

**Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA)**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**February 10, 2022**  
**By Video Conference**

**Meeting Recording:**

[https://tmapchs-org.zoom.us/rec/play/Rpg1LnXfCUOsc3zo9pa\\_XLcO-J8-ehTk4YjQYFlxg8SUP8dFbj7Rc\\_2QX2oCfI3Kz5xtMbhcGuVYKK7Z.ch\\_TxjuREXJIS6k?continueMode=true&\\_xzm\\_rtaid=z-yuNSNXTXmQADhrPGY8mQ.1648504765843.e688d75ffcac745892a01f8a7c8e68f0&\\_xzm\\_rhtaId=203](https://tmapchs-org.zoom.us/rec/play/Rpg1LnXfCUOsc3zo9pa_XLcO-J8-ehTk4YjQYFlxg8SUP8dFbj7Rc_2QX2oCfI3Kz5xtMbhcGuVYKK7Z.ch_TxjuREXJIS6k?continueMode=true&_xzm_rtaid=z-yuNSNXTXmQADhrPGY8mQ.1648504765843.e688d75ffcac745892a01f8a7c8e68f0&_xzm_rhtaId=203)

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**Board Members in Attendance:** Danielle Bierzynski, Jinah Bryant, Jerry Epstein, Dan Gordon, Mark Harrison, Aleisha James, Ken Jones, Richard Roe, Andy Rosenberg, Jonathan Stoel, Laurence Telson.

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

Mr. Stoel called the meeting to order at 8:07am. A quorum was present.

Mr. Stoel deferred approval of the minutes until the end of the meeting.

Mr. Weeden presented the **Executive Director's** report. Highlights included the following:

- In celebration of Black History month, TMA is highlighting TMA's music teacher who is an opera singer, students who have earned 300 community service hours, and students who have launched their own businesses.
- First semester ended January 21. Despite numerous challenges from COVID-19 and unpredictable building repair needs, Mr. Weeden said the school community has rebounded significantly and demonstrated resilience.
- TMA will sponsor its Civil Rights trip in the spring. The school will support any 11th or 12th grade student and teacher-chaperone who wishes to participate at no cost to them. All participants must be vaccinated.
- TMA leadership is examining the school's compensation structure, in collaboration with Promise54. While the present compensation system is competitive in the market, and while leadership has for several years worked to ensure transparency and equity concerning salaries, the compensation team is working to make the system still more equitable.
- In planning SY 2022-2023, TMA is discussing whether the current bell schedule is effective and sustainable. Mr. Weeden is working with Simon Rodberg to explore options for improvements to scheduling while remaining compliant with OSSE requirements.
- Looking at staffing for SY 2022-2023, administration has already begun asking current staff about their intent to return and recruiting applicants to fill anticipated openings.

Mr. Gordon asked if Mr. Weeden felt confident about staffing retention for the next school year. Mr. Weeden said TMA is currently overstaffed because of additional hires for intervention, so there may be some attrition but he is confident the school can retain many effective staff and hire qualified replacements as needed.

Mr. Stoel asked about vaccination rates for students. Mr. Weeden said having the COVID-19 testing on site has been helpful. Link Communications will be assisting the school with communication to families about the need for vaccination for various events and to encourage overall vaccination. DC has said all students must be vaccinated to attend school in 2022-2023. The consulting firm will be contacting about 240 families.

Ms. Bryant asked if the requirement is two vaccinations or three vaccinations. Mr. Weeden said the current language is “up-to-date” vaccinations, which now means two shots for students.

Ms. Telson said she was impressed with TMA’s efforts, and asked if TMA tracked the number of people coming to the site for COVID-19 testing. Mr. Weeden said TMA does not receive any reports about how many people are getting tested from the school vs. the community. The Curative kiosk in front of the school is a private business to which TMA offers space, and it must observe confidentiality.

Mr. Jones said he wondered if seniors would get vaccinated because of college requirements. He also said he was interested to see how the city’s elimination of mask mandates affected TMA, and what the approach would be to vaccination as COVID-19 becomes endemic rather than a pandemic.

Mr. Weeden said he expected that DC would continue to require masks in schools through the end of the school year. He anticipates that TMA will continue to follow DC Department of Health recommendations.

Mr. Weeden said a student brought a BB gun to school, an incident that the school resolved quickly. While school leadership is taking the opportunity to review security options, the school will make changes, if any, in a deliberative manner to balance vigilance with preserving trust within the school community. Ms. James said she appreciated Mr. Weeden’s communications and she followed his recommendations about talking with her children about gun safety.

Mr. Stoel mentioned that many students have received college acceptances and scholarships. Mr. Weeden said acceptances and scholarships are approximately on par with pre-COVID-19 rates, and that the waiving of SAT requirements by many colleges has helped students present themselves in a more holistic way. He said more TMA students are taking college classes earlier in high school.

Mr. Harrison asked about students’ ability to make in-person college visits. Mr. Weeden said TMA has arranged several virtual campus visits, and some students have visited campuses in person. Ms. James said her daughter has gone on campus visits recently, and that colleges required proof of vaccination and compliance with COVID-19 protocols.

