

 10/9/17

**MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD,
LEARNING EXCELLENCE FOUNDATION OF
WEST BROWARD COUNTY, INC.
d/b/a IMAGINE CHARTER SCHOOL AT WESTON**

**MEETING MINUTES
Date: August 1, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Prado-Stroze called the meeting to order at 5:43 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Board members present: Erika Royal Barnes, Radhika Paul, Jhanet Garcia, Priscilla Prado-Stroze, Pascale Royal, Scott Beck and Sylvia Allen. The following persons were also present: Paul Eichner, (attorney), Nadine Laham, (Principal), Jacky Vernon (Region Director Imagine Schools), Karen Gross (Business Manager), Elsa Forthmuller (Finance Director), and Rod Sasse (Executive Vice President).

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Ms. Laham confirmed public notice was given via the website, email blast and posted on the front door of the school.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Royal made the motion to approve the June 22, 2017 minutes as amended to reflect correct spelling of Mr. Sasse's name. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. All ayes.

Ms. Barnes made the motion to table item #4 on the agenda and move on to item #8 on the agenda at this time. Ms. Paul seconded the motion. All ayes.

Board Input/Discussion on Imagine School Property

Condition/property report as presented by Mr. Eichner and Ms. Kreitzer:

- Mr. Eichner and Ms. Kreitzer spoke with all members of the board. At issue is what we can do, what we should do, what is practical to be with respect to the existing lease, financial obligations, issue of the condition of the school. Mr. Francey, Mr. Eichner and Ms. Kreitzer met with Mr. Edelman (rep of lease holder) and had suggested that he do some form of evaluation of the condition of the property of the school, as yet, this has not happened. Imagine Schools commissioned study of the school to determine physical condition of the school. Ms. Kreitzer has provided a summary handout and here to review the results of the study and provide recommendations:
- Lease is triple net lease. Lease expires some time in 2021. Commencement date was beginning of school year after completion of the building.
- Lease contains two optional extension dates of five years each. To be exercised by Imagine 9 months before lease end.
- Three amendments to lease over time.
- Main source of funding is FTE revenue. In 2007-2008, FTE went down.
- Lease escalation clauses have also impacted the lease.

- Discussion of what happens when lease ends. Tenant has to return premises to Landlord broom cleaned with reasonable wear and tear (there have been renovations, retrofitting for use as a school).
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- First LEF considered buying property thru issuance of a bond or entering into new long term lease. After much discussion, the Paiz Group was hired to negotiate new lease. As part of that, the board realized the need to evaluate the property. Thought the Landlord would do it, but he did not. Imagine Schools did. Inspection report shows that there are maintenance issues and other issues that will have to be addressed. But for a building that is almost 20 years old, the report came back not bad. Report is available, it's long, over 100 pages. Can get electronic copy. Ms. Vernon will send copy to board within 24-48 hours.
 - Should the building be returned to the Landlord by Imagine, who would be responsible to fix it? Questions of ordinary wear and tear versus wish list. Bringing school back up to snuff. Who would be responsible for that? Getting it to where it was at beginning of lease term?
 - Operating agreement between Imagine and the school says some of the operating expenses are those necessary for maintenance. So Imagine can say did not provide enough resources to properly upkeep the property. Arguably, the Board has relied on Imagine to create budget which the Board approves.
 - The Board does not have adequate money in reserves to repair or replace anything/everything. Is it the best time for the board to be considering entering into a long term lease with little to no reserves in place? Would truly become LEF's responsibility if LEF enters into the lease. With what appears, no backup from Imagine.
 - Is there a necessity to enter into a new lease right now? There would be a lot of costs – security deposits, repairs, insurance costs. Imagine had blanket insurance policy for all schools that they purchase for one reduced rate. There are a lot of costs upfront to enter into lease as well.
 - In triple net lease scenario, there is no free lunch, costs will simply be returned into the new lease payments.
 - **Conclusions and recommendations –**
 - Work to building reserves prior to entering into direct lease
 - Create lease committee and discuss obligations, analyze cost issues
 - So that by 2021, the board and the school are in a better position to consider this.
 - Subcommittee needs to work much more closely with Imagine Schools on the budgets to make sure setting things up for success when it's time to enter into a new lease.
 - Symbiotic relationship between Imagine and the Board. The bottom line is that the report that was commissioned by Imagine is one report. Clearly, the Landlord will do his own as approach end of lease term or if go into renegotiations. His report will be considerably more conservative. He won't want to pay anything out of pocket.
 - Imagine Weston needs to be more aggressive about setting aside monies for repairs and work with Imagine Schools with respect to budgets and make sure that expenses that we know are forthcoming will be able to be met.

