

APPROVED



Alma del Mar

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting (IN PERSON)

Date and Time

Friday January 26, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Location

Alma Family Center at Fisher College, 777 Church Street, New Bedford, MA 02745

Trustees Present

C. Holley, D. Prentiss, G. Fortes, J. Korn, Y. Dennis

Trustees Absent

A. Cortez, C. Bator, C. Wood, D. Melo, I. Almeida, M. Bride, M. Rosario

Guests Present

H. Chew, T. DeLoach

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

D. Prentiss called a meeting of the board of trustees of Alma del Mar to order on Friday Jan 26, 2024 at 9:14 AM.

C. Mission Moment

T. DeLoach explained what the mission moment was for.

D. Prentiss informed the Board that there was a recent concert at New Bedford High School and simultaneously, in the same venue, an art exhibit featuring local students which he found impressive and was well received by attendees at the event.

T. DeLoach discussed a recent joint network event focusing on anti-bullying and best practices to keep scholars safe. 30 families attended.

D. Approve November Board Meeting Minutes

This vote was tabled as there was not a quorum.

II. Executive Director Report

A. Dashboard

The dashboard has been updated through December 2023. T. DeLoach explained that based on feedback from previous meetings she was now adding targets the board could use to orient themselves regarding the metrics that are trying to be met in regard to attendance, interims and suspensions.

The way suspensions are reported to the board has also been changed. Previously, suspensions were reported by incident count, now it is percentage of scholars who have received at least one type of suspension which is more inline with the way DESE tracks this information. J. Korn questioned the percentage listed under emergency removal. After discussion it was determined that 2.5% should be 1.5% and was just a typo on what was presented to the board.

T. DeLoach introduced Heather Chew, the new Director of Network Operations.

B. Executive Director Report

T. DeLoach announced that quarter 3 has just started and as a result a quarter 2 academic update would be forthcoming.

On the talent side, the hiring season has begun and the leadership team is preparing information on employee retention and the data from each campus will drive retention efforts. Headlines about staff survey data will be available for the next board meeting. The Douglas campus is struggling with retention challenges and more information will also be forthcoming at the next meeting.

A senior leadership staffing update included an announcement that Matt Marko would be moving on from his employment at Alma at the end of February 2024. An organizational chart was provided so that the board has clarity regarding who manages who at each campus.

There was no discussion following this report.

III. Academic Excellence

A. Q2 Academic Update

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

IV. Development

A. Fundraising Updates

We are 81% to the fundraising goal of \$300,000, this represents actual funds received.

5 of 12 trustees have donated to date with a goal of 100% participation from the board.

There were a few grant awards received which Alma is very grateful for.

The annual Fredrick Douglas speaking competition is being held on February 16, 2024 and the board is invited to attend along with "celebrity" guest judges which Becca is finalizing.

The board discussed donating books to the school and whether or not there is an Amazon wish list. T. DeLoach will follow up but also discussed the Scholastic Book Fair which is coming up. The school can work with families who may not be able to participate in the fair due to financial hardships.

There was further discussion of celebrating Fredrick Douglas' birthday and events the school may participate in.

B. Board Development Plan for 2023-24

The team has been working on finalizing the development plan which describes the spirit of what the school already does and would like to do in the future. The development plan also outlines activities the board can participate in regarding fundraising opportunities, cultivating new supporters, etc.

The board was asked to handwrite thank you notes to individuals in order to keep the friends of Alma engaged. Notecards will be provided to the board. Becca will follow up with the board regarding the mechanics of this project.

It was announced that Mel Bride will be stepping away from the board in June due to a new employment opportunity. The board expressed their gratitude to Mel for all that has been accomplished.

V. Finance

A. FY24 Q 2 Financials

Highlights included strong financial data. Tuition rates were released in December 2023, resulting in a projected increase of \$130,000. A meeting will take place among leadership to bring forth proposals regarding how to spend this surplus.

Health insurance premiums increased so the board will be tracking those numbers to see how they impact the budget.

J. Korn asked about the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSR) and how the loss of those funds would be handled. T. DeLoach explained that the school currently has about \$1 million in funds that need to be spent over the course of this school year. These funds are being used, partly, for professional development and coaching. Professional development is focused around leader development including communication, collaboration and skill development. There was further discussion about the types of training provided to staff and leadership. There is also a plan to use the ESSR funds for the strategic planning project that the school is anticipating.

T. DeLoach also discussed the Student Opportunity Act and how it fuses additional money into the school's budget.

B. FY25 Budget Timeline

The budget timeline was discussed along with the process. The budget will be presented to the finance committee in mid-March and then it will be brought to the full board for review. The budget will again be reviewed in April with final approval being sought in May 2024 by the board. The budget and review scheduling are currently fluid.

VI. Governance

A. Strategic Plan for Alma

T. DeLoach expressed to the board that the model the organization is following was more appropriate pre-pandemic and that an updated strategic plan was necessary. As a result of growth and new staff we need to scale up with our systems and dynamics. Engaging in a broad strategic process would help set the path to how we're going to scale up the organization to provide the best possible school for our scholars.

J. Korn expressed his support and C. Holley had questions regarding the length of the process and funding source. T. DeLoach explained she thought the process of strategic planning would take about 6 months and include not just senior leadership but families and community partners. ESSR funds would be used for this project. An RFP process

and board approval would be required. G. Fortes expressed her support and stated that the school has not updated their plan since 2017.

There was discussion of recruiting new board members and a succession plan for the board chair. The board will look to recruit a former Alma parent to join them.

VII. Other Business

A. Alma Email Usage

Reminder to the board to check Alma email or provide other suggestions for communication among members.

D. Prentiss also announced that the board would be reevaluating their meeting schedule as Friday mornings didn't seem to be working.

B. DESE Site Visit

T, DeLoach announced that Alma is in year 3 of the 5 year renewal cycle. DESE has scheduled an onsite check in for March 21, 2024. Focus groups will be formed to meet with DESE during this one day visit. More details will follow at the next meeting but the board was asked to make note of it on their calendars and to attend if possible.

C. MA Charter Public School Advocacy Week

This event is run by the MA Charter Public School Association and takes place annually, T. DeLoach explained that the board is being asked to write to legislators and those in the community regarding how important charter schools are. Becca will follow up with the board regarding next steps.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
H. Chew

B. For Reference- Board Calendar of Monthly Activities

C. For Reference- Updated Calendar of Meetings for AY23-24