

**The Next Step (El Próxmo Paso) Public Charter School | January 12, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE** (☒ if present, ☐ if absent)

**Board Members:**

- ☒ Melissa McKnight (Chair)
- ☒ Steve Cartwright (Vice Chair)
- ☒ Shawn Richardson (Secretary)
- ☒ John Ingold (Treasurer)
- ☒ Naomi Watson
- ☒ Sarah Lehar
- ☐ Fernando Mejía (Student Rep)
- ☐ Housnatou Vologuem (Student Rep)
- ☒ Sahira Fernandez (Staff Rep)
- ☒ Michael Cuellar (Staff Rep)

**Staff:**

- ☒ Juan Carlos Martinez (Acting Executive Director/Consultant)
- ☒ Taunya Melvin

The meeting was opened to members of the public.

## MEETING MINUTES

Chair, Melissa McKnight, opened the meeting at 7:01pm ET followed by Shawn Richardson, Secretary, conducting roll call to establish quorum.

### Roll Call

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa McKnight (Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Lehar
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Cartwright (Vice Chair)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fernando Mejía (Student Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shawn Richardson (Secretary)	<input type="checkbox"/> Housnatou Vologuem (Student Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Ingold (Treasurer)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sahira Fernandez (Staff Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Naomi Watson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Cuellar (Staff Rep)

### Welcome, Opening Remarks, Approval of Minutes from the December Board meeting

Melissa welcomed those in attendance, provided an overview of the meeting agenda and reminded those in attendance that the Board will enter closed session at the end of the meeting.

### Board Vote: To approve the December 2021 Board meeting minutes

Motion to Approve: John Second: Sarah Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

### Board Update

Melissa announced that Sahira will be stepping down as Board Staff Representative. Melissa will reach out to a staff member who has expressed interest in serving on the Board. With Shawn's departure from the Board, Naomi has expressed interest in serving as Secretary and will be presented for Board approval.

### Board Vote: To approve Naomi Watson as Secretary of TNS Board of Trustees

Motion to Approve: Shawn Second: Steve Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

### Acting Executive Director Update

Juan Carlos provided an update on enrollment, COVID-19 related matters, and staffing. PCSB's final approval of enrollment projections for next school year remains at 353 despite several appeals. Mayor Bowser mandated for school staff and students to produce a negative COVID-19 test in order to return to school/work post-holiday break. TNS distributed rapid COVID-19 antigen test kits on January 3 and 4. TNS remains open for in-person learning and random testing of 30% of the student body will continue on a weekly basis. Management will be moving forward with restructuring of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) as searches have not produced candidates suitable for the Deputy CAO and Principal roles. The co-principal model will be reinstated and filled by two internal employees. There are currently 13 vacancies with several other staff departures on the way due to non-compliance with the vaccination requirement and resignations for personal reasons. That will result in 18 vacancies. Juan Carlos also provided an update on other matters including the approval of the Soar Formula Grant and the engagement of a firm to assist with staff background checks which is a requirement for compliance.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

Melissa presented to the Board an updated COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement. The updated vaccination requirement added the requirement for staff and Board members to get boosters. The Board engaged in a discussion on staff time off to get boosters and adding flexibility to the effective date to account for delays in appointments and availability of boosters. It was suggested to add language, "within 4 weeks of eligibility or as supply allows," to the requirement rather than an effective date,

### Board Vote: To approve the updated COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement with the addition of language, "within 4 weeks of eligibility or as supply allows."

Motion to Approve: Steve Second: Michael Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

### Therapy Source Contract

As a follow-up from the December meeting, a revised Therapy Source contract was presented for a vote. John provided an overview of the revisions made to the contract that TNS staff was able to address with the vendor.

**Board Vote: To approve the Therapy Source contract for the outlined services**

Motion to Approve: Sahira Second: Shawn Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

**Remote Work Policy**

Melissa and Juan Carlos revisited the Remote Work Policy which was brought up in a previous board meeting. The policy is not ready for Board approval but was revisited so Board members can have an opportunity to discuss. The Board engaged in a discussion on the need for the policy.

**Finance Committee**

John provided an update on the financials. The October and November financials from EdOps were provided in the Board pre-reads. TNS is still on track for a net positive and the financials are in good standing.

