

## Metro Schools

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, March 28 2014 from 2:00pm – 3:23pm

Location of Meeting: Metro Schools

**Call to order:** The Board Chair, Abdulkadir Abdalla, called to order the meeting at 2:00 PM on Friday, March 28th, 2014.

**Board Members/Director Present or Absent:**

Name	Present/Absent
Abdulkadir Abdalla (Board Chair & Community Member)	P
Justine Bjergo (Secretary & Teacher)	P
Abdinor Warfah (Community Member and Parent)	P (left at 3:07pm)
Mohamed Mohamoud (Community Member)	P
Abraham Gadalla (Board Treasury)	P

**Guests and Community Members Present:**

Name	Position/Role
Robert Procaccini , CPA	Representative, School Business Solutions (SBS)
Kiellen Curtis	Metro Schools' Attorney
Ahmed Elmi	School Director – Metro Schools
David Rothfeder	High School Teacher at Metro Schools
Katie White	High School Teacher at Metro Schools
David Greenberg	Audubon Representative (School authorizer)

**Metro Schools' Mission**

Metro Schools College Prep is committed to academic excellence and closing the achievement gap by establishing rigorous goals for students, parents, teachers and the school. Metro Schools College Prep values cultural, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity as central elements of a college preparatory education and provides a caring learning community that prepares students and staff to be responsible world citizens.

**Metro Schools' Vision**

The vision of Metro Schools is for our students to have a steadfast belief in their worth as human beings and that they will be prepared socially and academically to fulfill their aspirations in a changing, challenging world community. We aim to be widely recognized as the most effective model for closing the achievement gap and preparing students for careers in the 21st century.

## Call to Order

### 1. Agenda & Minutes:

<b>Subject</b>	Agenda and Minutes					
<b>Motion</b>	Approve agenda for March 2014 Approve minutes for January 2014					
<b>Made by</b>	Gadalla		<b>Seconded by</b>	Abdalla		
<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gadalla asks to add agenda item about 'teacher retention incentives'. After discussing, Abdalla suggests that this should be up to school administration. If school administration comes up with a retention incentive, they may bring it to the board for approval.</li> </ul>					
<b>Vote</b>		<b>Yea</b>	5	<b>Nay</b>	0	<b>Abstain</b> NA
<b>Decision</b>	Approval of agenda for March 2014 Approval of minutes for January 2014					

### 2. Bills and Financials:

<b>Subject</b>	Bills and financials for January 2014 and February 2014					
<b>Motion</b>	Approve bills and financials for January 2014 Approve bills and financials for February 2014					
<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Board members individually review register for Jan. 2014</b></li> <li><b>Board members move on to looking through financials for Feb. 2014. More of a focus is on Feb. financials because they are more updated than Jan.</b></li> <li><b>Robert Procaccini, representative from School Business Solutions, addresses explains the financials to the board:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Current ADM is about 270, which is what the school has budgeted for.</b></li> <li>○ <b>There was a cash balance decrease from Feb. to Mar. due to the overpayment made from the state of MN last year because of the discrepancy between the budgeted and actual ADM. The school was overpaid by \$217,503 last year, and the state is withholding payments to the school to make up for this overpayment.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Metro Schools is in the process of switching to BMO Harris bank from Sunrise bank. Because of this, there are separate check</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>					

