

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS
MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
San Diego, CA
October 26, 2023

Present:

Officers:

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair, Portland Superintendent
Marcia Andrews, Chair-Elect, Palm Beach County School Board
Sonja Santelises, Secretary/Treasurer, Baltimore CEO
Kelly Gonez, Immediate Past Chair, Los Angeles School Board

Members:

Jerry Almendarez, Santa Ana Superintendent
Jill Baker, Long Beach Superintendent
Sabrina Bazzo, San Diego School Board
Sharon Contreras, North Carolina A & T State University, College of Education
Brandon Craig, Cincinnati School Board
Elyse Dashew, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board
Valerie Davis, Fresno School Board
Stephanie Elizalde, Dallas Superintendent
Susan Enfield, Washoe County Superintendent
Joe Gothard, St. Paul Superintendent
Shavonna Holman, Omaha School Board
Jesus Jara, Clark County Superintendent
Rodney Jordan, Norfolk School Board
Roger León, Newark Superintendent
Alex Marrero, Denver Superintendent
Christina Martinez, San Antonio School Board
Deborah Shanley, Brooklyn College School of Education
Mary Skipper, Boston Superintendent
Joyce Wilkerson, Philadelphia School Board
Stacey Woolley, Tulsa School Board

Absent:

Lewis Ferebee, District of Columbia Chancellor
Diane Porter, Jefferson County School Board

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair of the Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. 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 2023 meeting of the Executive Committee in Washington, DC.

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

Appointments and Nominations

No report. Ray Hart reviewed the leadership structure of the organization, and our commitment to ensuring that the Executive Committee reflects gender, racial, and geographic diversity, and is evenly split between board members and superintendents.

Membership

No report.

By-Laws

No report.

Audit

Ray Hart gave the report of the Audit Subcommittee. The Audit section includes the following materials—

The Audit section of the Committee materials includes:

- Combined report on General Operations and Categorical Programs
 - Preliminary fourth quarter report for 2022-23. *Ray Hart pointed out that our preliminary revenue over expenses comes to about \$58K. He explained that the \$700K+ decrease comes from paying down grant funds, which are recorded as revenue in the year that they are received, then recorded as expenditures in subsequent years. We are now negotiating an extension of our grant support.*
- General Operations Budget Report, Preliminary Totals for FY 2022-23
 - Dues information for 2022-23. *All districts paid their dues last year, with exception of two districts with waived fees. Toronto did not pay dues, but they have indicated they are interested in returning.*
 - Audited general operating budget report for 2021-22
 - Approved Budget for FY 2022-23
 - Preliminary expenses for FY 2022-23
 - List of operational expense types

- Categorical Programs Budget Report (Preliminary Totals for FY 2022-23).
 - Categorical projects. *Accounts 21 (Strategic Support Teams) and 22 (Governance Support) show a negative balance. Some of this is due to outstanding accounts receivable, but in general we run a deficit in providing this support. Despite charging districts a nominal fee, it is really only a portion of the costs. You will also see deficits for the accounts associated with grants from the Gates Foundation and Wallace Foundation. Again, this is us spending down the second year of these grants.*
 - Asset Allocations, including an investment schedule and investment portfolio by Asset Class. *As the Council's investments mature, we pull them out and reinvest. All of our investment allocations are within their strategic targets.*
- General Operating Budget for First Quarter of FY 2023-24
 - Membership Dues Structure by Tiers (showing a 7.1% increase this year from 2022-23 dues)
 - Status of membership dues as of October 2023. *A handful of districts have not yet paid, but this is mostly because of payment schedules/procedures.*
 - General Operating Budget by function
 - General Operating Budget by expense line
- Categorical Programs Budget Report for First Quarter of FY 2023-24. Special Projects Account will be renamed the Casserly Institute as it houses the Coaching of Superintendents, Aspiring Superintendents, and SOFG efforts.
- Asset Allocations, including an investment schedule and investment portfolio by Asset Class. *As the Council's investments mature, we pull them out and reinvest. All of our investment allocations are within their strategic targets.*
- A copy of the Council's Investments Policy and Guidelines

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

Conferences and Meetings

Ray Hart reviewed the lineup of remaining meetings in 2023 and upcoming meetings in 2024. The Committee will next meet on January 19 & 20, 2024 in Long Beach, CA, and on July 19 & 20, 2024 in St. Paul, MN. We are currently entertaining letters of interest in hosting the Fall Conference in 2027.

Awards

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

Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan was developed in 2018 and lays out a roadmap for the organization through 2024. There are quarterly updates on the work done to reach each of these goals.

Ray Hart then reviewed the Council’s mission, goals, and strategies, as well as the most recent initiatives and member support activities the organization has undertaken, and how these efforts further our long-term commitments. He also introduced a 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.

Finally, this section ends with information on 2 current partnerships, which the Council rarely and cautiously undertakes. These include—

1. A partnership with The College Board aimed at expanding two aspects of their AP coursework. These are unique AP courses that don’t necessarily lead to college credits (although they can)—instead, they are gateway courses to better prepare students for AP coursework. Specifically, the courses include an AP computer science course and an AP seminar course for 10th graders that opens them up to project-based learning. (This would be a replacement for English 10.)
2. A partnership with Kaplan aimed at creating a platform for students in Council member districts. This is currently being piloted to see if it is valuable.

