APPROVED

Alma del Mar

Minutes

February Board of Trustees Meeting (VIRTUAL)

Date and Time
Friday March 1, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Anti-Racism Statement: Alma del Mar strives to be an anti-racist institution. We seek to dismantle racist and white supremacist structures in pursuit of justice and racial equity. We will fight against racism when we encounter it both within and outside of our school community. We will actively work to ensure that all of our community members, including scholars, families, and staff, feel included, celebrated and empowered. By resisting racism and white supremacy, we will lay the foundation to challenge all forms of oppression.

Trustees Present
A. Cortez (remote), C. Holley (remote), D. Melo (remote), D. Prentiss (remote), G. Fortes (remote), J. Korn (remote), Y. Dennis (remote)

Trustees Absent
C. Bator, C. Wood, I. Almeida, M. Bride, M. Rosario

Trustees who arrived after the meeting opened
Y. Dennis

Guests Present
B. Kurie (remote), H. Chew, T. DeLoach (remote)

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 Mar 1, 2024 at 9:20 AM.

C. Equity Moment

T. DeLoach shared that Alma's enrollment lottery was Wednesday night. Alma received 870 applications this enrollment season - the highest ever in our school history. This is important to show that demand for our schools continues to grow, and that we are in a good position for sustainability over time.

D. Approve January Board Meeting Minutes

G. Fortes made a motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting (IN PERSON) on 01-26-24.
C. Holley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Wood	Absent
G. Fortes	Aye
Y. Dennis	Aye
C. Holley	Aye
D. Prentiss	Aye
M. Rosario	Absent
C. Bator	Absent
J. Korn	Aye
A. Cortez	Aye
M. Bride	Absent
I. Almeida	Absent
D. Melo	Absent

C. Holley made a motion to approve the minutes from November Board of Trustees Meeting (VIRTUAL) on 12-01-23.
G. Fortes seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

Roll Call

C. Bator	Absent
G. Fortes	Aye
C. Holley	Aye
M. Rosario	Absent
C. Wood	Absent
D. Melo	Aye
I. Almeida	Absent

Roll Call

J. Korn	Aye
D. Prentiss	Aye
A. Cortez	Aye
M. Bride	Absent
Y. Dennis	Aye

II. Executive Director Report

A. Dashboard

There were no questions from the board on the February 2024 Dashboard.

B. Executive Director Report

T. DeLoach highlighted the staff survey data from earlier this winter as well as early staff retention figures as managers begin to have conversations with their directs regarding their plans for next year.

J. Korn asked what fraction of staff will ultimately return to work at Alma next school year; T. DeLoach estimated 85% of staff will return.

J. Korn pointed to current concerns of midyear staff departures and reiterated the importance of consistent, long term staffing at our schools for scholar experience and success.

D. Prentiss congratulated T. DeLoach and the team on strong staff survey results. He then asked what priorities and what work remains to be done to continue to improve staff experience at Alma.

III. Academic Excellence

A. Q2 Academic Update

T. DeLoach presented on the Q2 academic data based on interim results and STEP reading assessments. A few highlights:

- There was a significant increase in average reading growth for K-3 scholars (this quarter had the highest average growth since we've been using this tool, originally adopted in January 2021).
- Ottiwell 5th-8th grade ELA data is very strong, with 65% of scholars passing their exams. This bodes well for MCAS performance in those classrooms.
- Early elementary math data also remains very strong, with 70% of K-3 scholars passing their math exams.

- **It continues to be true that teachers who stay at Alma the longest produce the best results, so our key strategy around talent remains the correct priority.**

Areas for Improvement

- Middle School math data across the network continues to be our area of most significant concern. While our new curriculum adoption has helped stabilize instruction on grade level content, we need to continue finding more effective and strategic ways to supplement for foundational skills remediation.
- Broadly, Douglass MS scholars perform lower than Ottiwell MS scholars across the board. This is likely due to several factors, including the different make-up of the student bodies (i.e. half of the Douglass MS scholars each year enter in 6th grade), the more novice teachers and leaders at that campus, and the more demanding schedule. We are continually considering programmatic shifts and supports to differentiate for this context.
- 3rd and 4th graders across the network are the scholars who experienced Kindergarten and 1st grade remotely. They continue to demonstrate significant gaps in reading and writing, which shows up in both their STEP and ELA interim data.

Y. Dennis arrived at 9:35 AM.
J. Korn asked about the Public Speaking Competition that was held in honor of Frederick Douglass on February 16th. B. Kurie shared that three of four finalists wrote their own speeches, and the winning scholar speaker shared her personal narrative as a young person with a visible disability.

C. Holley added that he had a challenging, but enjoyable experience as a guest judge for the event. He was impressed by the speakers and their speeches.

A. Cortez shared that her group is offering tutoring young people with a focus on volunteers who are able to tutor and model reading with clear and correct pronunciation to ensure they are able to pronounce words correctly in school and everyday life. This effort was in response to children voicing concerns and, sometimes, a 504 plan being put in place incorrectly due to mispronunciation.

