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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, February 27, 2019
6:00 PM

Sor Juana Inés De La Cruz School
7416 N. Ridge Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60645

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

At 6:00 PM, Chairwoman Rojas called the meeting of the Board of Directors of Acero Charter Schools, Inc. (“Board”) to order. General Counsel Araceli De La Cruz took the roll call as follows:

Present: Chairwoman Rojas, Treasurer Yohanan, Secretary Matias,
Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Harris
Absent: Vice Chairman Hewitt, Ms. Neier Beran, Ms. Yeager

With three members initially present, a quorum was not established at roll call, and the order of the agenda items was slightly modified.

2. Chairwoman’s Remarks

Chairwoman Rojas greeted all attendees and welcomed everyone to Cruz. Ms. Rojas offered attendees the opportunity to use a headset to listen to the Board proceedings in Spanish.

Ms. Rojas next provided some historical context to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz School, which was named in honor of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a feminist literary figure of the Spanish American colonial period who advocated for women’s rights and women’s education. Ms. Rojas highlighted some of the accomplishments of Cruz, as the only K-12 school in the network, and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

Ms. Rojas also reiterated the Board policy that individuals wishing to make public comment registered twenty four hours in advance of the meeting. Finally, Ms. Rojas introduced Cruz Principal Molly Robinson.

3. Principal's Welcome

Principal Robinson welcomed everyone to Cruz and highlighted Cruz's achievements as an arts academy, including: a choreography class performance was selected to perform at Stage 773; classical guitar instruction after school; participation in the Stars of Dance competition; and, three students who had artwork displayed at a Loyola art show. Principal Robinson described the new after-school programs offered at Cruz, as well as the multiple teacher teams collaborating to improve curriculum, instruction, and MTSS at Cruz.

4. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Chief Executive Officer Richard Rodriguez thanked everyone for joining the meeting this evening. CEO Rodriguez applauded the work being done at Cruz, which mirrors Acero's mission, values, and vision for the future. CEO Rodriguez next reflected upon Acero's twenty year history, its identity defined by placing students and families first, and the challenge to continue to do more for the population we serve. CEO Rodriguez concluded his remarks by identifying the changes taking place in Illinois and the City of Chicago, but expressing optimism that Acero will continue to chart a course to future success.

[Mr. Harris entered the meeting]

5. Chief Education Officer's Report

Christine Diaz, Acero's Chief Education Officer, provided an overview of the 2018-2019 SQRP results, which reflected tremendous work by the schools. Thirteen of Acero's fifteen schools are at a Level 1 or 1+, which is a 20% improvement from the previous year, and Ms. Diaz provided detailed regarding the specific SQRP achievements of Acero's schools. Ms. Diaz next described Acero's nationally recognized work on culturally relevant curriculum. Ms. Diaz concluded her remarks by highlighting personalized learning achievements, including furniture placement promoting curiosity and discourse at Santiago and Fuentes, a gold medal for Garcia's Special Olympics basketball team, and the Maker Spaces being created at Cruz, Soto, and Tamayo.

6. Executive Committee Report

Ms. Rojas, Chair of the Executive Committee, reported on the November 7, 2018 meeting of the Committee. At this meeting, the Committee met with representatives from The Horton Group, Acero's benefits broker, and discussed recommendations for benefit providers for 2019. The Committee voted to approve the execution of a contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois for healthcare and dental benefits, as well as voted to approve a contract with Dearborn for Life, Voluntary Life, Short Term Disability, and Long Term Disability benefits.

The Committee also met on January 12, 2019. The Committee ratified the 2018-2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement entered into with the Charter Division of the Chicago Teacher's Union, the details of such negotiations having been discussed in closed session.

*[Mr. Rodriguez entered the meeting]
[With five members present, a quorum was now established]*

7. Academic Committee Report

Mr. Rodriguez reported on the January 15, 2019 meeting of the Academic Committee. In closed session, the Committee discussed a student disciplinary matter. After reconvening into open session, the Committee took action to approve the recommendation received regarding student discipline.

The Committee also heard from Chief Education Officer Christine Diaz, who explained the performance remediation plan for Paz Elementary School as required by the Chicago Public Schools for the 2018-2019 academic year. Prior to the submission of the plan to CPS, Acero's Board Chair approved the plan. The Committee approved a recommendation to ratify Chairwoman Rojas' approval of the plan. Mr. Rodriguez moved, and Treasurer Yohanan seconded, a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Academic Committee to ratify the Chairwoman's approval of the remediation plan for Paz Elementary School.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

Mr. Rodriguez continued by describing the Committee's discussion of the Continuous Improvement Work Plan for Paz Elementary, which is required by the Illinois State Board of Education. The Plan includes the same goals as the remediation plan, however it also includes additional resources and support. Mr. Rodriguez moved, and Treasurer Yohanan seconded, a motion to approve the Illinois State Board of Education Continuous Work Improvement Plan for Paz Elementary School.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

Mr. Rodriguez concluded his report on the Academic Committee meeting with information regarding Assistant General Counsel Josh Herzog's presentation of a contract for translation and interpretation services. Mr. Herzog described the competitive procurement process and committee evaluation of proposals received in response to a Request for Proposals for translation and interpretation services. The Committee considered and approved to recommend to the full Board for approval of a contract, with one year base term and four one-year renewal options, with InterpreNet. Board members were provided with a copy of the Request for Proposals and subsequent contract. Mr. Rodriguez moved, and Mr. Harris seconded, a motion to approve the execution of a contract with InterpreNet for translation and interpretation services.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