Respectfully submitted:

Ray Hart
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
San Diego, CA
October 28, 2023

Guadalupe Guerrero, Chair of the Board of Directors, called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. Present members introduced themselves, and a quorum of the Board was established.

Minutes

Guadalupe Guerrero presented the minutes of the March 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors and July 2023 meeting of the Executive Committee in Washington DC.

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

Appointments and Nominations

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Membership

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2. A partnership with Kaplan aimed at creating a platform for students in Council member districts. This is currently being piloted to see if it is valuable.

In response to a question, Ray Hart clarified that the Council also frequently aligns its work and advocacy efforts with organizations and associations such as ALAS, CCSO, Chiefs for Change, and AASA on an ad hoc basis.

Annual Report

Ray Hart thanked Kelly Gonez, Immediate Past Chair, for her support and leadership over the past year. A copy of the Council's annual report was provided in the Board materials.

Conferences and Meetings

Ray Hart reviewed the lineup of remaining meetings in 2023 and upcoming meetings in 2024. The 2024 conference will be held in Dallas (this was postponed from 2020), the 2025 conference will be held in Philadelphia, and the 2026 meeting will be held in Boston. We are currently entertaining letters of interest in hosting the Fall Conference in 2027.

Awards

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

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, information on this year's Bernard Harris scholarship winners, copies of recent issues of the *Urban Educator*, an award that the Council received for the *Urban Educator*, a draft of an upcoming crisis communications guide, the latest Public Relations Executives (PRE) survey report, an agenda from the PRE meeting held in July, and a screenshot of the relaunched Council website.

The group then discussed strategies for addressing chronic absenteeism at the local and national level, as well as issues concerning school safety. Ray Hart provided an update on the Council's work with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to release a joint blueprint for action.

Legislation

Manish Naik provided an update on the latest federal action related to education. In response to a member question, General Counsel Mary Lawson discussed the potential for a K12 student assignment case similar to the ruling this year on race conscious admissions in higher education.

Research

The research section of the Board materials starts with an overview of the Council's research activities. Ray Hart highlighted a number of resources/activities, including dashboards that help districts track and benchmark demographic, enrollment, and attendance data; a Gates Foundation research partnership grant program; information on the Department of Education's regional advisory committees; updates on the work and role of the TUDA task force; a copy of *Between the Lines*, a two decade look at student performance on NAEP; a literature review on the impact of grade configurations (conducted for the School District of Philadelphia); a NAEP item analysis; an ESSER survey; a RAND survey; and information on charter school comparisons, including a comparison of demographics.

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 the task force members 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.

Participants at the task force meeting earlier this week also received the second, updated edition of the Council's curriculum framework and heard from Clark County and Baltimore on improvement efforts.

In the task force meeting in July, we discussed the need for work in this area to be more targeted to a more general audience, such as school board members. Currently the resources being released are incredibly technical, as they are intended for practitioners doing the work, not for a board audience. The Task Force therefore suggested releasing resources and guidance that could assist board members, and we're already starting to see this shift in the presentations and resources being shared.

Ray Hart then reviewed a few additional items, including information about a recent Math Summit, information on monthly content directors' meetings, and a review of the Little Rock academic program. He again highlighted the release of the second edition of the curriculum framework, and provided details on the updates that have been made and the structure of the document.

Task Force on English Language Learners and Bilingual Education

Ray Hart gave the report of the Task Force on English Language Learners and Bilingual Education. The ELL section of the Board materials starts with an overview of the Council's activities in this area. In particular, Ray Hart lifted up the efforts of member districts to support and educate newcomer students, and the resources available to help them in this work. Recent publications include *A Framework for Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction for English Learners*, a report on dyslexia screening, and a draft of an upcoming resource on supporting refugee students. In addition, the materials include information on pathway writing course development, a working group that was assembled to review foundational literacy skills instructional materials, and a save-the-date for next year's Bilingual, Immigrant, and Refugee Education (BIRE) meeting in Minneapolis, MN.

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 meeting on Wednesday featured powerful presentations and deep discussions on achievement and discipline data. The progress report provided in the Board materials and at this week's task force meeting provides powerful evidence of the needs and urgency for action in this area. In addition to presentations by Council staff, participants heard presentations from LAUSD and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management, and Finance

Joyce Wilkerson gave the report on the Task Force on Leadership, Governance, Management, and Finance. It was noted that much of the work has been covered and discussed at various other parts of the conversation, but Wilkerson highlighted the aspiring superintendents cohorts and the Council's governance support and coaching work—and specifically how these efforts are addressing the need for training and a deeper bench of future leaders.

Ray Hart then presented the leadership and governance materials.

Wrap up

Guadalupe Guerrero and Ray Hart then thanked the San Diego superintendent and team for hosting this year's annual conference.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Ray Hart
Executive Director