



*To instruct, empower, enable and guide Scholars to achieve superior academic, social and moral development.*

**BEST ACADEMY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Date:** February 26, 2018

**Time:** 5:15p.m. – 6:45p.m.

**Location: Best Academy**

1300 Olson Memorial Hwy, Minneapolis, MN 55411

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**ACTION**

**Board Members (in person attendance):** DeAndra Knighten, Ezra Hyland, Meghan Roegge, Idriss Omar, Fowsiya Dahir, Roda Rabi

**Board members in attendance via Zoom video conference:** Priya Morioka, Anura Si-Asar, Rita Gordon

**Staff:** Stacey Beethem, Aaliyah Hodge, Emily Peterson, Wendy Hines, Carl Allen, Eric Mahmoud, Shana Ford

**Public:** David Greenberg, Rhianon Sargent

**I. Call to order & Roll Call**

Ezra Hyland called the meeting to order at 5:20pm

**II. Consent Agenda Items**

**Approval Item:** Approve January Meeting Minutes

DeAndra Knighten motioned to approve the January meeting minutes. Meghan Roegge seconded the motion. Passes unanimously.

**Approval Item:** Approval of Agenda

Ezra Hyland makes a motion to amend the agenda and add the authorizer to the end of the agenda. Meghan Roegge seconded the motion. Passes unanimously.

**III. Principal Report**

Ms. Fatou provided an update to the Board. Ms. Butler and the external relations team help set up a wonderful Vikings event. Vikings players attended the school Friday the 23rd. Overall it was powerful for the students to see people who looked like them who are successful. There was a speech from Alan Page and Gene Washington as well as a powerful film. The school is also developing a full curriculum to go along with this. On Thursday the 22nd there was a Bingo at Parent night and Ms. Fatou heard positive feedback. Additionally Ms. Fatou shared with the BOD the upcoming ACNW visit which was happening the 27th.

Ezra Hyland commented that it would be helpful for the board to receive an academic report every month.

#### **IV. Finance Report**

##### **a. Approval: January Financials**

Carl Allen provided the January Financials overview for the board. Carl stated that Best Academy is on track to meeting their budget. Current ADM is better than anticipated. Propel payments will come out of the holdbacks. The board has a question regarding the vendor, Multihealth. Wendy Hines explains that Multihealth is a vendor we brought some supplies from, they claimed they never received payment so the school had to resend it, which is why it shows up as an old expense. DeAndra Knighten motioned to approve January financials. Anura seconded the motion and the January financials were approved unanimously.

##### **b. Approval: DT/DF Recommendations**

Carl Allen provided background about the financial deep dive, and the DT/DF project to the board. Carl expects that by the end of the year Mastery will be able to pay Best 64K and they are currently awaiting a plan from Seed on what's feasible. Ezra Hyland asks David Greenberg if this plan will satisfy ACNW's requirements. David Greenberg states that the recommendations substantially meets what ACNW was looking for, as it got to the core of the issues and there is a plan to address problems. Carl Allen states that there will be several policies that will be presented to the BOD in march and some more before June 30th.

##### **c. Approval: MEISA Contract**

Carl Allen provided background on the MEISA Contract. Currently, our Homeless and Highly mobile scholars are using the service, previously we used to have a taxi company. Meisa's pricing – with a \$12.50 pick-up fee per student and then a \$2.50 per route-mile charge thereafter to be highly affordable. It results in an average van trip cost of \$60-80 per day. Providing this service using Meisa versus Minnehaha for the rest of the school year will likely result in a \$100,000 less cash outlay across all three schools. Meghan Roegge asked if MEISA will be used instead of Minnehaha, Carl Allen says he likes MEISA and they are able to adapt to the changing needs of the students. Meghan Roegge asks if we have been using them since November why is the board just seeing it. Carl Allen said he intended to bring it to the board in Jan, but unfortunately that didn't happen. Meghan Roegge made a motion to approve the MEISA contract, Idriss Omar seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

##### **d. Approval: Pearson Agreement**

Carl Allen provided background regarding the Pearson Agreement. In a 2016, Harvest Prep, Best Academy, and Mastery School agreed to settle unpaid debts to Pearson in the amounts of \$44,854, \$149,224.90, and \$24,176.29, respectively. These amounts (\$218,255.19 in total) were completely paid off by October 2017 in accordance with the payment plan agreed to. In the winter of 2017, Pearson notified HNS that they would no longer do business with any of the schools unless the schools agreed to pay an additional \$35,000 to compensate them for the collection fees they incurred collecting on the original debt. The BA board is not happy with how the repayment amounts are being allocated. Meghan Roegge motions to approve the Pearson repayment plan, Priya Morioka seconds the motion. DeAndra and Anura abstain. The motion passes 7-2.

