

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Orlando, FL
October 20, 2022**

Present:

Officers:

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair-elect, Portland Superintendent
Darrel Woo, Secretary/Treasurer, Sacramento School Board

Members:

Siad Ali, Minneapolis School Board
Marcelo Cavazos, Arlington Superintendent
Sharon Contreras, North Carolina A & T State University
Elyse Dashew, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board
Talisa Dixon, Columbus Superintendent
Stephanie Elizalde, Dallas Superintendent
Eric Gordon, Cleveland CEO
Joe Gothard, St. Paul Superintendent
Shavonna Holman, Omaha School Board
Jesus Jara, Clark County Superintendent
Rodney Jordan, Norfolk School Board
Sonja Santelises, Baltimore CEO
Deborah Shanley, Brooklyn College, CUNY Dean
Joyce Wilkerson, Philadelphia School Board
Sylvia Wilson, Pittsburgh School Board

Absent:

Marcia Andrews, Palm Beach County School Board
Valerie Davis, Fresno School Board
Lewis Ferebee, DCPS Chancellor
Kelly Gonez, Los Angeles School Board
Barbara Jenkins, Orange County Superintendent
Megan Kerr, Long Beach School Board
Pedro Martinez, Chicago CEO
Diane Porter, Jefferson County School Board

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair-elect of the Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 4:30pm ET. A quorum was established. Members then introduced themselves and gave a short update on events in their districts.

Minutes

Guadalupe Guerrero presented the minutes of the July 2022 meeting of the Executive Committee in Los Angeles, CA.

A motion to approve the minutes passed without dissent by voice vote.

Appointments and Nominations

No report.

Membership

Joe Gothard gave the report of the Membership Subcommittee. There are currently two applications for membership that we are considering: Little Rock, Arkansas and Montgomery, Alabama. Little Rock meets all membership criteria, but Montgomery does not. The Executive Committee has faced this issue in the past of wanting to admit districts that don't meet the criteria but has ultimately decided (numerous times) not to make exceptions.

A motion to accept Little Rock as a new member, but to deny the membership request of Montgomery, passed by unanimous voice vote.

By-Laws

No report.

Audit

The audit materials include the 2022-23 budget, which is the same as what was presented to the Committee back in July. In terms of dues payments, dues from five districts remain outstanding at this point, although several payments are expected soon. Ray Hart reminded the group that Toronto had previously given up membership, but they are now rethinking this decision, driven by staff members that were engaged in Council activities and resources.

Looking at the report from the first quarter of the current fiscal year, Ray Hart called the group's attention to conference revenue, which has increased significantly. This is due to meetings moving from virtual to in-person, and a great demand for participation in these in-person convenings. He also updated the group on a new Wallace Foundation grant for \$250K to provide support to Council districts around the Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative (ECPI) project.

Finally, Hart reassured the group that the organization has rebalanced its portfolio of investments to buffer against market volatility.

A motion to approve the Audit Subcommittee report passed without dissent by voice vote.

Conferences and Meetings

Ray Hart then reviewed the lineup of upcoming meetings in 2022 and 2023. The Chief Operation Officers (COO) meeting will be held in New Orleans next month, and conference hotel has sold out (as has the hotel for the current fall conference). So this gives a good indication of the interest and demand among districts for attendance at this and other Council convenings.

Hart then discussed the timing of the Chief Finance Officers meeting and a few other job-alike conferences. It has taken a few years to move various conferences back to their typical time slots, and we are still trying to determine how to handle the timing of the COO convening.

The Executive Committee meeting will be held in January in Charlotte, and we now need to select dates and a location for July. One idea discussed was to hold the meeting in Washington, DC to give new members a chance to tour the Council offices and meet with staff.

A motion to hold the summer Executive Committee meeting on July 14 and 15, 2023 in Washington DC passed unanimously by voice vote.

Awards

Ray Hart recognized the nominees and winners of the Council's various awards programs for 2022.

Strategic Plan

In response to a request from the July meeting, dates have been added to the strategic plan update to serve as a record of both how and when the Council has pursued its various goals and objectives. Much of the work is ongoing, so that is also noted.

This section also includes materials recently developed for new members, and this document provides a good overview of the Council's priorities, activities, and member support services.

Ray Hart then discussed extending Mike Casserly's three-year contract as Senior Advisor by six months, to account for the extension of his time as Executive Director. Ray Hart will bring a new contract before the Committee in January to vote on.