- Budgeting for when the board does take over the lease, need to have reserves in place. For things like escalation and insurance.

- Biggest effects were class size reduction, FTE reduction and increase in costs. FTE is going up but not by much. There has been discussion of making capital improvement funds available to charter schools, but Broward County was the first to file suit to not provide the monies to Charter Schools - remains in discussion.
- Mr. Sasse pointed out that Imagine Schools does not own the building. They had attempted to purchase in the past but it never worked out.
- Imagine Weston has monies in reserve, but the amount is going down due to some of the funds being designated.
- If the millage amendment passes, it could add \$500-\$700 per child, Even if the amendment passes the funds would not be allocated until the following year.
- Mr. Huber (via phone) weighed in that Imagine Schools has been very clear from the start that they do not want to be in the property management business.
- Ms. Vernon and Ms. Laham are our lines of communication to Imagine Schools.
- Mr. Eichner suggested creating a committee to work with Imagine, separate from the board meetings. The committee can work as fact finders and report back to the board.

Ms. Prado-Stroze motioned to return to item #4 on the agenda. Mr. Beck seconded the motion.

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE AND NEW BUSINESS:

1. a. Contracts
 - i. Venture Design – for entire school. Itemized list is for middle school. Already signed by Don Francey. This is informational. This was negotiated by Paul to add language again.
 - ii. NSLP – National School Lunch Program. Free and reduced lunch rate went up from 10% to 21%. We receive \$206K for food services and we paid out \$167,930 so made some money on it. the cashier in the cafeteria is our employee and she maintains the accounts. Her salary was nearly \$16K. So, we did make a little money on it. School lunch rates are not going up.
 - iii A1A Transportation - the amount went up this year. He has had a 34% increase in insurance costs and he is passing it on the customers. It was \$192K and this year it is \$205K. last year got \$120K from the district last year for bus riders. Changed to say buses 20000 model year and younger. They will provide us with maintenance and driver licenses and vendor licenses. All buses inspected every 30 days and we can get inspection reports. Same bus drivers as last year. No one has retired or left.
 - v. Col-USA – facilities company. Slight price increase. (\$11,500/month which is a \$200 increase) It is in the budget (landscape maintenance). Under term, crossing off autorenewal provision in Section 3 (Term). Will have same staff as last year.
 - vi A/C – considered changing A/C companies and had put out RFP. Waiting for third bid, Hill York bid was thru the room. Biscayne Air Services still has not provided contract. Thought would save couple of thousand dollars per year but it's really a wash. So, sticking with BAS (Building Air

Services). Need to cross out Patrick Sandoe's name. This is last year's contract. So, are the amounts changing?

b. Handbooks

i. Parent-Student

1. Dress code enforcement in middle school
2. Telephones – must be off when you come to school and stay off all day. This in an ongoing problem. Some days teachers let the kids use program to vote but then supposed to turn them back off. Needs to be revised to include cell phone policy.

ii. Employee handbook

- c. Safety Plan – main changes to end of the book, pages 29-31. Changed location of fire drill from the field to the parking lot.
- d. Character report card – different for 2nd, 3-5 and middle school.
- e. School Grade and Results – technically, we are an A school again. Next week, imagine having a forum to discuss the new acceleration model to concentrate on curriculum, best practices, get kids up from lower quartiles and even those in higher quartiles.
- f. Rolling out Canvas (replacement for Engrade and more, also those Shutterfly accounts. One master student information system umbrella).
- g. For next meeting, will have comparison of Imagine to other schools in Weston. Generally on top for elementary school, MS had some hiccups.
- h. All in for Excellence: suggested that board come up with something. So want the board to come and talk to the teachers to discuss all in. August 14th at 9 am.
- i. Newsletter is about to go out.

