



Minutes of the Legends Public Charter School Board of Directors

Date: February 26 2025

Time 6:03 pm, Microsoft Teams

Attendance: 55

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Charlette Butler-Strickland at 6:01 pm. Roll call was conducted by the Chair, and the following members were present:

- Charlette Butler Strickland
- Rasheid Scarlett
- Makiese DeVose
- Adia Jordan
- Airen Washington
- Aminah Williams

The Chair announced that a quorum was present.

Department Reports

CEO Report (Presented by CEO Atasha M. James)

CEO James provided the CEO's update.

CEO James welcomed the Board and Community to this month's meeting.

Reminded the community that we are grounded in our 9 accountability goals.

Financial Update – Key Performance Indicators

- **Cash on Hand:** Projected to end SY24-25 with 231 days of cash (no change from last month).
- **Cash Balance:** Estimated at \$6.67M (adjusted from \$6.64M).
- **Net Income and Gross Margin:** Projected net income of \$3.3M (no change from last month) and a gross margin of 24%.
- Financial projections reflect recent staffing updates and the achievement of the enrollment goal of 897 students at \$14,124/student (flat funding).

The CEO presented the following updates:

- **Prince George's County Council Budget Approval:**
The Prince George's County Council has approved the budget and included a **1% increase** for school funding, which is a positive development for the district.
- **Maryland's Blueprint:**
The CEO provided an overview of the provisions within **Maryland's Blueprint**, emphasizing its impact on school funding and educational improvements.
- **PGCPS Administrative Fee and Funding Formula:**
The CEO discussed the **administrative fee** applied by PGCPS, which had previously been **2%** under the funding formula. This administrative fee remains a factor in the overall funding allocation.
- **PSDS Budget Allotment from PGCPS:**
The **budget allotment** from PGCPS for PSDS will be provided by **March**. However, the exact amount is still uncertain at this time.

Staffing Update (Presented by Portia Cameron)

Portia Cameron presented the staffing update for the 2024-2025 school year, highlighting the following key points:

- **Hiring Season for 2025-2026 School Year:** The school's hiring season for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year is officially underway. Legends Charter School is actively recruiting top talent for teaching positions in **Math, Reading, Science, and ELA/Humanities**.
- **Intent to Return Forms:** These forms were sent out to all current teachers and staff last week. It was emphasized that timely responses are important to assist with planning for the upcoming school year.
- **PGCPS Transfer Window:** The PGCPS transfer window is now open for eligible teachers interested in making a transition. Inquiries from educators looking to bring their expertise to Legends Charter School are welcomed.
- **Help Us Find Future Legends Educators:** Portia encouraged board members to help identify passionate educators or individuals interested in joining the Legends team. Whether as a teacher or an AmeriCorps Fellow, potential candidates are encouraged to visit the Legends website or send their resumes to **Portia.Cameron@LegendsSchools.org**.

SELAD/AmeriCorps Update (Presented by Ms. Ashari James)

Ashari James presented the AmeriCorps update, highlighting the following key points:

- **AmeriCorps Legends Fellows Program:**

The program is currently 96% staffed, with 23 Fellows, and continues to support grades K-3 with additional roles in Middle School. Key points include:

- Fellows have completed their second **IMPACT Evaluation**, with the third evaluation scheduled to begin the week after the Third Quarter ends on April 3rd.
- Fellows are on track to complete the required 1,700 hours (Segal Education Grant Award) by the end of the year.
- The **Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism (GOSV)** will visit at the end of March to showcase the work of the Fellows.
- **AmeriCorps Week** is coming up from March 9-15, and board members are encouraged to celebrate the team's efforts.

- **Hiring for Cohort Five:**

The school is in the process of hiring Fellows for the **2025-2026** school year. Nineteen of the 24 current Fellows are first-year participants, and almost all will be invited back for their second year. Prospective candidates are encouraged to apply via the Legends website.

- **Fellow of the Year Nominations:**

The first-round nominations for **Fellow of the Year** were announced. Up to two Fellows per grade level were nominated:

- Kindergarten: Ms. Aysia and Ms. Zee
- First Grade: Le'yah Parsons and Jada Nolan
- Second Grade: Noelle Gonzales-Jackson and Mariah Turner
- Third Grade: Janiaha Terry and Diamiani Brown
- Fourth Grade: Amira Burnett and Rayana Shubert
- Fifth Grade: Kelmya Sanker
- Sixth Grade: Kanae Branch and Devontay Henson

These nominees were recognized for their exceptional contributions to the school, especially in improving student data and promoting a positive school climate. Each nominee exemplifies **excellence** in attendance, behavior, and culture.