##### **e. Update: Memo on Propel Loan**

Carl Allen provides a summary on the Propel line of credit. Best Academy has received a line of credit of \$750,000. This will be critical for our ability to meet our financial obligations for the remainder of the year, and are based on our expectation of large "hold back" payments from the state in the fall of the 2018-2019 school year, that will be used to pay back the loans.

##### **f. Approval: Finance Policies**

Carl Allen introduces the School Electronic Funds Transfer Policy. He stated that this came out of an audit finding. Anura said that it seems that this is something that we have already been doing and we just need a policy to formalize it. Anura motions to approve the School Electronic Funds Transfer Policy, Idriss Omar seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

**g. Approval: Check Signers**

Meghan Roegge motions to approve the board chair, the board treasurer and Carl Allen as check signers. Idriss seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

**V. Chair Report**

**a. TNTP Audit and Recommendations-vote to accept/reject each TNTP recommendation**  
Eric Mahmoud and Ezra Hyland gave a brief recap of the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Eric Mahmoud stated that he thinks that TNTP came in and gave a throughout evaluation. Ezra Hyland states that on the 10th the boards spent a lot of time going over the second recommendation, in general people seemed to be interested in a consulting partner to support the CMO. Mr. Mahmoud says that we have to explore all options and whatever the three boards pick he is in support of. Ezra wants to go through and accept recommendations so we can start exploring things and talking to possible CMO partner, and getting these CMOs to visit the school. One of the recommendations was a joining of the boards and exploring a consolidation for BA and HPS. Meghan Roegge said the boards had started talking about that a while ago, and that the logistics would have to be discussed by all boards. Meghan Roegge motions to approve the report and the recommendations, DeAndra seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

**VI. Key Board Priorities**

**a. Discussion: School Calendar**

Shana Ford provides background on the school calendar and the work that the calendar committee has done. Option 1 mirrors last year's calendar and Option 2 mirrors MPS, with a later start date. The calendar committee recommends option 1 as it provides consistency for parents, it provides a jump on recruitment and avoids summer slide while also having 3 weeks of PD. In March a finalized calendar will be provided to the board. The board asks for concrete data to prove that starting in August is better for the students. Meghan Roegge brings up the fact that Term 1 doesn't start until after Labor Day, how do we keep our scholars accountable for the work they do before Labor Day. Roegge states that in light of the TNTP audit she doesn't see many advantages to starting in August, and she wants to know how staff will have the opportunity to give feedback. Shana Ford says that she and Ms. Fatou are working on getting feedback from staff. She also says they need to manage parent expectations, HNS schools are schools that start before MPS. Ezra Hyland states we need to articulate our academic philosophy and the benefits to the child and the benefits to the teachers of having an earlier start date.

**b. Discussion: MDHR Update**

Emily Peterson and Aaliyah Hodge give an update on the MDHR "investigation", there are two options for agreements that the department has sent us. One of them is very ridged with the requirements and the other is more "customizable", which we believe is better for Best as we can weave in some of our current practices. Ezra Hyland has questions about the suspensions, he wants to know if there has been a decrease in suspensions because we aren't suspending kids or are we doing something right. Peterson assures the board that it's

because of processes. The board asks for discipline data to be included in next month's principal report.

**c. Discussion:** School Board Elections

Elections are scheduled for May 17th, Ezra, Anura and DeAndra are up for reelection. Emily Peterson states that this is a good time to look at the current board composition and seeing which skills they need, she also mentioned that the BOD has only one teacher. Ezra, Anura, DeAndra, and Meghan have volunteered to be on the elections committee.

**d. Approval Item:** Converting Roda Rabi to Community Member

Anura makes a motion to convert Roda Rabi to a Community Member and Idriss seconds, the motion passes unanimously.

**e. Authorizer Letter**

David Greenberg walks the board through the financial evaluation and the authorizer letter. In terms of financials, things are a little better, but not having cash put the school at risk. Currently the school has a 7.1% fund balance and only 4 other ACNW schools have a lower balance than that. No other school in ACNW's portfolio had more findings than BA and HPS with 7 apiece. David also went over the authorizer letter with the board and reviewed Audubon's expectations.

**VII. Adjournment**

DeAndra motioned to adjourn. Meghan Roegge seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m.