Ms. Telson asked about the status of the mentorship program for students. Mr. Weeden said the mentorship program is active.

Mr. Gordon introduced the **Academics Committee** Report, and asked Mr. Weeden to provide details.

- Unsurprisingly given pandemic disruptions, students struggled during the first semester. Teachers and staff have worked hard to provide interventions whenever possible. School leadership has worked to better support teachers by providing coaching, co-teaching, and teaching modeling.
- District-wide testing will be conducted in the spring, for the first time since 2019. Scores will be taken as a point-in-time marker to help the school re-evaluate for the next school year.
- Administration is looking at teachers who may be good teacher-leaders and school leaders to provide training to educators.
- Ten teachers are receiving individual coaching from Julia Poole.

Mr. Gordon asked where the learning gaps were appearing. Mr. Weeden said the larger problem is a lack of appropriate student behavior. Attendance is not good. He attributes this to the fact that students may be working jobs they began during the pandemic, and that students are not used to daily attendance. Mr. Weeden said a variety of other factors may be involved, including transportation challenges and weather.

Ms. Bryant asked if attendance is impacted by COVID-19 protocols. Mr. Weeden said he does not think so.

Ms. Bryant asked about the evening credit recovery program. Mr. Weeden said that, thus far for the first round, 20% of students who started the program have completed it. He said the school is still assessing students' progress.

Ms. James asked how many seniors are on track to graduate. Mr. Weeden said all seniors are on track but some may need to complete credit recovery first or may graduate at the end of the summer.

Ms. Telson asked about TMA's mental health offerings. Mr. Weeden said all TMA's staff and contracted clinicians are fully booked because students are taking advantage of opportunities for counseling and support. TMA's Wellness Team meets every two weeks to assess student needs.

Mr. Epstein presented the **Governance Committee** Report, noting in particular that board members need to complete and return conflict of interest forms to come via DocuSign by February 25.

Mr. Stoel said some members have submitted names of potential board candidates and encouraged the board to continue to suggest people and for individuals to talk with prospective board members.

Ms. Telson asked about recruiting an African-American male parent to the board. Board members discussed the challenges of recruiting parent-members, given the competing demands on their time and noting that the challenge is widespread among nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Jones introduced the **Finance Committee** Report, which included an update on the retirement plan process and the financial forecast.

Mr. Schlossman presented the financial report, which included the following:

- Mayor Bowser announced a 5.9% increase in per pupil base for next year.
- The board has approved the new retirement plan from Vanguard. Employees will be able to make elections by late spring.
- The board needs to review and approve the plan document and service agreement, which can be done in a special meeting or the decision can be delegated to a committee. The board needs to agree on a plan to review and approve.

Mr. Epstein said the full board should review and approve documents. Mr. Jones said a special board meeting would not be long and would only include a vote on approval.

Mr. Stoel said the board understands the importance of facilitating this process.

- FY22 forecast is based on data ending December 31, 2021, details of which were shared with the finance committee and board.
- Forecast bottom line is \$148K less favorable than the budget, a projection similar to that made following the first quarter. Changes are largely pandemic related.

Mr. Jones said the finance committee has discussed future finances based on the prospect of fewer high school students in the District. Mr. Weeden said TMA received 551 applications through MySchoolDC, of which 298 have ranked TMA in their top three schools. This suggests TMA would be able to return to previous enrollment numbers. The number of returning students also depends on the success of current students.

Mr. Jones contrasted the 5.9% increase in student funding from the District with the recent Consumer Price Index increase of 7.1%. Mr. Schlossman agreed, noting that the per pupil funding increase is a testament to the Mayor's and the city's investment in education, but that current high inflation rates make it a solid base for the FY23 budget, not a windfall.

Mr. Stoel concluded discussion of financials by noting that the school will draw modestly upon savings to support current year expenditures, which is not typical but that achieving the mission of the school is more important right now. Mr. Schlossman concurred, noting that the school is using pandemic support funds received earlier (without which the school's planning and spending during the pandemic likely would have been curtailed to the detriment of employees and students).

Mr. Rosenberg presented the **Development Committee** report, which included the following:

- The showcase gala will be Thursday, May 19 to be held both indoors and outdoors. The theme will be focused on highlighting student leaders. Save-the-date invitations should be sent by the end of the month.
- Mr. Rosenberg and Ms. Oviedo have met with prominent philanthropists about possible scholarship opportunities.
- End-of-year appeal brought in \$28,000, bringing YTD contributions to more than \$80,000.
- There's been an increase in grant funding.
- Two parent blogs (featuring Ms. Bryant and Ms. James) were published on the website that are being used in the community and in fundraising.

Mr. Stoel invited public comments, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. There were no public comments.

Mr. Stoel asked for board members to review the previous meetings' minutes. Following board review, Mr. Epstein made a motion to approve the November 4, 2021, and December 9, 2021, minutes. Ms. Bierzynski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Stoel asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Harrison made the motion. Mr. Jones seconded. The motion carried. Mr. Stoel adjourned the meeting at 9:35am.