



ASPIRA OF DELAWARE CHARTER OPERATIONS, INC.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES (Draft): ASPIRA OF DELAWARE CHARTER OPERATIONS INC. (ADCO)

DATE: 5/26/2016

LOCATION: Conference Room
Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) Charter School
326 Ruthar Drive, Newark DE 19711-8017

Directors Present: Lourdes Puig (Chair), John Laznik, Jim Coyne, Dr. Jose-Luis Riera, Nancy Labanda, ; Alex Fajardo, Jamie "Gus" Rivera (Vice-Chair), Kathleen Chappel, Jorge Diaz, Donald Patton

Directors Absent: Dusty Blakey

Others Present: Greg Panchisin (Business Manager), Margie Lopez-Waite (Head of School), Beth Anne Gluck (Asst HOS), Jesus Urdiales (Asst HOS)

Future Meetings Dates: TBD

Executive Session

Riera presented a motion to move into executive session at 5:30PM for personnel matters. Fajardo seconded the motion and the motion to move into executive session was approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

Laznik presented a motion to move out of executive session at 6:28PM. Fajardo seconded the motion and the motion to move out of executive session was approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

Call to Order

Lourdes Puig (Chair), called the public session to order at 6:29PM, noting that a quorum was present.

Laznik made a motion to extend the public comment period beyond 20 minutes if needed. Fajardo seconded the motion and the motion to extend the public comment period if needed was approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

Public Comment:

- 1) Pam Evans posed two questions to the board.
 - a) Who approved the driver license policy at the front desk for visitors? When? In place for 16-17?
 - b) Why are so many graduates attending vo-tech schools rather than traditional high schools?
- 2) Corie Bennett-DeCubellis presented a letter to the board regarding the Middle School Immersion Program. (Letter attached)
- 3) Marty Essick wanted to thank the school and administration for a great experience as a first year parent.
- 4) Jane McGonegal (Director of HR) expressed to the board how pleased she is to be affiliated with LAAA and how grateful she is to have worked at the school for the past 2 years.
- 5) Greg Panchisan expressed his concern about an interaction that took place between a parent and a teacher the day of the board meeting. He also wanted to express his trust and respect for the Head of School and provided numerous examples to support his feelings.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The May 26, 2016 agenda and April 28, 2016 meeting minutes were presented and reviewed. Coyne presented a motion to accept the agenda and meeting minutes as presented. Patton seconded the motion and the motion to approve the agenda and meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

Operations Committee as reported by Greg Panchisin

Greg presented the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) document produced by GG+A with a total cost of \$11,495,753.37. The GMP was needed in order to move forward with bond financing. \$500,000 of contingency is built into the GMP. 25% of all drawings are complete as of today. The anticipated construction start date is August 1, 2016 with the understanding that the Sportsplex will be vacating their existing space on or before June 30, 2016.

Finance Committee Report (FOC) as reported by Greg Panchisin (Business Manager)

Greg reviewed the April monthly financial report. Actual to budget remains favorable. Several questions were raised and answered. The full report will be available on the FOC portion of www.aspiraacademy.org. A motion by Riera, seconded by Labanda that the ADCO Board accept the April 2015 Monthly Financial Report. Final resolution was unanimous.

Bond Financing – Our current bond rating is BB+ (non-investment grade rating). Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO) sometimes does not sign off on non-investment grade bonds. Conversations are continuing with DEDO.

Head of School Report as reported by Margie Lopez-Waite (Head of School)

Policy Title: Seclusion and Physical Restraint Policy#: 5002

Patton made a motion to accept the Seclusion and Physical Restraint policy as presented. Coyne seconded the motion and the motion to accept the Seclusion and Physical Restraint policy was approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

(Full HOS Report attached below)

New Business

HB61 – Digital recordings will be required by all public schools boards (including charters). Board recordings will have to be posted, no later than, 7 days after the date of the recording. The ADCO board will do its research and test proper files in order to get ready for compliance, if and when the HB is signed by the Governor.

Parent Forum – The board makes a formal request to the HOS and administration to develop a proposal in order to develop a mechanism for parent involvement and communication moving forward.

Adjourn The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:50PM.

