



Board of Directors Meeting

April 15, 2009

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Provident Bank

114 E. Lexington Street, Baltimore, 21202

John Marshall Room on the 10th floor

Minutes

The Board of Directors of the Fund for Educational Excellence met at the Provident Bank offices on Wednesday, April 15, 2009 from 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Sylvia Eggleston Wehr, Vice Chair of the Board, opened the meeting at 4:10 p.m. Board members present in addition to Ms. Wehr were: Michael Blum, Diane Cho, Scott Gensler, Nancy Jordan-Howard, Lillian Kilroy, Brian McLaughlin, Russell Moore, Lisa O'Masta, Ilene Salcman, Rita Walters, and Lisa Wright. Board members attending by phone were: Jim Mathias and Mike Riley. Staff members present were Lisa Bishop, Sharon Dondes, Janise Lane, Brianna McMullen, and Marilyn Powel.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Wehr called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

There being a quorum of the Board present, Ms. Wehr called for approval of the minutes of the February 25, 2009 meeting. Upon motions duly made and seconded, the minutes were approved.

III. Chairman's Remarks

Ms. Wehr thanked everyone for attending, and informed the Board that since Jim Mathias, Board Chair, was unable to attend in person, she would be acting as Chair for the meeting. She briefly reviewed the agenda, explaining that since the third quarter had just ended on March 31st, there would be no financial review. She noted that during the second half of the meeting, Lisa Bishop, the Fund's Director of Programs, would be providing an overview of the variety of school and district level work in which the Fund is involved.

Ms. Wehr also noted that Laura Weeldreyer, City Schools Deputy Chief of Staff, would be attending the meeting on behalf of Dr. Andrés Alonso, CEO of the Baltimore City Public Schools. Since Ms. Weeldreyer was not yet present, Ms. Wehr continued with the other agenda items.

IV. CEO Remarks

Lisa Wright, President & CEO, began by updating the Board on the Fund's outreach efforts to principals to secure contracts for the 2009-10 school year. She noted that it looks like the Fund will have at least the same, if not more, schools electing to purchase the *Achievement First* literacy program for next year. The Fund's program staff is also continuing its conversations with a number of principals around targeted, customized professional development services for next year. She reminded the Board that the Fund already has an approved, three-year requirements contract with the City Schools for services, so does not need to get a new contract approved for this coming year.

Ms. Wright briefly introduced the Fund's new Knowledge Management process which will help the organization capture, codify and disseminate our work in a meaningful way. She indicated that this is a new undertaking for the Fund and informed the Board that Bonnie Copeland is assisting staff in this work.

While noting that the Board would hear more about development efforts later in the meeting, she highlighted the ongoing effort to find ways to fund human capital, part of what the Fund traditionally refers to as its unrestricted operations cost. Marilyn Powel, Director of Development, is working closely with Ms. Wright on framing the Fund's human capital needs in ways that will be attractive to funders. Ms. Wright expressed her belief that the branding process currently underway would help the Fund in this effort through its focus on developing simple, meaningful ways to talk about the value of the Fund's work.

She concluded by asking members to refer to the President's Update in their Board packets and briefly walking them through the additional items not yet discussed in the meeting, including:

- Co-sponsoring the City School's Enrichment Event;
- Supporting City Schools as it reviews the competitive grant programs for education funding included in the Federal ARRA stimulus package; and
- Helping City Schools introduce a menu of College Access support providers for next year.

V. Development Report

Rita Walters, a member of the Board Development/Marketing Committee presented the Development Report. She referred members to the handout in their packets which outlined dollars raised to date, as well as projected totals. Ms. Walters highlighted that the Fund was currently projecting a total amount raised for FY2009 of \$168,970, an increase of \$11,000 over the Fund's FY2008 total. Unfortunately these numbers are still short of the original FY2009 goals, which were set before the current economic downturn. Given the unexpected severity of the economic downturn, the corporate scaling back of operating support, and the fact that many foundations will be skipping a year after FY08 program support, Ms. Walters indicated that it is quite positive that the Fund is holding its own, and may actually end the year with an increase over last year.

Ms. Walters and Ms. Powel answered a number of questions from the members about the United Way gifts for this year, particularly about timing of receipt of these donations. Ms. Powel explained that different types of pledges have payment timelines, ranging from a single payment for certain donor-designated gifts to as much as two years of monthly pay-outs.

