



*Nuestra Mundo Public Charter School*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**April 11, 2022**

Meeting at 17-21 Gordon Ave

Present: Dr. Heather Allcock, Steffy Molina, Seth Zeren, and Dr. Carmen Rolón, Lydia Perez, Dave Moscarelli, Ana Baraza

Also Present: Katie Cardamone, Joe Maruszczak, Diana Ferreira, Amanda Seewald

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm

The agenda for the meeting was approved unanimously (motion by S. Molina, seconded by S. Zeren)

The minutes of the meeting of February 28th, 2022 were approved unanimously (A.Baraza, seconded by S. Zeren)

### *Superintendent/Executive Director's Report*

#### Enrollment Update

Dr. M reported that our enrollment of 128 has been stable. At present we have four fewer students attending on a daily basis. Two first grade students (siblings) have not been attending for the past three weeks, as the mother is homeschooling them. Two students, one kindergartener and a 6th grade student, are currently being home tutored while further educational and psychological evaluations are being conducted. The 6th grade student will be an out-of-district placement for significant behavioral and social-emotional reasons.

Per RIDE's guidance, NMPCS held the lottery for the 2022-23 school year on Friday, April 1st. In total, we had a total of **445 applicants for 62 seats** in next year's kindergarten and 6th grade . Technically, we had only 54 openings, because we had 8 siblings of existing students take spots in K and Grade 6. The breakdown of applicants we had pre-lottery was the following:

K: 233 students

Grade 1: 54 students

Grade 2: 49 students

Grade 6: 77 students

Grade 7: 32 students

Per our discussion of our last Board meeting, we have offered 40 seats for kindergarten and 22 seats for 6th grade.

We will enroll only one cohort of 6th graders next year due to space constraints. After much consideration, we feel this is the wisest course of action given the academic and social-emotional needs of the middle school students. However, in thinking of growth beyond next school year, our charter permits as many as 230 students for 2022-23 and as many as 322 for 2023-24.

Discussion was had on how to improve attendance prompted by A. Baraza. There may have to be involvement from a truancy officer. Our Dean of Students is also meeting with parents and students about attendance.

### **COVID-19 Data Update**

Dr. M reported that Nuestro Mundo has not had a single student COVID case in the past ten weeks. Our attendance rate is typically in the low 90s% range, so the rate is more consistent to what we had in the fall, pre-Omicron wave. We had one breakthrough case with a teacher four weeks ago, and she missed a week of classes. At present, we have 108 students (84% of the student body) participating in weekly pooled PCR testing, and while time-consuming, it is going smoothly.

As approved by the Board, we have been mask optional since March 7. With each successive week, more students are going maskless. At current, it's approximately a 50/50 split.

A lagging statistic is the number of students who have been vaccinated. According to the RIDOH, as of April 2, only 32% of our students are fully vaccinated, with 38% receiving one dose. We have scheduled our third clinic with the DOH to be at the school on Tuesday, May 3 from 4:00-6:00 pm.

### *Program Director's Report*

#### **College Crusade**

Nuestro Mundo has partnered with [College Crusade of Rhode Island](#) to give our middle school students the opportunity to participate in this amazing program. This connection was made by Operations Associate, Diana Ferrerira. She reported that this partnership is a huge benefit to Nuestro Mundo students. Once a student is enrolled in the program, they stay enrolled for all four years of high school and beyond. The student also receives a mentor that visits the school and works with them twice a week. Students also have the opportunity to participate in after school enrichment programs and continue with the same advisor who helps with academics, relationships, and all steps in ensuring students are the first in their families to attend college. We are so thankful to give our students this meaningful support.

We shared this [link](#) to sign up for the information events we will be hosting for all of our 6th grade families.

#### **Facility Planning**

At present we have two proposals from two different architectural firms, Frank Karpowicz Architects, Inc. and Saccoccio & Associates, Inc. Dr. M and K. Cardamone shared the initial proposals to develop conceptual drawings. Each plan looks to expand our current facility in different ways. We are working with the building owner to acquire access to the part of Reynolds Ave in between the playground and our

parking area, as well as the vacant lot across Baxter Street. This would allow 17-21 Gordon Ave to be our permanent home.