Las Américas ASPIRA Academy
Head of School Update
May 26, 2016

Seclusion & Physical Restraint Policy

- Review and approval by board needed

Enrollment for 2016-2017

- Enrollment update
 - Goals = 665 (100%); 698 (105%)
 - May 1st Count = 100%
- School Choice Applications

| Grade | Active | W/D | Total |
|--------|------------|------------|------------|
| KN | <u>243</u> | <u>82</u> | <u>325</u> |
| 01 | <u>81</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>92</u> |
| 02 | <u>65</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>77</u> |
| 03 | <u>66</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>72</u> |
| 04 | <u>66</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>73</u> |
| 05 | <u>69</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>74</u> |
| 06 | <u>90</u> | <u>28</u> | <u>118</u> |
| 07 | <u>35</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>40</u> |
| 08 | <u>20</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>21</u> |
| 09 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| 10 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| 11 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| 12 | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Total: | <u>735</u> | <u>157</u> | <u>892</u> |

- K enrollment – 93 enrolled, 3 retention, 4 slots to fill; currently at #110 on wait list
- Retention

| Grade | #Students Not Returning |
|--------------|--|
| KN | 6 |
| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 8 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 6 |
| 6 | 0 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | n/a (graduating) |
| TOTAL | 32 (95% retention rate) |

Staffing for 2016-2017

- Recruitment is in process to fill open positions
 - 1st round interviews
 - 2nd round interviews include demo lesson and collaboration activity
- Goal is to have all positions filled by end of June (at the latest); three positions offered and accepted to date

SBAC/DCAS Update

- Testing and make-ups will be completed next week
- Results to be reviewed by AEC in June and presented to ADCO Board

Middle School Immersion Update

- Staffing is in process
- Meeting scheduled with students and families in August (prior to start of school year)

Legislative Update (Update from DCSN)

The following Legislation affecting Title 14 - Education was acted upon by the General Assembly on 5/18 - 19/2016:

- [HJR 12](#) (WEIC) SUPPORTING THE REDISTRICTING RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WILMINGTON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION AND APPROVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.
History: May 18, 2016 – Out of Committee
URL: [http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/lis148.nsf/vwLegislation/HJR+12/\\$file/legis.html?open](http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/lis148.nsf/vwLegislation/HJR+12/$file/legis.html?open)
- [HB 229](#)
AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL CHOICE.
Under the current School Choice program, there are certain students who may receive priority consider...[more](#)
History:
May 19, 2016 - Amendment HA 2 - Introduced and Placed With Bill
May 18, 2016 - Amendment HA 1 - Introduced and Placed With Bill
Jan 07, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House
URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+229>
- [HB 292](#)
AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO POSTING INFORMATION RELATED TO CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN SCHOOLS.
This bill requires schools to post the toll-free telephone report line number for child abuse and ne...[more](#)
History:
May 19, 2016 - Passed by Senate. Votes: Passed 19 YES 0 NO 0 NOT VOTING 2 ABSENT 0 VACANT
Mar 17, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House
URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+292>
- [HB 307 w/HA 1](#)
AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FEES FOR EDUCATOR LICENSURE.
In 2015, the Legislature enacted the one-time fee of no more than \$100 for an educator's first lice...[more](#)
History:
May 19, 2016 - Passed by Senate. Votes: Passed 19 YES 0 NO 0 NOT VOTING 2 ABSENT 0 VACANT
May 05, 2016 - Amendment HA 1 - Introduced and Placed With Bill
Apr 06, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+307>

▪ [HB 348](#)

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

This bill expands the list of persons eligible to participate in the Ada Leigh Soles Memorial Profes...[more](#)

History:

May 19, 2016 - Passed by House of Representatives. Votes: Passed 34 YES 0 NO 0 NOT VOTING 7 ABSENT 0 VACANT

May 18, 2016 - Reported Out of Committee (EDUCATION) in House with 11 On Its Merits

Apr 28, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+348>

▪ [HB 229](#)

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL CHOICE.

Under the current School Choice program, there are certain students who may receive priority consider...[more](#)

History:

May 18, 2016 - Amendment HA 1 - Introduced and Placed With Bill

Jan 07, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+229>

▪ [HB 390](#)

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

This bill clarifies that a vote by the General Assembly as required in 14 Del C. §§ 1008(g) and 1026...[more](#)

History:

May 18, 2016 - Introduced and Assigned to Education Committee in House

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HB+390>

▪ [HS 1 for HB 1 w/HA 1](#)

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING.

This bill will require responsible employees of institutions of higher education to offer to victims...[more](#)

History:

May 18, 2016 - Passed by Senate. Votes: Passed 21 YES 0 NO 0 NOT VOTING 0 ABSENT 0 VACANT

Mar 03, 2016 - Adopted in lieu of the original bill HB 1, and assigned to House Administration Committee in House

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/HS+1+for+HB+1>

▪ [SB 208 w/SA 1](#)

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLES 6 AND 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE AND CHAPTER 149, VOLUME 80 OF THE LAWS OF DELAWARE RELATING TO ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTIONS.