IV. Development

A. Fundraising Updates

B. Kurie announced that this year's fundraising is on track with the goal being $300,000. To date the school has received $255,000. The Board was asked to complete the thank you notes for donors who contributed over the annual appeal season. Ms. Kurie will follow up with the Board electronically incase there are questions or suggestions needed regarding wording for the thank you notes.

B. Board Development Plan for 2023-24

D. Prentiss shared that he has reached out to the Advisory Council to engage them and determine what involvement or contribution they may be interested in.

There is a need for a Development Committee Chair. D. Prentiss asked Board members to submit suggestions at their convenience. Mr. Prentiss also thanked Ms. Kurie for her dedication. No votes were taken.

V. Finance

A. 5 Year Projections

C. Holley provided the Board with the 5 year projections document. The Finance Committee wants to be proactive when addressing concerns such as teacher retention. It is projected that there will be an increase of 6% in tuition for 2025 and a conservative projected increase of 3.5% in 2026.

The expense (personnel) cost was kept to a 3% increase which demonstrates we have strong financial projections through 2028 with a consistent net income of over $1 million. The projections document will be updated as new information becomes available. The Board had not follow up questions.

B. FY24 Surplus Spending Proposal

C. Holley provided the Board with a summary of three identified buckets of surplus spending for 2024. He explained that there was a surplus due to tuition rates, it is projected that there will be a $450,000 surplus and the Finance Committee would like to increase the base salary of existing staff and also add two full time senior leadership positions with these funds. T. DeLoach explained that one of these positions was Director of Human Resources. The other role is Chief Academic Officer (CAO). Ms. DeLoach informed the Board that it can be difficult to find a well qualified CAO who is familiar with charter schools. If the school cannot find an appropriate candidate they may search for a Director of Culture instead.

The second bucket consideration is a release of contingency line item funds which results in a $500,000 surplus. The Finance Committee would like to use it for staff bonuses. More information on how they will be structured will be forthcoming. T. DeLoach informed the Board that this is a line item that becomes available every year. Historically it has been used for thank you bonuses and recommitment bonuses.

The third bucket consideration is a surplus that is projected due to ESSER funding which totals about $1 million. If these funds are not used they have to be returned to the state.

The Finance Committee would like to move these funds to a capital replacement account which will allow us to use them in the future. T. DeLoach explained that we want to use the money for professional development, teacher certification (MTEL) , technology upgrades, etc.

Yolanda Dennis rejoined the meeting. There were no follow up questions from the Board.

J. Korn made a motion to accept the surplus spending report as presented.
C. Holley seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

Y. Dennis	Aye
C. Wood	Absent
I. Almeida	Absent
M. Rosario	Absent
C. Bator	Absent
A. Cortez	Aye
J. Korn	Aye
D. Prentiss	Aye
M. Bride	Absent
C. Holley	Aye
G. Fortes	Aye
D. Melo	Absent

VI. Governance

A. Board Retreat Next Steps

G. Fortes opened the floor for discussion about the Ready Plan. D. Prentiss will work with G. Fortes to reach out to committee chairs to put items from the Ready Plan on agendas. There was no further discussion.

B. Succession Plans

The Board reviewed draft versions of the Succession Plans for the Board Chair and School Leader. G. Fortes opened the floor for discussion. J. Korn had suggestions regarding updates and will email D. Prentiss.
C. Holley made a motion to accept both succession plans as presented.
Y. Dennis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

I. Almeida	Absent
D. Prentiss	Aye
D. Melo	Aye

Roll Call

G. Fortes	Aye
Y. Dennis	Aye
A. Cortez	Aye
C. Holley	Aye
M. Rosario	Absent
C. Bator	Absent
J. Korn	Aye
C. Wood	Absent
M. Bride	Absent

C. Strategic Plan for Alma

The Board was provided with a copy of the previous strategic plan. T. DeLoach announced that she was still meeting with two different partners who may be able to work with Alma on this project. Ms. DeLoach is also working closely with senior leadership and other stake holders to ensure everyone is on the same page of what the end product should look like and accomplish.

An update is anticipated for the April board meeting.

D. March Board Meeting Date

The next regular meeting for the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Good Friday (3/29/2024). There was discussion regarding the possibility of not having a quorum. There was no further discussion after that and no changes were made.

VII. Other Business

A. Alma Email Usage and Scheduling Board Meetings

D. Prentiss announced that he is using alternate emails for those who have requested it. The communication flow among board members seems to be more streamlined. There were no questions.

B. DESE Site Visit

Scheduled for March 21, 2024.

T. DeLoach reminded the board that 9 trustees were needed for a focus group on that day, 8 trustees have responded. It was also mentioned that A. Teevens was the point staff person for this project and would be working with participants on what to expect. This is anticipated to be a constructive and positive experience.

VIII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

J. Korn made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
G. Fortes seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call

M. Bride	Absent
C. Wood	Absent
I. Almeida	Absent
Y. Dennis	Aye
C. Bator	Absent
D. Melo	Aye
G. Fortes	Aye
A. Cortez	Aye
D. Prentiss	Aye
J. Korn	Aye
M. Rosario	Absent
C. Holley	Aye

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
H. Chew

B. For Reference- Board Calendar of Monthly Activities

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