REGION DIRECTOR: JACQUELYN VERNON –

Ms. Vernon commended Ms. Laham on Imagine Weston's earned high grades.

- a. Imagine Weston earned a promising practice award from National Character Education.org.
- b. Trade days following forum next Tuesday. Principals rolling out acceleration model to continue on the road to success.
- c. Tinker – technology, STEM, coding. Not extra work for the teachers
- d. Canvas
- e. Restorative practices – Ms. Pardo working on building character in schools.

~~f. Renaissance – learn about STAR and align better with state standards.~~

~~g. Rigorous centers – when kids are working alone, doing rigorous work.~~

h. Thank you to Mr. Sasse for coming tonight

BUDGET UPDATE - Final 16/17 Budget Amendment

- a. Reserve funds
- b. Last year, we were unable to give teachers any retention bonus because we were afraid we would not have any money in June. We would like to give a bonus to the staff. Would like to set aside a reserve towards retention and recruitment stipend. Would consider distribution at two different times next year - say before Thanksgiving and then before Spring break.
- c. Monies need to be set aside to fix the parking lot. Waiting on the City of Weston for permits.
- d. Two of the three projects going in for permits are being funded by the PTP. The wall and the outside marquee. The wall is done. And the marquee is in the making. Third permit would be the parking lot. The concern is that spots could become a sinkhole. The landlord needs to sign off on the permits. The PTP is replacing the laminating machine, once again.
- e. Imagine schools provided a new color copier/printer

PUBLIC INPUT

- A request was made if a calendar could be created and distributed to the parents regarding fundraising events.
- It was noted that the Venezuela fundraiser was very successful but perhaps a bit political. It was suggested to look for rallying fund raisers closer to home. Even to the extent of having different organizations on a monthly basis.

BOARD ACTION

- Ms. Barnes made the motion to create facilities committee led by Scott Beck and co-chaired by Ms. Barnes. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. All ayes. When committee meets, must be in sunshine. When want to have meeting, Ms. Laham will have to put out public notice. Minutes will need to be taken during these meetings.
- Ms. Paul made the motion to authorize releasing the Paiz from their contract without any additional action or any additional payments, Ms. Barnes seconded the motion. All ayes.
- Mr. Beck made the motion to table consideration of BAS contract until next board meeting because they provided the wrong agreement. Ms. Paul seconded the motion. All ayes.
- Mr. Beck made the motion to approve the Imagine Charter School at Weston Monthly Financial Report For the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2017, with the exception of the recommendation for designated reserve funds for recruitment and retention to be addressed at the next meeting. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. All ayes.

a. Handbooks

i. Parent-Student – Ms. Royal made motion to approve Parent-student handbook with the amendment to add more explicit cell phone policy, and bicycle rules, and change email for treasurer of PTP. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. All ayes.

ii. Imagine Weston Employee – Mr. Beck made the motion to approve Imagine Weston Employee Handbook, amended to add curriculum leader. Ms. Royal seconded the motion. All ayes.

b. Contracts

i. Venture Design – Ms. Barnes made motion to approve action taken by Mr. Francey, when he signed the Venture Design contract that was provided to the school Board. Ms. Paul seconded the motion. All ayes.

ii. InUnison

iii. A1A Transportation – Ms. Paul made the motion to accept and authorize Ms. Prado-Stroze to sign A1A student transportation agreement, Ms. Royal seconded the motion. all ayes.

iv. Col-USA – Ms. Barnes made the motion to accept and authorize Ms. Prado-Stroze to sign as the COL-USA agreement as amended to reject auto renewal provision in section 3, Ms. Paul seconded the motion. All ayes.

vi. By-laws need a signature – have uploaded the same by-laws for the past nine years but this year, the district said the document needs to have a signature.

c. Safety Plan - Ms. Paul made the motion to approve and accept Comprehensive School Safety Plan for 2017-18. Ms. Royal seconded the motion. All ayes.

d. VPK documents, required every year, to be signed by the Board. Ms. Barnes made the motion to approve and authorize Ms. Prado-Stroze to sign School Readiness and VPK authorization form. Ms. Paul seconded the motion. All ayes.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Governing Board meeting will be Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.