	<p>numbers and bank account information in the bills/financials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is \$17,979 in outstanding payments as School Business Solutions is looking for proof of payment from the school administration to cover these expenses.</li> <li>○ The estimated year-to-date holdback is 10% or \$227,595</li> <li>○ The school has received 59% of the state revenue for the year, 0% of the federal revenue for this year, and 95% of the local revenue for the year.</li> <li>○ It is 67% of the way through the school year, Metro schools is 60% of the way through total expenses, and 57% of the way through the budgeted revenue.</li> <li>○ The school is over budget in the 'student support' section due to high costs of transportation. It is expected that transportation costs will be over by about \$100,000 by the end of the school year.</li> <li>○ The school is over budget in the 'operations and maintenance' section due to the school's lease being prepaid.</li> <li>○ Metro Schools will be at about a \$35,000 loss in food service for this school year.</li> <li>○ The year-to-date activity is (\$87,752) only due to the holdback (explained above). This should equal out by the end of this school year.</li> <li>○ There was \$236,060.18 in expenses paid in February.</li> <li>○ The Feb. 15, Mar. 15, and Mar. 31 payments will be lower than expected, and may not come at all due to the state overpayment last year.</li> <li>○ The state is holding an extra \$65,000 in addition to the \$217,503 due to a MARSS and Special Education funding issue. This has been appealed and the appeal has been accepted by the state. The school should get that \$65,000 back from the state.</li> <li>○ The cash flow for the school year should be 'okay', according to School Business Solutions.</li> <li>○ Overall, the finances look good, but there are some administrative issues (e.g. outstanding payments without receipts) that need to change.</li> </ul>					
Made by	Mohamoud	Seconded by	Gadalla			
Vote	Yea	5	Nay	0	Abstain	NA
Decision	Approval for bills and financials for January 2014 Approval for bills and financials for February 2014					

## Director's Report

### 1. MARSS update

Subject	MARSS update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ADM as of March 27 is 271.</li> </ul>

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be an additional 4 students added to school on Tuesday, April 1. This will make the school ADM 275.</li> <li>• There are 21 students currently on the Metro Schools waitlist to enroll in the school.</li> </ul>
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## 2. Audubon Updates

Subject	Updates from the school's authorizer, including discussion regarding the letter of concern that was received one week prior to the meeting
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There was a letter of concern sent by David Greenberg, who is our school representative from Audubon, the school's authorizer, after he did a financial evaluation of the school.</b></li> <li>• <b>The letter of concern addresses four issues that were found:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>There was never a budget adopted for the 2012-2013 school year.</b></li> <li>2. <b>There is an excessive/inappropriate use of manual checks. This concern derives from the 2011 and 2013 school audits, both of which found that there were undocumented checks written out, and that the manual checks were not written out in the order of their check numbers.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Metro Schools was paying regular employees as contractors. This includes paying hall and bus monitors as contractors, even though they should be considered and taxed as employees of the school.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Metro Schools has made payments to a board member for services rendered. The only board member who should be paid by Metro Schools is the teacher-board member. There was an issue with a community member-board member being paid.</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Actions that Audubon requests to resolve the current concerns:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Provide evidence that the 2012-2013 school year budget was, in fact, adopted.</b></li> <li>2. <b>It is requested that school administrators and board members seek additional training to prevent future issues such as the ones listed above from happening. This includes providing Audubon with a training plan that will be implemented to ensure that all administrators and board members do seek the necessary training.</b></li> <li>3. <b>The school should provide Audubon with a manual check policy which they will follow.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Provide an explanation of why the community member-board member was being paid by the school. Also ensure that no board members, other than teacher-board members, receive payments from the school in the future.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Provide evidence that the schools' conflict of interest policy meets the statutory requirements.</b></li> <li>6. <b>By April 1<sup>st</sup>, no employees at Metro Schools should be paid as</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<p>contractors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specific actions that the board discussed taking to address the above concerns:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The board will go through previous meeting agendas/minutes to make sure that the 2012-2013 school year budget was, in fact, adopted. This was likely a secretarial issue.</b></li> <li>2. <b>The board will ask that administration only issue checks in case of emergency. The check may only be written when supporting documents are provided. The school's attorney, Kiellen Curtis, has drafted a manual check policy which the board looked over and agreed upon (approval for this policy happened later in the meeting). David Greenberg also suggests that the board takes time at each monthly meeting to reflect upon the usage of the manual checks from the previous month.</b></li> <li>3. <b>The contracted employees have already been moved to the regular employee payroll. They need to be paid hourly instead of in bulk sums. This means that they are required to fill out time cards, as other hourly employees do.</b></li> <li>4. <b>The school will no longer seek services or render payments to board members aside from the one teacher-board member.</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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### 3. Academic Updates