**Search Committee Update**

Sarah thanked all those who were involved in the search process and provided an update on the search for the permanent ED. Working with HYA, the Board narrowed down the candidate pool to two candidates after staff and the Board interviewed the top five candidates. A communication to staff on the selected new ED will be emailed to staff on Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Governance Committee**

Sarah presented the MSM Global Culture and Climate Proposal for Board approval on behalf of the Governance Committee. Three firms were contacted, and two proposals were received to assist TNS assess allegations of discriminatory treatment and concerns of erosion of culture. Due to the urgency of this need, it did not permit the time for a competitive bidding process.

**Board Vote: To approve the MSM Global proposal/contract to conduct an organizational climate & DEI needs assessment**

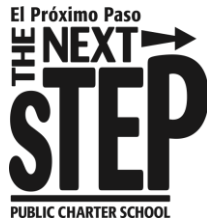
Motion to Approve: Shawn Second: Sahira Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

**Adjourn**

**Board Vote: To close the open session of the meeting and enter into closed session**

Motion to Approve: Steve Second: Shawn Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Sahira Fernandez – Aye
Naomi Watson – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye

The Board meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.



**The Next Step (El Próxímo Paso) Public Charter School | February 9, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE** (☒ if present, ☐ if absent)

**Board Members:**

- ☒ Melissa McKnight (Chair)
- ☒ Steve Cartwright (Vice Chair)
- ☒ Naomi Watson (Secretary)
- ☒ John Ingold (Treasurer)
- ☒ Sarah Lehar
- ☐ Fernando Mejía (Student Rep)
- ☐ Housnatou Vologuem (Student Rep)
- ☒ Michael Cuellar (Staff Rep)

**New Board Members**

- ☒ Carlos Hernandez
- ☒ Mario Marquez (Staff Rep)

**Staff:**

- ☒ Juan Carlos Martinez (Acting Executive Director/Consultant)
- ☒ Taunya Melvin

The meeting was opened to members of the public.

## MEETING MINUTES

Chair, Melissa McKnight, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm ET followed by Naomi Watson, Secretary, conducting roll call to establish quorum.

### Roll Call

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melissa McKnight (Chair)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Cuellar (Staff Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Cartwright (Vice Chair)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fernando Mejía (Student Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Ingold (Treasurer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Housnatou Vologuem (Student Rep)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Naomi Watson (Secretary)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Lehar	

### Welcome, Opening Remarks, Approval of Minutes from the January Board meeting

Melissa welcomed those in attendance, provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Melissa noted a change in the agenda. A decision was made to move the voting on a remote work policy to the following meeting to ensure the new ED had time to review and provide feedback prior to the board.

### Board Vote: To approve the January 2021 Board meeting minutes

Motion to Approve: Michael Cuellar Second: Steve Cartwright Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
Naomi Watson – Aye	
Sarah Lehar - Aye	

### Board Update

Melissa announced there are two new potential board members for the boards consideration and vote today.

Carlos Hernandez's resume was shared with the Board in advance of the meeting and Carlos introduced himself to the board and the floor was given to board members to ask questions. Michael asked about Carlo's interest in serving on the board and Carlos shared that through his wife he understands the importance of leadership and wanted the opportunity to give back to a city that has given so much to him.

**Board Vote: To approve Carlos Hernandez as a Board Member of TNS Board of Trustees**

Motion to Approve: John Ingold Second: Naomi Watson Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
John Ingold – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
Naomi Watson – Aye	
Sarah Lehar - Aye	

Mario Marquez introduced himself to the board and the floor was given to board members to ask questions. Mario has been with TNS for almost 5 years. He sees working on the board as an opportunity to further his leadership and deepen his support of TNS. John asked if there were areas that Mario would be interested in participating in. He noted Governance as an interest and would like to learn more about Finance.

**Board Vote: To approve Mario Marquez as a Board Member of TNS Board of Trustees**

Motion to Approve: Naomi Watson Second: Sarah Lehar Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Michael Cuellar – Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Carlos Hernandez – Aye
John Ingold – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Naomi Watson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent
Sarah Lehar - Aye	

Melisa provided an update on the culture and climate work. The Board initiative an emergency contract to retain MSM Global to help support culture and climate work for TNS. The work will include surveys, staff conversations and facilitated group conversations. A kickoff meeting with MSM was held and the Governance committee will provide an update later in the meeting.