In closing, Ray Hart informed the group that this is the last Committee meeting for Siad Ali. Hart thanked him for his support and dedication, particularly in the area of English Language Learner education and the support of immigrant students and families.

Respectfully submitted:

Ray Hart
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
October 22, 2022

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair-elect of the Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 8:40 am ET. A quorum of the Executive Committee was established, and in the event that a quorum of the Board is not reached Chair Guerrero asked them to remain present to ratify all votes. Present members introduced themselves. (A quorum of the Board was later established.)

Minutes

Guadalupe Guerrero presented the minutes of the March 2022 meeting of the Board of Directors in Washington D.C. and the July 2022 meeting of the Executive Committee in Los Angeles, CA.

A motion to approve the minutes passed without dissent by voice vote.

Audit

Darrel Woo asked Ray Hart to give the report of the Audit subcommittee. The audit materials include the 2022-23 budget, which is the same as what was presented to the Committee back in July. In terms of dues payments, dues from five districts remain outstanding at this point, although several payments are expected soon. Ray Hart reminded the group that Toronto had previously given up membership, but they are now rethinking this decision, driven by staff members that were engaged in Council activities and resources.

Looking at the report from the first quarter of the current fiscal year, Ray Hart called the group's attention to conference revenue, which has increased significantly. This is due to meetings moving from virtual to in-person, and a great demand for participation in these in-person convenings. He also updated the group on a new Wallace Foundation grant for \$250K to provide support to Council districts around the Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative (ECPI) project. And he pointed out that revenue from the Harvard ABC Institute is flat, as we offer this professional development opportunity at cost.

Finally, Hart reassured the group that the organization has rebalanced its portfolio of investments to buffer against market volatility.

A motion to approve the Audit Subcommittee report passed without dissent by voice vote.

By-Laws

No report.

Membership

Joe Gothard gave the report of the Membership Subcommittee. This section of the materials includes three membership applications. The first is from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. This district meets the membership criteria, and the Executive Committee voted to accept their membership request at the July meeting, so they are currently a member.

There are also membership requests from Little Rock, Arkansas and Montgomery, Alabama. Little Rock meets the Council's membership criteria, but Montgomery does not. The Subcommittee therefore recommends accepting only the Little Rock request for membership. Gothard then reviewed the Council's membership criteria for new members.

A motion to accept the membership application of Little Rock passed without dissent by voice vote.

Strategic Plan

At the request of the Executive Committee, Council staff has gone back and added dates to our quarterly updates to the strategic plan.

Ray Hart then reviewed the most recent initiatives and member support activities the organization has undertaken, and how these efforts further our long-term goals and commitments. He also introduced a new summary of Council activities developed for new members. This document does a good job of articulating our priorities, initiatives, and portfolio of member support services.

Appointments and Nominations

No report.

Annual Report

Barbara Jenkins, Immediate Past Chair, reviewed highlights from the past year. A copy of the Council's annual report is provided in the Board materials. Members will also be receiving a copy of an individualized member services report that provides a summary of services provided directly to each district, along with an estimate of the return on investment for the dues that members pay. (This will most likely arrive in the spring of 2023. We are adjusting the timing so that we can provide this report alongside annual dues invoices.)

Members then discussed the various challenges they are facing and strategies they are pursuing with federal pandemic relief funds.

Conferences and Meetings

Ray Hart reviewed the lineup of remaining meetings in 2022 and upcoming meetings in 2023. The 2023 fall conference will be held in San Diego, the 2024 conference will be held in Dallas (this was postponed from 2020), the 2025 conference will be held in Philadelphia (this was postponed from 2021), and the 2026 conference will be held in Boston.

Awards

Ray Hart recognized the finalists and recipients of the Council's various awards.

Legislation

Manish Naik provided an update on the latest federal action related to education. Congress is currently adjourned as members are campaigning for the mid-term elections. Before leaving Washington, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution giving themselves until December 16th to pass annual appropriations bills. Both sides are eager to see what happens in the mid-term elections to see which side will come out stronger before continuing negotiations on the spending bills. At the moment, the funding proposals look good and include significant increases for Title I, Title III, and IDEA programs. These increases will likely get whittled down in negotiations and the outcomes of November's elections will determine how far they come down.

