

**Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA)**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**November 4, 2021**  
**By Video Conference**

**Meeting Recording**

**<https://tmapchs->**

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**Board Members in Attendance:** Bruce Berman, Jerry Epstein, Dan Gordon, Mark Harrison, Aleisha James, Ken Jones, Andy Rosenberg, Jonathan Stoel, Laurence Telson.

**Staff in Attendance:** Raymond Weeden, Executive Director; David Schlossman, Chief Operating Officer; Faith Oviedo, Director of Development and Communications

Mr. Stoel called the meeting to order at 8:06am. A quorum was present.

Mr. Schlossman, at Mr. Stoel's request, provided an update on retirement plan research. A group of employees will meet later in November and plans to make recommendations for the Board to consider at a meeting in December.

Next, Mr. Weeden reported on faculty and student matters:

- His team is starting a compensation study in January, 2022, to look at the right mix of salary and benefits to retain staff.
- The first quarter has ended. Attendance is about 85% but has increased in recent weeks and hopefully will continue to improve. Over the course of the school year, 110 people have been impacted by COVID (either as positive cases, close contacts, or employees having to work remotely due to family emergencies), but there has been a dramatic reduction in cases or affected people in recent weeks. Mitigation strategies seem to be effective.
- On November 1, when DC's school employee vaccination mandate went into effect, all but five employees were fully vaccinated, and the school as an institution fully complies with the Mayor's orders. Three individuals had medical exemptions, one individual was waiting to receive the second dose, and one individual declined to get vaccinated so they were placed on unpaid leave and will be terminated December 1 if they don't choose to get vaccinated or seek an exemption. Two other team members left TMA due to stresses related to the pandemic.
- Mr. Weeden and other managers are working to ensure a positive culture supporting all employees during the return to in-person work.

Mr. Stoel said some parents have asked if they will have more access to the school. He asked also whether there are staffing resources TMA needs to fill.

Mr. Weeden responded:

- TMA is seeking in-house substitutes or teaching assistants and other creative staffing solutions.
- TMA is working to balance parent involvement with COVID-19 best practices that limit visitors (those not regular in the building).
- TMA recently held a fall festival which included offering parents a tour of the building.
- Parent-teacher conferences are still conducted via zoom or phone.
- Vaccination among the school community—which reflects the Wards 7 and 8 vaccination rate of only roughly 27% overall—constitutes another challenge to frequent in-person family activities. TMA is continuing to try to support vaccination efforts in Ward 8.

Ms. James said her daughters have reported that many of their peers want to be vaccinated but cannot do it on their own because they are minors and their family members do not want them to get vaccinated.

Ms. Telson asked about vaccination and family outreach for vaccinations. Mr. Weeden noted that the school has conducted outreach and held vaccination clinics. School staff are currently holding athlete-specific clinics and asking students to encourage their peers to get vaccinated.

Mr. Weeden said TMA has 347 students this year. The enrollment target for next year is 360. The largest grade level is 9th grade (120 students) because many students (30) did not pass their 9th grade classes the prior year despite credit-recovery opportunities.

Mr. Stoel asked whether upper grade students are leaving for other DC schools. Mr. Weeden said more students are leaving because they're moving out of the District, often because their families can no longer afford to live here.

Mr. Jones asked if the changing population of the city will impact the school enrollment. Mr. Weeden said TMA's recruitment strategy has shifted in response, including expanding targeted outreach to more middle schools.

Mr. Stoel asked if TMA was having problems hiring, and Mr. Weeden said they are still able to hire qualified candidates but that it requires time and energy to go through the recruitment process.

Mr. Stoel said the December meeting would be virtual but that he hoped meetings would be in person beginning in the Spring if possible. He asked for board and staff members to share their feelings with him individually.

The meeting adjourned, following appropriate motions by the Trustees, at 8:35am.