This Act makes the following technical corrections to two online privacy protection bills passed dur...[more](#)

History:

May 18, 2016 - Reported Out of Committee (EDUCATION) in House with 12 On Its Merits

Mar 10, 2016 - Assigned to Judiciary Committee in Senate

URL: <http://legis.delaware.gov/LIS/LIS148.NSF/vwLegislation/SB+208>

Academic Excellence Committee Update

- May meeting was canceled due to schedule conflicts with EOY events
- June will focus on review of SBAC/DCAS test results and developing action plan

Development Committee Update

- 3rd Annual Viva ASPIRA event
 - Raised \$10,500
 - Overall event was very successful
 - Lyn has developed a list of changes and improvements for next year
 - The event location, STAR Campus, received positive reviews (It should be noted we were not charged for the use of this facility)
 - The Monday after event, Lyn personally delivered thank you notes and flowers to Dean Kathy Matt, Assistant to Dean Regina Porter & Facilities Manager Debbie Martini
 - Funds from VIVA ASPIRA have been used to purchase signage for the Outdoor Classroom, and plantings, and more
- Visit from Frank McIntosh (May 2016)
 - Former President/CEO of Junior Achievement for over 20 years; extensive experience and success in development initiatives; was appointed to sit on the Christina School Finance Committee; author of the book *The Relational Leader*.
 - He toured the school and spent over an hour sharing his ideas for developing our personal story to use to build our fundraising program.
- Annual Appeal Program
 - Developing a project outline for implementation
 - Target date of Fall 2016
- Grants
 - Welfare Foundation
 - Application submitted by April 15th deadline; requested \$650,000 for HVAC upgrade; historically their max award has been \$200K
 - Visit from Peter Morrow (May 2016); great discussion with him; he advised to resubmit application in fall (Oct. 15 deadline) for better consideration



Las Américas ASPIRA Academy SCHOOL POLICIES

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Policy Title: Seclusion and Physical Restraint | Date Adopted: 5/26/16 |
| Policy #: 5002 | Date Revised: N/A |
| Purpose: To strengthen ensure that each student and staff member is provided with a safe environment. | |
| Scope: The policy establishes LAAA's procedures and guidelines for the use of seclusion and physical restraints with students. | |

Definitions

- **Seclusion** - Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. This includes situations where a door is blocked by other objects or held by staff.
- **Physical Restraint** - A physical restraint is defined as any method of one or more persons restricting another person's freedom of movement, physical activity, or normal access to his or her body.

Guidelines

LAAA has established procedures and guidelines for the use of seclusion and physical restraints which must be followed by all staff.

1. Behavioral interventions for children must consider the right of all children and youth to be treated with dignity.
2. All children should receive educational programming and supports in a safe and least restrictive environment.
3. Positive and appropriate educational interventions should be provided to all children who need them.
4. Behavioral interventions should emphasize preventions and create positive behavioral supports.
5. Conflict de-escalation techniques should be employed by all school staff to avoid and defuse crisis and conflict situations.
6. Children whose pattern of behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others should receive appropriate educational assessment, including functional behavior assessments followed by behavioral intervention plans that incorporate appropriate positive behavioral interventions (i.e. targeted instruction in appropriate behavior and strategies to de-escalate their own behavior).
7. Seclusion or physical restraint procedures should be used in school settings only when the physical safety of the student and/or others is in imminent danger.

8. Seclusion or physical restraint is viewed as a “last resort” intervention while maintaining student dignity as much as possible. “Last resort” means that all other possible reasonable interventions have been implemented with fidelity and these interventions have failed to prevent or de-escalate a situation and there is significant concern for the personal safety of the student and/or others.
9. Neither seclusion nor physical restraint should be used as a punishment to force compliance or as a substitute for appropriate educational support.
10. Chemical and mechanical restraints are never permitted at LAAA.
11. Students may be physically restrained only by LAAA personnel who have completed *Safe & Positive Approaches® training by Devereux Institute* and are certified as such.

Procedures

1. All seclusion environments must be safe, consider the dignity of children and meet programming and safety guidelines.
2. Any student in seclusion must be continuously observed by an adult for the entire period of the seclusion. Occasional checks are not acceptable.
3. Parents/Guardians will be involved in the planning for the use of physical restraints and seclusion and be informed promptly if physical restraints and/or seclusion have been utilized for their child.
4. The Head of School or designate will be informed when physical restraint or seclusion is utilized in the school.
5. If a student is physically restrained or placed in seclusion, a reasonable attempt shall be made to notify the parent/guardian on the same day, but in no event later than twenty-four hours after, the physical restraint or seclusion is used. Such notification shall be made in person, by phone or by voicemail, or by e-mail. The reporter shall maintain written documentation of successful and unsuccessful attempts to notify the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian shall also be provided with a copy of the written report generated by the eSchoolPlus system.
6. The use of Physical Restraint /Seclusion is to be documented utilizing eSchoolPlus immediately following the incident and all required reports shall be submitted to the Delaware Department of Education as required.
7. Comprehensive debriefing following the use of physical restraint and seclusion is required:
 - a. The LAAA administrative team is expected to problem solve the event to determine what is needed to prevent escalation of such behavior in the future.
 - b. The student’s parent/guardian and the LAAA administrative team may meet to discuss future plans in order to prevent such escalation.