8. Governance Committee Report

Ms. Matias reported on several matters discussed at the January 24, 2019 meeting of the Governance Committee. The Committee first reviewed and discussed the credentials and experience of a potential board member, Mr. Michael Baumert, an attorney currently practicing at the firm of Barnes & Thornburg, LLP. In consideration of Mr. Baumert's commitment to serving and support the students and communities of Acero Schools, the Committee recommended to elect Mr. Baumert to the Acero Board. Ms. Matias moved, and Mr. Rodriguez seconded, a motion to approve the election of Michael Baumert to the Acero Board with a term to expire in June 2020.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

The Committee also discussed the current vacancy on the Board of Acero Marquez Campus, Inc. and recommended that the vacancy be filled by Christine Diaz, Acero's Chief Education Officer. Ms. Matias moved, and Mr. Rodriguez seconded, a motion to approve the appointment of Christine Diaz to the Acero Marquez Campus, Inc. Board.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

Finally, the Committee received a presentation from Acero’s Chief Operating Officer, Richard Valerga, regarding Acero’s proposed 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, which details Acero’s educational approach and expected outcomes. After review and discussion, the Committee recommended that the Acero Board approve and adopt the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan. Ms. Matias moved, and Mr. Harris seconded, a motion to approve and adopt the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan for Acero Schools.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

9. Review of Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes of October 24, 2018

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2018

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2019

Academic Committee Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2019

Governance Committee Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2019

Ms. Matias moved to approve the open session minutes from the October 24, 2018 Meeting of the Acero Board; the November 7, 2018 meeting of the Board’s Executive Committee; the January 12, 2019 meeting of the Board’s Executive Committee; the January 15, 2019 meeting of the Board’s Academic Committee; and the January 24, 2019 meeting of the Board’s Governance Committee. Mr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

Ms. Matias next moved to approve closed session minutes from the October 24, 2018 Meeting of the Acero Board, the January 12, 2019 Meeting of the Board's Executive Committee, and the January 15, 2019 Meeting of the Board's Academic Committee. Ms. Matias further moved to keep these minutes closed as the need for confidentiality exists due to the discussion of a personnel matter and collective bargaining negotiations on October 24, 2018; the discussion of collective bargaining negotiations on January 12, 2019; and the discussion of a student discipline matter on January 15, 2019. Mr. Harris seconded the motion.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

Semi-Annual Review of Minutes

Ms. Matias next described the process by which the Board conducts a semi-annual review of closed session minutes, having been provided a memo from Acero's General Counsel/Chief Administrative Officer setting forth the recommendations as to whether or not the minutes should remain closed per the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The memo also addressed taking action regarding all closed session audio recordings older than eighteen (18) months. Ms. Matias moved, and Mr. Rodriguez seconded, to approve Board Resolution 1819-001, which follows the recommendations made by counsel to maintain certain enumerated minutes as closed and authorizes the destruction of certain closed session audio recordings.

Ayes: 5
Nays: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 3

Motion carried.

As a result of the approved Board Resolution 1819-001, the following actions have been taken:

The Board has determined that the continued need for confidentiality exists, and the following closed session minutes shall remain closed:

- i. The following meetings of the UCSN Academic Committee: April 2, 2014; May 22, 2014; February 13, 2015; March 20, 2015; March 30, 2015; November 24, 2015; February 27, 2016; April 9, 2016; and October 14, 2016.

- ii. The following meeting of the UCSN Executive Committee: February 22, 2017.
- iii. The following meetings of the UCSN Board: April 26, 2017; and June 28, 2017.
- iv. The following meetings of the Acero Board: June 26, 2018 and October 24, 2018.
- iv. The following meetings of the Acero Executive Committee: September 11, 2017; March 1, 2018; August 8, 2018; and January 12, 2019.
- v. The following meetings of the Acero Academic Committee: March 19, 2018 and January 15, 2019.
- vi. The following meetings of the Acero Operations Committee: June 20, 2018 and September 26, 2018.

The Board also authorizes the destruction of the verbatim audio recordings of closed session meetings from June 30, 2016 – July 30, 2017 in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

10. Public Comment

Chairwoman Rojas opened the meeting to public comment. Two speakers pre-registered, and one additional audience member expressed the desire to speak as well.

The first speaker, a 5th grade teacher at Fuentes, thanked the Board for approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement and described the energy the new professional solutions committees bring to the campuses. She next urged the Board to consider taking steps to give parents official voices through the creation of local school councils.

The second speaker, the parent of a child at Zizumbo, expressed concern that parents are shut out from decisions and would like a voice through local school councils. The speaker represented that parents want to participate in and engage with the schools to make Acero better.

The third speaker, the father of a Paz student, expressed the idea that the union received what they desired from the strike, including decreased class sizes and shorter school year, but raised the concerns as to how these gains were helping students and how teachers planned to make up for lost instructional time.

11. Old/New Business

12. Adjournment

Chairwoman Rojas called for old or new business matters to discuss. There being none, Chairwoman Rojas adjourned the meeting of the Acero Board of Directors at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Matias
Board Secretary

Approved by the Acero Board of Directors on April 24, 2019.