

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Drexel Foundation for Educational Excellence, Inc.
DBA Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
3401 W. 5th Avenue, Gary, IN 46406
Wednesday, January 31, 2024
6:00 PM CT

I. Meeting Called to Order

A meeting of the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of Thea Bowman Leadership Academy (“TBLA”) was held on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. The meeting was called to order by the Board Chair at 6:02 PM CT.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was recited by the assembled Directors and attendees.

III. Roll Call

Eve Gomez, President	Present
Jason Beres, Vice President	Present
Michelle Dickerson, Treasurer	Present
Helen Hill	Present
Cedric Steele	Present

Other Attendees:

- Marisa Simmons, Principal, Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
- Antoinette Troupe, Operations Manager, Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
- Dr. Brison Blackwell, Operations Manager, Thea Bowman Leadership Academy
- Jewell Harris, Jr., Attorney, Harris Law Firm
- Caitlin Hicks, Education One
- Eva Spilker, President & CFO, PLA
- Theresa Jacobs, NW Regional Instructional Specialists, PLA
- Javi Dimas, VP of Enrollment, PLA
- Ashley Minter, National Director of Scholar Enrollment, PLA
- JoAnn Gama, Chief Human Assets Officer, PLA
- Cathy Kendrick, Director of Human Resources, Schools, PLA
- Paul Farrington, Associate Director of Operations, PLA
- Lauren Fihe, Development Manager, Government, PLA
- Johnny Jin, Chief Strategy & Development Officer, PLA
- Ignacio Zarate, Director of Operations and Student Information Systems, PLA
- Khyla Jackson, Regional Director of Operations, PLA

- Ms. Zellers, Lori Bedenfield-Herron, Tasha Fuller, Pamela Joseph, Elder Loriann Reed, L. Dukes, Cheryl, Lakesha J, and Samsung SM-A536U.

a. Approval of Board Agenda

The board made a motion to approve the agenda for January 31, 2024.

Motion: Jason Beres

Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 5

Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

b. Approval of Board Minutes from November 29, 2023.

The board made a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 5

Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the November 29, 2023 board minutes.

IV. Open Communication/Public Comments

- None

V. CMO Report

a. Principal's Report

Principal Marisa Simmons, presented the January Admin Report with updates on academics, staff professional development, recent activities, upcoming events, and transportation. Principal Simmons thanked all attendees who attended the public meeting and wished the TBLA school board a Happy School Board Appreciation Month!

b. Academic Board Report

Theresa Jacobs presented the academic board report and shared the NWEA winter-to-winter growth results.

ACTION ITEM: Trustee Hill asked why there is typically a dip in winter testing scores. What controls have been established to prevent the dips?

ACTION ITEM: President Gomez asked where TBLA is listed as far as growth compared to other schools in the region and state.

c. Enrollment Update

Javi Dimas presented data on the current enrollment, waitlist, and student transfers.

ACTION ITEM: President Gomez inquired about the number of scholars who transferred to PLA Virtual.

d. HR Update

JoAnn Gama provided information on staff retention.

ACTION ITEM: President Gomez would like to see records and exit surveys of staffers who left. Add a column for the open position.

ACTION ITEM: JoAnn is to provide 2024-2025 compensation benefits and comparison data at the February board meeting. Moving forward, include a monthly update on terminations, new hires, vacancies, and length of vacancy. Additionally, include any new positions and salary.

e. Financial Report

Eva Spilker presented the financial review with an overview of the income statement with revenue, expenses, and net income, the balance sheet with cash balances, accounts payable balances, days cash, and the enrollment budget.

ACTION ITEM: President Gomez requested a detailed YTD report on the janitorial services and supplies.

f. ESSER and Federal Grant Update

Lauren Fihe provided the ESSER and Federal Grant overview and update.

ACTION ITEM: Add a column to the use of funds section to show spend-to-date items (e.g., completed, in progress).

ACTION ITEM: How much of ESSER III is going to be spent after June 30th?

VI. Authorizer Report (Trine University/Education One LLC)

Caitlin Hicks shared the authorizer's accountability update, academic, financial, and organizational performance, deficiency report, community connections, and upcoming events.

VII. Old Business

ACTION ITEM: Vice President Jason Beres, requested copies of the bus titles.

VIII. New Business

a. Approval to Submit a Charter Facility Grant Application

The board made a motion to approve the resolution to submit a charter facility grant application.

Motion: Jason Beres

Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 5

Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

ACTION ITEM: Create a committee to assist with the grant process.

b. Approval to Change the February 2024 Board Meeting Date

The board made a motion to approve the change of the February 2024 board meeting date from 2/28 to 2/29.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 5

Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the date change.

ACTION ITEM: Attorney Harris recommended that Vice President Beres receive the school website access information.

c. Approval for Jason Beres to have Access to the Website Login Information

The board made a motion to approve Jason Beres to have access to the school website login information. **The motion was amended to include Trustee Cedric Steele:*

The board made a motion to approve Jason Beres and Cedric Steele to have access to the school website login information.

Motion: Michelle Dickerson Support: Helen Hill

Yays: 4 Nays: 0 Abstain: 1 (Jason Beres)

The board unanimously voted to approve access to the school website login information.

IX. PTA

PTA Vice President, Lori Anderson, provided an update. Last month's meeting was canceled. The next meeting is scheduled for February.

X. Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Helen Hill Support: Cedric Steele

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Zoom Chat Comments:

- 00:16:12 PLA - Christina Garrett: Good evening! Please let me know if you have a public comment.
- 00:21:50 Samsung SM-A536U: Replying to "Good evening! Please..."
- I would like to know why the previous meeting with Education One scheduled to be held on December 19th 2023 was canceled the day of the meeting.
- 00:24:46 PLA - Christina Garrett: Replying to "Good evening! Please..."
- Public comment has already been presented on the agenda. I will bring this question up prior to adjournment.
- 00:43:33 Samsung SM-A536U: Replying to "Good evening! Please..."
- How many parents who didn't reveal why they decided to leave haven't been counted?
- 00:46:31 Samsung SM-A536U: I'm also interested in knowing what we're the allegations of deficiency of the past 7 years within TBLA? Please address in what areas the notice referred to when stating, "Unfortunately, the school has demonstrated deficiencies in regard to academic performance.
- 00:51:05 Samsung SM-A536U: New hires data would be helpful
- 00:57:14 Samsung SM-A536U: if we are below budget in expenses why do we not have transportation? What would be the cost to provide it for TBLA

- 01:05:39 Samsung SM-A536U: I was here since 5:50pm
- 01:09:56 PLA - Christina Garrett: Replying to "I was here since 5:5..."
- Thank you for joining early! When public comment is presented on the agenda, please feel free to comment. Unfortunately, I did not receive your initial comment until after public comment had passed.
- 01:15:02 Samsung SM-A536U: What are Exclusionary discipline practices
- 01:31:48 Samsung SM-A536U: Please let her answer that first question as it was mine as well.
- 01:40:40 Samsung SM-A536U: How can I find out more information about parent participation
- 01:42:12 PLA - Christina Garrett: Replying to "How can I find out m..."
- Please contact the PTA President or Vice President.
- 01:42:40 Samsung SM-A536U: Replying to "How can I find out m..."
- Who are they? Are you able to provide names and email
- 01:49:43 Elder Loriann Reed: I would like to work with the pta on future events
- 01:51:16 Samsung SM-A536U: There should be a public event called "Changing The Narrative." The sock hop can be one of the attractions within the event.
- Create an incentive to encourage participation.