Ms. Walters reminded the Board of the 25th Anniversary event that will be held on May 13, 2009 from 5:30-7:30 at the home of Sally Michel. Dr. Alonso will be the featured speaker. Invitations have been sent to current and former Board members, friends and funders. Responses are beginning to come in and Ms. Walters encouraged Board members to please let the Fund know if they will be attending. She stressed how important it was to have a good Board turn-out for this event to demonstrate their support of the Fund's efforts.

VI. *City Schools Update*

Laura Weeldreyer, City Schools Deputy Chief of Staff, began with an overview of the City Schools budget recently approved by the Board of School Commissioners. She also discussed the changes made by the Maryland State legislature to the state vs. local funding ratio for all school districts. Currently, the ratio is 80% state and 20% local; next school year the ratio will be shifted to 70% state and 30% local with proposals on the table to move the ratio over the next few years to 50% state and 50% local. Given these proposals, and the fact that the federal stimulus dollars are only for two years, City Schools is being very conservative in its financial planning, while at the same time moving forward with some key initiatives like expanding pre-Kindergarten program.

She also described in detail the new City Schools central office reorganization. She described the changes as two-part. First is right-sizing the central office to meet best practices, and second is decoupling support services from evaluation/accountability. To help with the support side of the equation, City Schools is creating four new Network Teams whose role is to work with schools to use data from the accountability office to identify needs and then help them access appropriate support services. City Schools is actively recruiting for these positions and is looking at candidates with broad ranges of skills and experience.

VII. Board Affairs Update

Ilene Salcman presented the Board Affairs Committee update. She discussed the three main goals of the Committee moving forward including: ensuring that current and new members are well-integrated into the Board; recruiting new members; and looking at the potential for building an Advisory Board structure.

VIII. Overview of Fund's Program Activities

Lisa Bishop, the Fund's Director of Programs, presented an overview of the Fund's core programmatic activities. She referred Board members to the copy of the presentation in their packets, and began with a brief overview of the extended program team, including introducing the two team members in attendance: Janise Lane, Program Manager, K-8 Literacy Reform and Brianna McMullen, Program-Manager-District Reform.

Ms. Bishop presented a comparison of the Fund's school and district work, highlighting their unique relationships, funding, strategies and evaluation processes. The Board engaged in a lively discussion of the implications and opportunities of these various strands of work including how these functions could best be packaged and tied to the functions of the new City Schools organization model.

Ms. Bishop reminded the Board of the FY2009 Program goals, and shared a number of recent accomplishments. She highlighted the various levels of planning and implementation support the

Fund provides to the City Schools as well as to a number of external partner organizations, such as the Baltimore Education Research Consortium (BERC). The Board asked a number of questions about this work, focusing on the wide scope and the potential for greater packaging and dissemination of the Fund's efforts. Ms. Bishop and Ms. Wright assured the Board that these issues were a key part of the branding project currently underway. They also discussed how the Knowledge Management efforts will help the Fund codify, summarize, and disseminate lessons learned and key areas of expertise.

Ms. Bishop asked Ms. Lane to provide an overview of current K-8 Literacy activities. Ms. Lane talked about the considerable principal outreach effort currently underway to secure *Achievement First* participating schools for next year. She shared the list of schools that have already indicated their participation next year, including five full *Achievement First* program schools (four days/week) and two part-time program schools. She also informed the Board that the Fund is in the process of conducting teacher and principal surveys in the six schools that are participating in *Achievement First* this school year.

Ms. Bishop asked Ms. McMullen to present an overview of current District Reform activities. Ms. McMullen discussed the variety of college readiness and access activities in which she is engaged, and also described some of the rapid response support she is providing on City Schools' initiatives.

Given the amount of positive questions and discussion, the presentation generated, Ms. Wehr suggested that the Board ask Ms. Bishop to continue the conversation at an upcoming Board meeting.

IX. New Business

Ms. Wehr asked if there was any new business to bring to the floor. There being no new business, Ms. Wehr moved to adjournment.

X. Adjournment

Ms. Wehr thanked the Board members for attending and adjourned the Board meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Next Meeting - Please note that the next meeting of the Fund for Educational Excellence Board of Directors is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2009 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Constellation Energy Offices, 111 Market Place, Baltimore, 21202 in Conference Room 6-5.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lillian Kilroy, Secretary