

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
Drexel Foundation for Educational Excellence, Inc.  
DBA Thea Bowman Leadership Academy  
3401 W. 5th Avenue, Gary, IN 46406  
Wednesday, October 25, 2023  
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, October 25, 2023. The meeting was called to order by the Board Chair at 6:01 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
- Jewell Harris, Jr., Attorney, Harris Law Firm
- Caitlin Hicks, Education One
- Eva Spilker, President & CFO, PLA
- Melissa Morris, NW Executive Director, PLA
- Lauren Fihe, Development Manager, PLA
- Jermaine Mead, Dean of Students and District School Safety Specialist, TBLA
- Dr. Finley, Blue Onyx Consulting, LLC
- Leslie Skinner-Leslie, VP of Marketing and Operations, Haywood & Fleming Associates

a. Approval of Board Agenda

The board made a motion to approve the agenda for October 25, 2023.

Motion: Michelle Dickerson                      Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 5    Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

b. Approval of Board Minutes from September 27, 2023.

The board made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 27, 2023.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Jason Beres

Yays: 5

Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the board minutes.

#### **IV. Open Communication/Public Comments**

- Parent, Ms. Davis, asked the board if they were for the school or against the school. She noted that only Board President, Eve Gomez attends events and stated that the school needs more than just Ms. Eve.
- Scholar, Alissa Anderson, inquired about having a study hall space; her day ends at 2:00 p.m. and it would not make sense for her to go home, just to return to school after dismissal for extracurricular activities and practice. Alissa requested help with her major; Trine credits do not transfer to all schools.

#### **V. CMO Report**

##### **a. Principal's Report**

Principal Marisa Simmons, presented the October Admin Report with updates on academics, professional development, testing, community connections, recent activities, and upcoming events. Principal Simmons congratulated scholar, Tristan Hamer, for being chosen as the Thea Bowman Leadership Academy representative for the Lilly Endowment Scholarship, and Olivia Davis for leading the Youth Build Service Learning Projects! A huge shout-out was given to all staff who took the lead on clubs; there is a total of 17 clubs this school year.

##### **b. Academic Board Report**

Melissa Morris presented the academic board report and shared the Fall-to-Fall results for NWEA school growth data.

##### **c. 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.

#### **VI. Updates**

##### **a. ESSER**

Lauren Fihe, PLA Development Manager, provided an ESSER II and ESSER III funding update, overview, use of funds, and awarded grants for stronger community connections.

#### **VII. Presentations**

##### **a. School Safety Training – Mr. Mead**

Dean of Students and District School Safety Specialist, Mr. Jermaine Mead, presented an overview of his recent advanced training that took place in Indianapolis. The school's safety plan has been updated, all fire drills are current, and planning is taking place to partner with the Gary Police Department to work with their K9 unit and have their SWAT team come in to assist with an active shooter drill. Mr. Mead asked the board to reconsider the number of building security guards for everyone's safety.

Trustee Hill recommended Mr. Mead start a school safety committee to address safety issues and prioritize his concerns to submit them to the board. In addition, Attorney Harris suggested that Mr. Mead present a staffing plan to the board, and show how the recommendations impact the budget. Lastly, President Gomez highly recommended and encouraged staff to become safety specialists.

b. 2023-2024 Strategic Plan – Blue Onyx Consulting, LLC

Dr. Finley presented the 2023-2024 strategic plan and provided an overview of the strategic goals, annual objectives, measures, and performance indicators and targets.

The board made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan.

Motion: Jason Beres                      Support: Cedric Steele

Yays: 5                                      Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the 2023-2024 strategic plan.

**VIII. Authorizer Report (Trine University/Education One LLC)**

Caitlin Hicks shared the authorizer’s accountability update, academic performance, ILEARN growth, attendance, chronic absenteeism, and upcoming events.

**IX. Old Business**

**X. New Business**

a. Commercial Liability Insurance Renewal

The board made a motion to approve the commercial liability insurance renewal.

Motion: Cedric Steele                      Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 4                                      Nays: 0                                      Abstain: 1

The majority of the board voted to approve the commercial liability insurance renewal.

b. Policy Adoption of Implementation and Requirement of Student Identification

The board made a motion to approve the policy adoption of implementation and requirement of student identification.

Motion: Helen Hill                              Support: Jason Beres

Yays: 5                                      Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the policy adoption of implementation and requirement of student identification.

c. Policy Adoption of the Use of Educational Service Provider’s Name, Logo, or Likeness

The board made a motion to approve the policy adoption of the use of educational service provider’s name, logo, or likeness.

Motion: Jason Beres                              Support: Michelle Dickerson

Yays: 5                                      Nays: 0

The board unanimously voted to approve the policy adoption of the use of educational service provider’s name, logo, or likeness.

**XI. PTA**

PTA President, Tanisha Smith, provided the PTA update. The October meeting was held on 10/17 with guest speaker, Cory Williams, Owner and CEO of Creative Innovative New Opportunities. The next meeting is scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Smith expressed her concern about the lack of support and stated that it will, unfortunately, result in the dissolution of the PTA unit at Thea Bowman Leadership Academy.

**XII. Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Helen Hill

Support: Cedric Steele

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.