<b>Subject</b>	Updates on school academics
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The school just finished with ACCESS (WIDA) testing. All teachers were trained to proctor these tests, and participated in helping to proctor the tests.</b></li> <li>• <b>The MCAs are coming up this April. Teachers and administration have been helping to prepare students for these tests.</b></li> </ul>

### 4. Staffing Updates

<b>Subject</b>	Updates on new school staff members
Motion	Approve new school staff members
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There have been several new employees added to Metro Schools in the past few months. They include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Abdiraman Mohamed: Middle School Dean of Students</b></li> <li>○ <b>Mohiadin Hassan: 1-on-1 para professional</b></li> <li>○ <b>Badria Mohamed: 1-on-1 para professional</b></li> <li>○ <b>Rahima Ahmed: Moved from being a 0.5 ESL para professional/0.5 Arabic teacher, to being a 0.5 ESL teacher/0.5 Arabic teacher. School administration posted the ESL position online and was not able to receive a qualified candidate so Rahima Ahmed applied for a teaching limited license to be able to finish the school year being an ESL teacher.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	○ <b>Amal Gazey: Joined the school through Public Allies. She will be working at the front desk of the school until July.</b>						
Made by	Abdalla			Seconded by	Gadalla		
Vote		Yea	5	Nay	0	Abstain	NA
Decision	Approval of all new school employees						

## Old Business

### 1. Transportation Updates

<b>Subject</b>	Updates on the transportation of the school
<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transportation has become a large concern for the school. Currently, Metro Schools is set up to lease-to-own their buses. Because of this, the school is responsible for all mechanical/maintenance costs of the buses. Due to the extra maintenance and mechanical costs, there has been excessive spending on transportation.</b></li> <li>• <b>So far, the school has spent \$285,000 on transportation. By June 5<sup>th</sup>, it is predicted that the school will spend \$483,000 on transportation. This is about \$100,000 over budget.</b></li> <li>• <b>School administration and Robert Procaccini have sat down to compare these costs with the costs of using an outside bus company. If the school used Monarch Bus Company, the annual costs would be about \$280,000 for 6 buses and several mini-vans.</b></li> <li>• <b>Going through an outside bus company for the next school year will be less expensive than keeping the current transportation plan. The board suggests that the school administration do whatever makes the most financial sense for the school.</b></li> <li>• <b>One factor to consider is that selling the buses that the school is currently leasing could cause the school to lose money.</b></li> <li>• <b>Another possible solution: school administrators have been talking to Lincoln International High School (located just down the road from Metro Schools). They could possibly be interested in taking over the bus contracts/leases. The administration will look further into this possibility.</b></li> </ul>

## New Business

### 1. New Policy

<b>Subject</b>	New records policy and new manual check policy
<b>Motion</b>	Approve new records policy Approve new manual check policy
<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The school would like to adopt a new records policy. This policy will be put in place to ensure that student privacy is being respected. This should</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>include that no student records or social security numbers be given out. All personal email correspondence between teachers/administration should not use student names.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The board revisits the manual check policy drafted by the school's attorney that was discussed earlier in the meeting.</b></li> </ul>					
Made by	Gadalla			Seconded by	Abdalla	
Vote		Yea	4	Nay	0	Abstain NA
Decision	Approval of records policy and manual check policy					

## 2. Afterschool Update

<b>Subject</b>	Updates on the afterschool program offered at Metro Schools
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metro Schools previously offered a SAPA (Somali-American Parents Association) tutoring after-school program at the school. This program was recently cancelled because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was very expensive to transport students home after the program</li> <li>The SAPA tutors were not able to manage/control the students. This became a safety concern.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The SAPA tutoring program has been cancelled for the remainder of the school year. The school administration will revisit having an after school program for the next school year.</li> </ul>

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:23pm by Abdulkadir Abdalla, the board chair.**