- CEO James mentioned to the Board that the AmeriCorps grant was identified to respond to one of the Trump Administration executive orders with specific emphasis on the DEI initiatives – we had to self-certify our stance on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that we are not violating any of the directions of the Trump Administration. We're waiting back to ensure we're in the clear. We also had to provide information about the name Equity Now.

Student Affairs Update (Presented by Ms. Portia Cameron on behalf of Ms. Anita Williams)

Ms. Anita Williams presented the Student Affairs update, highlighting the following key points:

- **Communication Flow for Parent Concerns:**

The following steps were shared for managing parent concerns:

1. **Contact the Teacher:** Parents are encouraged to first reach out to the teacher for classroom-related concerns. Teachers have up to **72 hours** to respond. (We do not encourage this timeframe, we expect them to respond sooner).
 2. **Contact Student Affairs:** If the teacher does not respond within the 72 hours, parents can reach out to Student Affairs at studentaffairs@legendsschool.org for further assistance.
 3. **Contact the Principal:** If there is still no response, parents may contact the Principal for additional support.
- **Communication Journal (CJ) Expectations:**
Ms. Williams emphasized the importance of the **Communication Journal (CJ)** in fostering strong academic habits and accountability:
 - Parents are asked to **check the CJ daily** to ensure completion of homework assignments.
 - The CJ should be used to monitor the expected completion time for each assignment.
 - **Teacher's Stamp:** The teacher's stamp in the CJ indicates that the scholar has correctly recorded their assignments.

Legends EdVentures will be providing a summer program and information will be provided via ParentSquare starting tomorrow.

These tools and guidelines aim to improve communication and ensure scholars' success.

Operation Update (Presented by Mr. Antonio Barr)

Mr. Antonio Barr presented the Operations update, highlighting the following key points:

- Mr. Barr provided an update on the attendance rate:
 - 95.5% for the month of February
 - 3rd Grade has a high chronic absenteeism rate – 20%
- **Mr. Barr provided a Lottery Update for 2025-2026 School Year:**
The lottery for the **2025-2026** school year was opened on **November 1, 2024**, and closed on **February 7, 2025**.
 - **708 students** applied through the lottery, with a focus on filling **100 kindergarten seats**.
 - Current grade-level enrollment and lottery numbers are as follows:
 - Kindergarten: 81 current, 179 lottery applicants
 - 1st Grade: 106 current, 68 lottery applicants
 - 2nd Grade: 105 current, 79 lottery applicants
 - 3rd Grade: 84 current, 74 lottery applicants
 - 4th Grade: 109 current, 61 lottery applicants

- 5th Grade: 104 current, 64 lottery applicants
- 6th Grade: 102 current, 124 lottery applicants
- 7th Grade: 99 current, 43 lottery applicants
- 8th Grade: 98 current, 16 lottery applicants
- **Annual Goal:** The focus remains on student retention to maintain a strong, connected community, with the paper waitlist now open on the school's website.
- CEO James mentioned that the Maryland and PG Alliance of Charter Schools are working closely with the PGCPS to follow the administrative procedures. They have historically not followed the AP and have impacted the ability to meet enrollment targets.
- **Mr. Barr provided several Operations Reminders:**
 - **Lost and Found:** Parents are reminded to label their child's items with their first and last names. Unclaimed items will be donated at the end of each month.
 - **Early Dismissal:** Parents should email Earlydismissal@legendsschools.org in advance with their student's name, grade, and preferred pickup time. A **10-minute grace period** is allowed, with the cutoff time remaining at **1:30 p.m.**
 - **Attendance Issues:** Inaccuracies should be reported via email to attendance@legendsschools.org.
 - **Lunch Balances:** Parents should ensure they add funds to their scholar's **My School Bucks** account weekly. Payments can be made at the school cafeteria or through online payment options. For assistance, contact **Natalie McKisset**.