Naik shared that the Council is also paying close attention to action in the Supreme Court. On October 31st, the Court will hear oral arguments on the higher education admissions cases involving Harvard University and UNC. The cases are based on the use of race in college admissions. The Council submitted an amicus brief in the cases arguing that continued de facto racial segregation has contributed to persistent economic and educational inequality for African American and Latino students and narrowly tailored race-conscious admissions policies remain necessary in higher education to diversify campuses as long as racial and ethnic achievement gaps persist. The Council's hope is that the eventual decision in these cases would not affect the decision in *PICS v. Seattle School District*. The Council's brief also underscored that the use of narrowly-tailored student assignment policies to address racial isolation remains a compelling governmental interest in elementary and secondary education.

The Supreme Court also recently agreed to hear a special education case at some point in 2023 called *Perez v. Sturgis Public Schools*. In that case, a family of a deaf student settled an IDEA complaint with the school district for postsecondary compensatory education after it was discovered their student did not receive proper accommodations for several years. After settling with the school district, the family sought monetary compensation through the ADA. The district argued the family could not bring suit until the family had exhausted all administrative proceedings under IDEA and lower courts agreed. The Council is currently in discussions with our legal counsel to determine if the organization should submit an amicus brief.

Finally, Naik provided an update on the "Late Liquidation" guidance released by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) at the end of September. ED released a letter and application

template for “Late Liquidation” requests of ESSER-1 funding under the CARES Act, highlighting that funding for ESSER-1 under the CARES Act had to be obligated by September 30, 2022 and that all school districts have an automatic 120 days to liquidate funds that are obligated by the September 30th deadline – no application or extension request is needed. The “Late Liquidation” information provides the possibility of an additional 14 months beyond the 120 days – or a total of 18 months beyond September 30, 2022 – to spend out funds that were obligated by the deadline. So if you need additional time to spend out already-obligated ESSER-1 funds beyond January, you’ll need to discuss that with your state because they are the ones that have to put in the request to ED on districts’ behalf.

Naik reiterated that it appeared that Council districts have spent or obligated all of their ESSER-1 by the deadline, but what ED is doing here is important because they very well may use this same process for ESSER 2 and ESSER 3. They haven’t committed to that and won’t say for sure, but how this liquidation process works for ESSER-1 will be helpful as the obligation dates for ESSER-2 and ESSER-3 approach in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Communications

The communications section of the materials includes a collection of the Council’s latest statements, press releases, and articles. There are also update reports on the organization’s social media presence over the past few months, copies of recent issues of the *Urban Educator*, an agenda from the Public Relations Executives (PRE) meeting held in July, and a communications metrics benchmark survey. Finally, members will find a copy of a progress assessment survey at the end of the section. This is part of a series of assessment documents, across topical and functional areas, that were designed and released to help districts gauge the strength and progress they have made in planning, implementing, and overseeing their investment of federal relief funds.

Research

Ray Hart introduced and thanked the Council research team. This section of the Board materials starts with an overview of the Council’s research activities, including updates from the TUDA task force, the latest report on academic key performance indicators (including links to the academic KPI dashboard), and a recent RAND school district survey, which includes data collected on superintendent tenure, salary, job satisfaction, etc.

Ray Hart then called the group’s attention to data reports from the assessment consortia, including Curriculum Associates’ iReady, NWEA’s MAP, and Renaissance’s Star reading and math assessments. These ‘assessment consortia,’ or groupings of districts have been assembled according to the assessments they employ to enable districts who use the same assessments to query their peers around implementation, best practices, etc. The Council is also working with each of these companies to produce reports specific to Council member districts. In general, the data shows impressive growth in a number of areas. The data also suggests that declines from the pandemic were greater in the elementary grades

than in later grades. In addition to providing networking and data, this is an opportunity to push back on assessment developers to ensure urban district needs are met.

NAEP TUDA results will be released this coming week, and the primary challenge will be to provide context for the media and public to help them understand and interpret the data.

Finally, this section ends with a copy of a progress assessment survey designed to help Research Directors and departments gauge their work in tracking and evaluating the efficacy of their district's ARP investments and recovery activities. This is part of a series of assessment survey documents across topical and functional areas created to help districts gauge the strength and progress they have made in planning, implementing, and overseeing the use of federal relief funds.

