discussed the results of the employee culture survey which showed very strong results.
- The key takeaways from the committee meeting were that the School is demonstrating strong academic momentum at the midyear point, but the School wants to get to a Level 1 rating. There are a number of strategies to get there. In particular, Mr. Uvin was excited to learn about the School's contracts with CellEd and EnGen to provide supplemental tutoring to students.
- The Committee also engaged with School leadership around the difference between Charter Agreement goals and ASPIRE goals.
- Regarding the employee culture survey, the Committee has advised leadership to fully align with the standard question and rating scale pertaining to net promoter scores. The School could then use that net promoter score to compare itself to other entities.
- The interest in the School's CTE approach is one that the School should really leverage. The School is very good in this space, but there might be opportunities we have not yet leveraged from a revenue perspective, a programming perspective, and so forth.
- Mr. Dean thanked Mr. Uvin for the readout, and Ms. Barrera, who will be working with the accreditation task force. Mr. Dean noted that codifying its model is one of the priorities for the School.

Governance and Nominating Committee

Ms. Rosario noted the following:

- The Committee has been busy. Over the last few months, the Governance and Nominating Committee has taken a close look at the descriptions of Officer Roles in the School's Bylaws, with an eye to seeing where those descriptions should be updated.
- The revisions are intended to better reflect the duties the School's Officers perform, and to remove outdated or obsolete language.
- The changes also remove the prohibition on the Treasurer being the Chair of the Finance Committee, which will allow the Board greater flexibility in its Officer selections.
- These revisions reflect the input and expertise of Committee Members, as well as retired and current General Counsel, in a thorough and thoughtful process.
- The D.C. Public Charter School Board has confirmed that as currently drafted, the revisions would not constitute material changes to the Bylaws, and so the School can provide notice to the PCSB of the revisions after they are adopted, rather than having to seek a Charter amendment.
- The Committee is not submitting the proposed revisions for Board approval at this meeting, because the Bylaws require 15 days' notice of a meeting where the Bylaws will be amended or altered. The Committee hopes to call a vote for Board approval of the revisions at a special meeting to be scheduled in the near future.
- After the revisions are approved by the Board, they will be submitted to the D.C. PCSB for their awareness.
- Mr. Dean thanked Ms. Rosario for the close attention paid to the Bylaws.

Closed Session

Mr. Dean 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)(2) – contracts and DC Code § 2-2-575(b)(11) – trade secrets and commercial or financial information.
 - Review of auditor RFP responses and recommendations.
 - Any questions about financial performance.

Mr. Torres made a motion to approve entering the closed session for the stated purposes. Ms. Rosario 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 8:03pm.

Open Session

Mr. Dean thanked everyone for an enriching discussion in closed session, and invited Mr. Goodman to share information about the auditor selection process.

Auditor Selection Process

Mr. Goodman noted the following:

- A major focus of the Finance and Development Committee this winter was selecting a new auditor. The Committee released an RFP in December, and received a number of

proposals. The Committee scored the proposals across five different criteria, including expertise in sector, qualifications of engagement team, how they approach technology, and cost. The goal is to find a great audit partner that can bring strong experience in Charter schools and accounting and tax expertise to support oversight of the school.

- The Committee interviewed top firms and intends to come back to the Board with a recommendation at a special meeting. Mr. Goodman asked Board Members if they could attend a special meeting on March 19, so that auditor selection and revisions to Bylaws could be discussed at the same time.
- 11 of 13 Board Members confirmed their availability for a special meeting of the Board.
- Mr. Dean thanked Mr. Goodman for his careful work to present the best options to the Board.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjourn

Mr. Dean adjourned the meeting at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted by Cesar Lopez-Morales, Board Secretary