Additionally, last month Seth, Katie, and Dr. M viewed the [old Herff-Jones building](#) on the corner of Eddy St. and Public St. It has many advantages with respect to the size (over 51,000 sq. ft.), it has over 100 parking spaces, and approximately 20,000 sq. ft. of pavement that could be converted to green space. A key challenge, however, could be that there could be extensive environmental remediation that may need to be done, as for many years the facility produced class rings and other jewelry. We will be pursuing conversation with the DEM Coordinator on the state's school siting law as well as Jacob Butterworth from Sage Environmental.

## **New Business**

### **Approval of 2022-23 School Year Calendar**

A draft calendar for the 2022-23 academic year was shared. K. Cardamone and Dr. M intentionally aligned it with the suggested RIDE school year calendar so we may be able to take advantage of shared professional development opportunities with other charters and districts across the state. For the sake of our families and well as transportation, we have also largely aligned the calendar with PPSD's.

The calendar was approved unanimously (motion by S. Molina, seconded by C. Rolon)

### **Consideration/Approval of New Board Members**

Over the last month Dr. M and K. Cardamone have solicited four people to serve as new members of the NPSCS Board of Directors. Three are current NM parents and one is a CPA/financial analyst who has deep roots in the South Providence community. All are professionals and will be very positive assets to the Board. Two were presented to the Board: Chris Sanford and Raymond Watson. Additionally, two interested people, Ana Perez and Jerome Hayes, will be brought forward at our next meeting in May.

R. Watson was approved unanimously (motion by S. Molina, seconded by S. Zeren)

Chris Sanford was approved unanimously (motion by D. Mascarelli, seconded by S. Molina)

### **Resignation and Succession Planning**

Dr. M has made the difficult decision to step down and return to Massachusetts as a superintendent. It is best for his career and the school as an organization. He thinks the perfect candidate would be an engaged principal, earlier in his career, and bilingual.

A lot of our kids really need role models that they can see themselves in. Dr. M and K. Cardamone presented the idea to replace his position with a principal and business manager. Also in his career he is considering what makes more sense for him professionally.

He still cares deeply about the school, students and staff and would like to continue being part of decision making and as a Board member.

A viable plan for leadership replacement is needed. Dr. M and Katie have started the process of networking with both the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE), MABE (the Multistate Association of Bilingual Education, Northeast), and Edgility Consulting to find potential candidates. We may also advertise in the typical online sources, including *SchoolSpring* and the RI League of Charter Schools. The vision would be to have a search and interview process that will involve a representative group of all school stakeholders.

There is also a need for the creation of a business manager-type position, including being involved in the facility management/operations. At current, we have been outsourcing work in this area to Richard, Steere & Associates of Warwick; however, the majority of their work has been tending to accounts payable. Dr. M has done the majority of budget planning and writing of entitlement grants, as well as management of transportation and food services and K. Cardamone has handled HR and facilities. We have started a dialogue with a Boston-based CPA, [Patricia Lavoie](#), who is interested in working with us in this capacity.

Dr. M's resignation was approved unanimously (motion by C. Rolon, seconded by D. Moscarelli)

The plan to proceed with the new leadership positions (motion by S. Zeren, seconded by D. Moscarelli)

The new job descriptions were approved unanimously (motion by S. Zeren, seconded by C. Rolon)

**Future agenda items:**

- Budget
- Hiring the new leadership
- Welcoming new board members
- Policy binder
- Facility update
- Additional Board Members for approval including Dr. M
- Voting on Board Executive Positions/ReOrg in June

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 pm. (Motion by A. Baraza, seconded by D. Moscarelli)

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Cardamone

The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Also, the timeframe for each topic is a general guideline and may not be strictly adhered to. <http://nuestromundopcs.org>