Financial Education Update (Presented by Mr. Justin DeVose)

Mr. Justin DeVose presented the Financial Education update, highlighting the following key points:

- **Building Wealth for Scholars:**

Mr. DeVose emphasized the importance of early investing to build wealth for students. Key actions to get started include:

 - **Begin investing as soon as possible:** Investing while young provides the best opportunity for growth over time.
 - **Decide how much to invest:** This is determined by the investment goal and the timeframe in which it must be achieved.
 - **Set up an investment account:** There are no minimum amounts required to open an account, and small amounts can be invested.
 - **Choose an investment strategy:** Tailored to savings goals, the amount of money needed, and the timeframe.

- **Identify investment options:** Understanding each instrument and the risks involved is crucial.
- **Custodial Account Engagement:**
 - **Total Students Tracked:** 800
 - **Custodial Accounts Opened:** 272 (34% of tracked students)
 - **Custodial Accounts Funded:** 160 (20% of tracked students)
 - **Custodial Accounts Invested:** 125 (15.62% of tracked students)The engagement statistics reflect growth in participation and investment over the years.
- **Increasing Custodial Investment Accounts:**

The goal is to achieve a **25% increase** in funded custodial accounts by the end of the fiscal year. Monthly online and in-person workshops will be hosted for parents and students, focusing on early investing and providing tutorials for independent guidance.
- **Upcoming Financial Education Sessions:**

Virtual Workshops on 3/13 and 3/27 for a better understanding of how the stock market works and to understand the importance of our focus to Open, Fund and Invest in their scholar's custodial investment accounts.
- A **Global Youth Summit & Shark Tank** event will be held on **April 17, 2025**. Students will have the opportunity to pitch business ideas and learn about entrepreneurship and leadership. <https://www.equitynowinc.org/global-youth-summit>

CEO James talked about why we added Financial Education to the school design. She stressed the importance of Financial Education, entrepreneurship and having various streams of income to help maintain our quality of life and protect their interests at home. With the focus of Financial Liberation.

Academic Update (Presented by Principal Tanisha Dixon, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Ellegood, Ms. Towell)

Mr. Gregory gave the academic testing update.

- MOY growth reports were sent via ParentSquare

Ms. Athens Parker provided an update about the Afterschool Intervention

- 3-8 Literacy and Math
- MCAP Preparation
 - Text Dependent Questions
 - Problem Solving Strategies



Principal Dixon stressed that deliberate reading practice drives growth and asked parents to encourage reading and using the Accelerated Reader program which is free for our students. She shared the AR points goals by grade level.

Principal Dixon also provided at home reading strategies

Principal Ellegood provided the at home math strategies with a QR code.

- Provided parent-focused support resources as well.
- Gave a shout out to the 6th graders who are doing great on iReady!

Mr. Gregory provided some at home MISA/MCAP Strategies and Resources, which will be shared on ParentSquare.

- Also shared an EdTech reminder with the appropriate way to access the Legends Charter School online resources, especially Clever.

Secretary's Report and Public Q&A (Presented by Secretary Aminah Williams)

Publicly Asked Questions and Responses

Please use the link posted on Parent Square to ask your questions in advance. The link can be used throughout the month as questions come up.

It is with a heavy heart that we share the passing of Mr. Troy Wheeler, a beloved founding teacher of Legends Charter School. Mr. Wheeler dedicated his time, talent, and passion to shaping the lives of our scholars, ending his tenure as a third-grade math teacher. His commitment to education and the impact he had on our school community will never be forgotten.

The Wheeler family has given us **permission to share the news of his passing and the details of his funeral services with our teachers and staff.** In accordance with the family's wishes, we ask that you **refrain from sharing this information with anyone else, including scholars.**

Union Bethel A.M.E
6810 Floral Park Road
Brandywine, MD 20613

Viewing: 10:00 AM
Service: 11:00 AM
Saturday, March 8, 2025



Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and all who were touched by his kindness and dedication. May his legacy continue to inspire us all.

Upcoming Events

Please follow the PGCPs on social media and their website for updates.

New Business

None.

Chair Strickland reminded us that we need to be mindful of the current climate and that we sometimes need to shift to support and advocacy.

Chair Strickland thanked the academic team for sharing the at-home resources that are available to the families.

Chair Strickland also encouraged the parent community to help with the recruitment efforts.

Chair Strickland asked if there were any further reports, new business, or questions. There were none.

Chair Strickland recognized Ashari James

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm,

Board Office Contact Information:

Office: 240-455-5900