Regulation: Delaware Title 14, Administrative Code 610

Parents for LAAA Middle School Immersion
Las Americas Aspira Academy
May 26, 2016

Dear ASPIRA Board of Directors:

This current academic school year represents a milestone as the school and its families celebrate the conclusion of LAAA's original five year charter. LAAA parents are looking forward to providing continued support of our school's existing immersion program, currently being provided as a "Dual Immersion Program" for current Grades K-5th¹ and set to advance to 6th under the school's renewed charter, with full school-wide implementation of this model expected by the 2018-2019 academic year.²

As the Delaware World Language Initiative asserts, "the standard definition of immersion is a program in which students spend no less than 50% of the instructional day learning academic content in a language other than English." However, the board meeting minutes from February 2016, propose a departure from the school's current immersion model, suggesting that instruction will now be primarily in English, with only a Spanish language and humanities block. We are surprised by this unexpected shift in the school's mission and concerned about this material change to the current immersion model. The hundreds of families with students currently within the "Dual Immersion Program" (i.e. current grades K-5th) are heavily invested in this model.

However, the information memorialized in the Board's February minutes suggests that instead of phasing out the "Spanish as a Second Language" block (as current 5th graders graduate into the next grades), there appears to be a defacto phasing-out of the 50/50 "Dual Immersion Program".

It is a valid argument that a language block of time each day is one way of continuing the bilingual model. Certainly that can be the case for programs where there is not an immersion plan already in place and where there is not yet such strong community belief in the mission. This argument was also understandably necessary for siblings of younger students (in the Dual Immersion Program), who because of their age at the time they enrolled, would not have been amenable to an immersion model they weren't previously exposed to. In the case of students already enrolled in a 50/50 model, however, we are well set-up to aim higher and to achieve what communities have set up across the country, from areas like Minneapolis-St. Paul to communities in Texas to Los Angeles where programs extend fully into high school and students leave high school with college credit. This cannot be achieved if we resort to less than immersion at this early stage in our school's development.

¹ "Our curriculum consists of two language programs: Dual Language Immersion Program (K-1st grades in year 1; K-3rd in year 3 [and so forth]) and a Spanish as a Second Language Program (2nd-5th Grades in Year 1; 4-7th in Year 3). The Dual Language Immersion Program will continue to grow each year, as our students graduate to the next level". LAAA Performance Agreement, December 19, 2013.

² "We are accomplishing this mission through the full implementation of a dual language project-based curriculum. Dual language instruction is being delivered through an **immersion** model, which was introduced in K-1 grades in Year 1. The immersion program continues to grow each year **as students are promoted to the next grade**. Grades K-4th are currently included in the immersion program **with full school-wide implementation to be completed in the 2018-2019 school year**", *emphasis added*.

It might be suggested that the long waiting list of students wanting to enter LAAA ensures the school's success. This is short-sighted. There are many factors that complicate the choice to attend a charter school as parents give up neighborhood schools, drive longer to school or to bus stops, have fewer extracurricular or support programs than their neighborhood schools, particularly in the middle school years. Content-based language instruction for 50% of the school day has served as a return on the investment that is unique to this immersion learning opportunity, and must continue to be nurtured.

We understand that finding certified teachers can be difficult for the middle school immersion curriculum. However, there are a wealth of resources that can be explored. Governor Jack Markell's Delaware World Language Initiative, for one, offers numerous guidelines for hiring appropriate teachers for just this scenario. As the current 5th grade sets to graduate next week, it is urgent to address the recruitment of qualified teachers. Possible venues for outreach could include the University of Delaware, or seeking information regarding the H1B program, through which many school districts nationwide recruit highly qualified dual-language instructors. In addition, your LAAA parent community is ready to support this effort.

We take pride in sending our children to this special program and have an invested interest in both our children's success and the potential for the school to become a model for the growing state interest in bicultural and bilingual education. In the context of Jack Markell's announcement just this week to expand the state of Delaware's World Language Immersion program even further, a retreat from the initial vision on which LAAA was founded runs counter to the state's and our community's educational goals. We have the chance to lead the way in a culture that is increasingly supportive of our mission.

Therefore, we respectfully request and submit that any and all steps be taken to address this issue.