Melissa shared an updated on the work to develop legal contract templates. The Operations team has been looking to develop contract templates that would have approved legal language for all contracts going forward. The decision was made to retain the support of a firm to provide additional support. Griffin Strategic Law Advisors is the firm and the cost of services fall below the threshold for competitive procurement. The Executive Committee reviewed and approved this agreement, and the work is underway.

The board discussed the need to appoint a new Chair for the Academic Excellence Committee given the departure of the Chair. The ask was made that any interested candidates notify Melissa of the interest to serve. Michael raised the question of the need for the committee as most of the previous work was driven by the reaccreditation work. Melissa noted that the



### **The Next Step (El Próximo Paso) Public Charter School | February 9, 2022**

carter was drafted around boarder academic excellence needs for the school. John proposed that the committee review the carter and needs and that the committee bring a recommendation to the board about need going forward. Mario noted the future needs around PCSB revaluation of PMF and annual goals around testing.

Melissa provided an update on school leadership. March 1<sup>st</sup> will be the first day of the new ED, Dr. Vivian Robledo. Vivian was able to come to DC on two occasions prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> to meet with staff and students. Joan Carlos continues to support the school in a few key areas, including Board updates, data validation submissions for compliance purposes. Juan Carlos' contract was set to expire, and the board agreed to extend the contract through the end of Febuary.

Melissa provided an update on the Board Retreat. The decision was made to shift the retreat from March to April to ensure the ED can fully participate in the retreat. Melissa committed to sending an email to board members to finalize the date and content.

### **Acting Executive Director Update**

Juan Carlos provided a reminder and invitation for board members to attend the February 18<sup>th</sup> graduation of 6 students. A staffing update was provided to confirm that restructuring of the leadership team was completed. Two co-Principals are now in place and were filled by existing staff. This move resulted to two vacancies for instructional coaches. Total vacancies for TNS is at 15. Two additional staff members are departing, ESL and a case manager. Ask for the board to continue to monitor staff changes. COVID update, random rapid testing is ongoing for daytime and nighttime program, 30% of students on a weekly basis and a new practice was established to ensure testing availability prior to extended breaks. Facilities, TNS is leasing space from Centro Nia. The lease is about to come up for renewal. The question was posed if TNS still needs all of the space. There was also an issue with the fire system where the motherboard crashed and resulted in the building closing. The likely impact is that the building will be closed for a week and staff will shift to virtual learning. No staff can be in the building until the motherboard is replaced. Tanya provided additional information about the fire motherboard issue and the plan for resolution. Tanya is waiting on a date from the manufacture in regard to the chip replacement. Ed Fuel 2021 Compensation study was just completed. Last revision of compensation and salary scales was completed 3 years ago at TNS. If compensation is going to be revisited in the future, the study might be helpful to inform future discussions.

### **Finance Committee**

John provided an update on the financials. John offered to provide an overview of budget and finance to new board members. December financials provided by Ed Ops are available. TNS is ahead and running positive to projections due to the open staffing positions. The draft 990 is available for review and we will vote in the March meeting and has been reviewed by the finance committee. The Mayors budget for the year will contain a recommended increase to the UPSFF, TBD how this will impact the adult formula. Increase is not guaranteed, and we won't know for sure until the budget passes. A first draft budget has been completed and in April the finance committee will be voting to send to the full board, the full board will be expected to vote on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Budget is due to PCSB on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Opportunities to review and discuss will be available to all board members throughout this process.

### **Governance Committee**

Sarah and Steve presented the MSM Global Culture and Climate kick off and preview of upcoming work. Staff survey should start this month and discussions were held to discuss survey strategy. The full board will engage with the work again at the March/April retreat. Full findings and recommendations from MSM are slated for May. Governance committee is also working to update bi-laws and tenure for members, slated for the next meeting and organization and access to box was also raised. Discussions were also held around board involvement in the community. The board will be asked to provide input on how to be more present with the community and staff.

**Adjourn**

**Board Vote: To close the open session of the meeting**

Motion to Approve: Mario Marquez Second: Carlos Hernandez Outcome: Approved	
Melissa McKnight – Aye	Sarah Lehar - Aye
Steve Cartwright – Aye	Carlos Hernandez - Aye
Shawn Richardson – Aye	Mario Marquez - Aye
John Ingold – Aye	Fernando Mejía - Absent
Naomi Watson – Aye	Housnatou Vologuem - Absent

The Board meeting adjourned at 7:57pm.