Task Force on Achievement and Professional Development

Elyse Dashew gave the report of the Task Force on Achievement and Professional Development. She started by introducing her task force co-chairs and reviewing the mission of the group.

The meeting Wednesday highlighted the resources, tools, and support provided by the Council to assist districts in curriculum and instruction. The achievement and professional development section of the materials starts with an update and overview of academic department projects and activities. The academic KPI report and dashboard provides a wealth of information districts can use to benchmark their progress against other similar school systems. She then reviewed some trends and patterns we are seeing in the data across districts.

Participants at the task force meeting also received a preview of how the Council and member districts were planning to handle the release of TUDA scores on Monday, and how to contextualize the data. And there were spotlight presentations from Birmingham and Guilford on what they are doing in the areas of ELA and Math, respectively.

In the next few months, the Council will be releasing a second edition of the curriculum framework, and information and draft excerpts from this document were shared.

Details were also shared on upcoming resources and convenings including a math instruction summit, ongoing virtual role alike calls for various curriculum and instruction staff, and a series of professional learning spotlights focused on key features from the upcoming curriculum framework.

The final item in this section is a copy of an interim progress assessment for gauging the efficacy and impact of instructional investments of federal relief funds.

Task Force on English Language Learners and Bilingual Education

Task Force Co-Chair Siad Ali thanked the Council for providing support, information, and guidance to districts in supporting immigrant and bilingual students, highlighting the academic and social-emotional needs of immigrants and refugees arriving in urban districts. He cited the ELL data dashboard in particular. He then introduced his co-chair Marcelo Cavazos, who thanked the Council staff for their support and praised the work of the task force.

This section of the materials starts with an overview of the activities of the ELL department, and the task force meeting touched on all of this work. Specifically, the task force studied a sample enrollment form, highlighting the potential need for guidelines from the Council in this area. There was also a presentation on a family support center bringing wraparound services to students and families.

The ELL section of the board materials also includes information on the development of writing courses on the Professional Learning Platform, an agenda from the most recent BIRE meeting—including a 3Ls pre-conference session, and a report on dyslexia screening. This came about from requests from member district staff for guidance in this area, given the challenge of over-identification of English learners.

Task Force on Black and Latino Young Men and Boys and Task Force on Black and Latina Young Women and Girls

Joe Gothard gave the report for the Task Force on Black and Latino Young Men and Boys and Task Force on Black and Latina Young Women and Girls. The meetings on Wednesday featured powerful presentations and deep discussions on achievement and discipline data. It is clear we need to get vocal, and to get strategic about how we apply the data.

There were three district presentations at the task force meeting, including a presentation from Dallas Independent School District on their literacy work, a presentation from Duval County Public Schools on their Black Male Collective and paraeducator pathway for students, and Milwaukee Public Schools on the work and guiding principles of their Office of Black and Latino Achievement.

This task force has begun to pivot in their work to concentrate on disproportionality in three areas: performance, access, and discipline. They are hoping that this added clarity around goals will help advance the work.

Barbara Jenkins then brought up data and trends specifically in the area of AP participation and success, highlighting the importance of providing access and school-based advocates to ensure that students have full access to advanced coursework. This should be something we as districts return our attention to now that we are back to school and working to address the impact of the pandemic on student achievement trajectories.

Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management, and Finance

Ray Hart gave the report on the Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management, and Finance. He introduced Willie Burroughs, Bob Carlson, AJ Crabill, and Michael Hinojosa, the Council's first Superintendent-in-Residence.

The leadership section of the materials begins with an agenda from the task force meeting. The Council has identified a set of coaches to provide support to superintendents as needed and as requested. This is a fee-based support service, but we have capped these fees. In June, we held a superintendent planning retreat to gather input on critical areas impacting superintendent success and longevity and help develop and shape the support the Council provides to current and rising leaders.

The Board materials also include information on the Harvard ABC Institute; an overview of management services; copies of two recent strategic support team reviews; and interim progress assessments for gauging investments in facilities and operations, technology, and leadership and human capital management, as well as the financial management and school board monitoring of ARP investments.

Several board members then shared their experiences with governance coaching for school boards and thanked the Council for providing this support.

There was a request for additional guidance around school safety.

Wrap up

Guadalupe Guerrero and Ray Hart then presented a plaque to Barbara Jenkins for her leadership and service as Immediate Past Chair, and for her many years on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Ray Hart
Executive Director